

Practicing What You Preach: Maintaining Your Chops While Teaching

2018 Kansas Music Educators In-Service Workshop
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PRESENTED BY

Dr. Frank Perez, Director of Bands
Associate Professor of Music – Baker University

William Biggs, Director of Bands – Gardner Edgerton H.S.

&

The KC Bone Connection Trombone Quartet

William Biggs
Andy Newbegin
Frank Perez
Ted Toulouse



MUSIC & THEATRE

at Baker University

OPENING SET – (9min)

Star Spangled Banner (1:51)

Pie Jesu (3:30)

Suite for Four Trombones (3:20)

Spirituale

Alla Marcia

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to our session. Glad you are here.

Our hope is to start an open dialog about how we can continue to build our own musicianship, continue to stay involved as active practitioners, how to better relate to our students and pass down our performance traditions.

Frank: for me, personally, I felt like something was missing from my life. Even though conducting is now my full-time job, I felt that I need to keep playing trombone to stay sane I felt it reminded me that I needed to connect more with my students from a performer standpoint more often.

We have learned this tradition, lived it, and some of us are guilty of leaving it in the closet. Staying active as a performer is a good reminder of the details we often take for granted.

THE KC BONE CONNECTION JOURNEY

- Born out of the desire to:
 - Stay motivated/have something to look forward to
 - Susan Gerber, contributor for Next Avenue (PBS system) writes: “staying motivated can be tough.”
 - Her advice:
 - Set a goal and visualize it down to the most minute
 - Make a list of reasons you want to accomplish the goal
 - Have a strategy
 - Mayo Clinic Staff – Tips for staying motivated
 - Set Goals
 - Make it fun
 - Make physical activity part of your daily routine
 - Play music at the highest level possible
 - Work on my individual musicianship. Desire to push myself to become a better musician and a better educator. Jazz musician and author of Effortless Master, Kenny Werner says “along with the desire for a deeper experience comes an intense desire to play better.” I felt that if I continued to improve as a player, I would improve as a conductor and a teacher.
 - Playing in a regular ensemble gives me the opportunity to remind myself of the traditions of performance. There is an unspoken tradition that is most easily passed down through the master/apprentice model.
 - We think it is important to model for our students what it is like to be a performing musician, after all, that is what we are asking them to do.
- The original Trombone quartet was comprised of four music educators (by design). I wanted to put together a group of players with similar backgrounds, goals and expectations. This alignment is crucial to our success.

- Challenges:
 - Setting Realistic Expectations
 - We are all music teachers. Teaching is our priority.
 - We agree to make a regular time each week but understand that our rehearsal day and time may need to change to accommodate our teaching/full time job schedules.
 - Why are we doing this? Are we doing this for our own professional development or are we concerned about gigging and making money? The money would be nice, but the musical rewards are key. I have been in groups that were motivated by money.

 - Where do I find the time to practice?
 - If we think it is important, we need to make it a priority and carve out time to practice. We expect our student to do the same...
 - Setting weekly rehearsal goals for your own ensemble or playing in an ensemble that rehearses regularly helps to stay motivated.
 - I make it a point to play alongside all of my private lessons. I remind myself that I am modeling musician ship and performance tradition. Same when I play with our jazz band. I can model style, tone, and expressiveness. I play with the saxophones, trumpet, trombones, etc. Master/Apprentice model.

 - Creating a safe environment.
 - We all agree that our rehearsals are a safe environment. We are free to experiment, try new things and free to make mistakes. We give each other honest feedback and we agree not to be offended. It's okay to say, "Hey man, that was out of tune."
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OUR TAKE ON REHEARSALS

We start each rehearsal with listening and tuning. Getting to know how we play together. How the harmonies are working according to which part we play.

We randomly select a Bach chorale (in Public Domain tenorposaune.com or IMSLP) – lots of free music in Public Domain available!

Warmup Goals (5-6 minutes)

- Bach Chorale (play - selected randomly)
- Listening in an accessible manner #1/keeping list of favorites
- Tuning/Tone/Just Intonation/Sight Ready
- Phrasing
- Switching Parts/Switching places (Weston Noble)
- Model “the messup”

WALKING THE TALK

MASTER/APPRENTICE MODEL can help significantly in passing down our performance traditions. The way we interact with other musicians/what we consider performer expectations.

Remember back to when you started practicing music.
Why did you choose your instrument or voice?

How often do we teach from this perspective?

How much time do we spend teaching performance etiquette/performance practice/culture & tradition, history

Do you approach your rehearsals from a conductor/teacher/or performer standpoint?

Do you switch roles, while you are in front? Do you model on your instrument?

Apprentice Model is a good way of staying connected with your students.

We all know that it's tough for students to go see live music. Many don't. But, we are performers, we can perform for our students more often. Frank talk about Baker Trombone Choir.

This goes a long way to helping inspire students when they see their teachers practicing what they preach.

It helps to build a community of musicians where everyone can participate and where it becomes a "way of life."

It becomes a norm....

WHERE DO I GO FROM HERE???

But, we don't have time....

- "Cause It To Happen"
 - Start by playing more with your ensembles. Give your student leaders the opportunity to conduct.
 - Start your own group (chamber ensemble, big band, etc.)
 - Partner up with a pianist and work on solo literature
 - Seek opportunities to play at
 - Perform a recital for your students
 - Church
 - Library
 - Community Centers, etc.
 - Join an Band

- Kansas Community Band Project
 - Started to encourage teachers to find a place to perform and stay motivated to practice.
 - I noticed that there isn't really a good place or resource available to help musicians find a community band or ensemble.
 - GOAL: to include Concert Bands, Jazz Bands, Orchestras, Choirs, etc.
 - Please help us spread the word!
 - Join our Facebook group

CLOSING SET – (6min)

Swingin' Classical Dances – Humoresque (2:20)

Alma Y Desnudo (3:30)

RESOURCES

Gerber, Susan. How To Stay Motivated And Accomplish Anything. (2018, February 20).

Retrieved from

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/nextavenue/2013/07/19/how-to-stay-motivated-and-accomplish-anything/#21e5d92132a5>

Mayo Clinic Staff. Fitness: Tips for staying motivated. (2018, February 20). Retrieved from

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/fitness/in-depth/fitness/art-20047624>