

“Diving into Expression by Looking into One’s Self”
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Start everyday by moving.

Some things that are important to me:

- Music is derived from the human experience.
- Live life, don’t let it just happen.
- Perception is reality.
- Vulnerability
- Journaling

Who are you as an expressive conductor?

What does it mean to dive?

By definition, dive means:

- to plunge into water intentionally and especially headfirst.
- to come or drop down precipitously (very steeply).
- to plunge into some matter or activity.

What do they all have in common?

- Desire
- Trust/overcoming fear
- Confidence/fearless

All could only occur because you first...

- wanted to know/understand.
- were willing to take a risk.
- made yourself vulnerable.
- expressive, since birth.

As teachers (people), we are:

Good at:

- the technical, binary aspects of music.
- the behavioral aspects of music.
- telling our students what to do and talking about expression.

We might not be good at/with:

- allowing ourselves to be musically expressive through gesture.
- allowing ourselves to let emotion motivate and inform our gestures.
- practicing our conducting musically.
- trusting that our students will respond to our gestures and do the right thing.

So what can we do?

- Utilize Laban Gestures
- Move
- Journal

Laban Gestures:

Laban Movement Analysis (LMA) is a system for the observing, describing, performing, and interpreting human movement.

- Breath, space/body, effort element (qualities):
 - flow (free/bound)
 - weight (light/strong)
 - time (sustained/sudden)
 - space (indirect/direct)

Experience Effort Element Combinations:

- Float – floating in a pool, tracing, bubble wand, spraying
- Wring – wringing wet towel/sponge, screwdriver, massage
- Glide – erasing board, dusting surface, bowing, zipping bag
- Press – ironing shirt, paper cutter, doing a push-up, swing
- Flick – flick, light switch, leafing through a book, hot stove
- Slash – cutting, casting a line, golfing, slamming a door
- Dab – darts (release), paint brush dots, typing, dotting “i”
- Punch – using a hammer, pounding fist, forcing a staple

Move:

“Feeling must prompt gestures. Gestures without such internal feelings end up being musically meaningless” (Lisk, p. 6).

“Gestures are born out of a need that arises only during music making...They cannot be determined” (Leinsdorf in Lisk, p. 13).

“Once an individual is willing to take the risk of shaping and creating the sounds dictated by the melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic flow of the composition, we experience the truth and integrity of musical expression (Lisk, p. 12).

This exercise allows:

- personal discovery of how to show sound through space and expression.
- freedom “break the rules” and live “outside of the box.”
- to be vulnerable; focus on YOU, not others.

Journaling:

- Like building muscle, it takes time, repetition, and willingness to feel pain to achieve gains (Coyle, 2018).
- Is an investment, requires patience for discovery to occur.
- Demands discipline and respect for the process.
- Is a relationship fostered by initiative and integrity.
- Is different but the same for everyone; balance is key.
- All of these apply vulnerability with your expressive conducting.
- Live Journaling Activity using Google Docs.

Closing:

- Time is of the essence; life also happens outside the band room.
- Expression is the elephant in the room, hopefully we found a way to manage its existence.
- Nothing here is new but hopefully different enough to inspire thought and motivation as begin your year.
- Allow yourselves to be vulnerable take risks in understanding what you do not.
- The more you create, the better you perform, the better they respond.

“Once a student overcomes their shyness, you will be amazed at how expressive their playing becomes” (Lisk, p. 23).

“To be human is to be musical, the two cannot be separated” (Blacking, 1973).

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