

## STATEMENT CONCERNING PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

Preparing music students for personal and professional success has been a rewarding experience for me in my professional development journey. As a conductor and music educator, I aim to facilitate student collaboration in chamber and large ensemble settings, cultivate musical excellence through rigorous teaching and emotionally stirring musical performances, and promote and disseminate standard band repertoire as well as the music of diverse and under-represented composers. And, perhaps most importantly, I aim to inspire students to realize their own love of music-making, and to share their musical passion with wonder and abandon.

My teaching method begins with collaboration in mind. As a conductor, I welcome opportunities for students to express themselves musically in rehearsals, as well as provide feedback during rehearsals. So, moments in rehearsal can be devoted to seeking student feedback by taking questions. Also, I sometimes defer to student's musical opinions, particularly in student-performed concerti, in soloist passages, and in chamber ensemble settings either with verbal or gestural indication. Another facet of my teaching method as a conductor is my rigorous pursuit of musical excellence. Feedback is quick, detailed, and prescriptive. At times, feedback can even be formulaic: I have made rehearsal recordings and later provided the ensemble with a detailed breakdown of the issues in the recording with prescribed solutions. In a similar manner, I will empower students to do the same. I will also ask principal players to evaluate a recording, then provide comments and prescribe sectional work to overcome them.

Even the best rehearsal strategies and techniques can be a moot point if there is no effective way to evaluate student learning and comprehension of ensemble skills, and recordings provide a strong objective manner of evaluation of objective qualities. As mentioned previously, I often distribute recordings with comments, then follow up on those materials with later recordings and direct feedback regarding progress on the earlier comments. Principal players utilize the same model for full rehearsals and sectionals. Receiving feedback regarding student comprehension directly from the students allows me to adjust rehearsal plans accordingly. For younger students and ensemble, it may be necessary to evaluate other elements of individual and ensemble playing. For example, I have distributed worksheets early in the semester where students are asked to complete a listing of the tuning adjustments for chords of just intonation. These adjustments are not always readily known. But, throughout the course of the ensemble semester, repertoire will be chosen where this information can be taught regularly. Then later in the semester, the same worksheet is distributed again. Based on the responses, I can evaluate student comprehension and retention of those topics.

Conducting coursework provides additional opportunities for assessment of student learning. Both in classroom settings and in private independent studies, I have provided students with the opportunity to reflect on their experience, growth, and frustrations in conducting class with weekly journal entries. I have encouraged students to include "transfers." This is a transfer, or perhaps a synthesis, of understanding between something they have learned in class and something they have experienced for themselves. For example, this could be a student who understands the value of developing their facial expressions while on the podium because their own ensemble playing has been inspired by their conductor's use of facial expressions. Reading these journal entries provides me with considerable insight into the trajectory of conducting students. By learning what frustrations students have either with themselves or with the class, I can modify lesson plans to allow them to be more

successful in other areas or to empower them to work through their frustrations. By learning what challenges the students have personally overcome, I can celebrate those successes with them and with the rest of the class.

Perhaps even above the pedagogical importance of an excellent curriculum or lesson plan, I believe instructor modeling of those values from the beginning of this statement to be principally important in achieving these goals. Demonstrating personal integrity and rigor in these regards is, in my opinion, the most powerful tool to inspire students to exemplify these qualities for themselves. I have worked to embody each of these facets in my own musical journey. So, I continue to seek out performance opportunities to better inform my understanding of student and ensemble collaboration from the performer's perspective. I have continued to study my instrument privately to demand the most from my own musicianship as a performer. I am committed to the inclusion of new works by under-represented composers alongside traditional repertoire in concert programming. And, I am committed to demanding the most from myself gesturally in order to personify the fullest emotional landscape of music-making.