

OHIO MUSIC EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CONFERENCE

THURSDAY 3:30 P.M.

Brian Stevens
AE,BD

Brass Adjudicator's Session

This session is open to anyone and also counts as a required in-service for OMEA Adjudicators.

Presider: AE Committee

Content Standards: CE,RE,PR

Sponsor: AE Committee

HY Taft C

Shelley Jagow
BD,CM

CSI Music: Crime Scene Investigation for Band Directors

What happened? Who did it? How to fix it. Identify music "crime scenes" and learn several rehearsal tips for forensic cleaning.

Presider: Heather Marsh

Content Standards: CE,RE

HY Union DE

Mario Marini
BD,BR,OR

Percussion Accessories: Tips and Techniques for Educators

Percussion accessories can make or break the sound of an ensemble. In this session, the oft-neglected instruments will be discussed with a focus on tips and techniques for getting the best sounds.

Presider: Shawn Reynolds

Content Standards: PR

HY Knox

**Roy Young,
Adam Ladd**
BD

Anthony Wayne Symphonic Winds

Roy Young, Adam Ladd - Conductors

Tower Brass Quintet - Guest Ensemble

Presider: Daniel Ruckman

CC A111-115



**Aaron Given,
Michael Torres**
CA,BD,OR

We Just Made This Up: Strategies for Teaching Improvisation in the Large Performing Ensemble

Composer Michael Torres and band director Aaron Given will share their model for facilitating student improvisation and composition, from first experience to final performance.

Presider: John Blasko

Content Standards: CE,RE,PR

HY Fayette

**David Rayl,
Zebulon Highben**
CH

Romantic Works at a Reasonable Price

An introduction to nineteenth-century works with reduced instrumentation that are nevertheless artful and engaging. Lesser known pieces by master composers of the era (Schubert, Mendelssohn, Schumann, Brahms, Reger, Puccini, Ives) will be included.

Presider: Lisa Richards

HY Fairfield

Strategies for Teaching Improvisation in the Large Performing Ensemble

Ohio Music Education Association
2018 Professional Development Conference

Aaron Given
The Olentangy Local Schools
www.aaronjgiven.com

Michael Rene Torres
The Ohio State University
www.michaelreнетorres.weebly.com

Benefits of incorporating improvisation into the large performing ensemble:

- 1) Generates an environment for students to make music while relying on critical thinking skills.
- 2) Enables students to improve their listening/watching skills.
- 3) Creates an understanding of compositional tools like form, phrasing, contrast, timbre, etc.
- 4) Creates awareness of ensemble fundamentals like intonation, balance, blend, etc.
- 5) Produces musicians with a sense of open-mindedness to new musical experiences.
- 6) Produces musicians that can approach musical challenges with flexibility and creativity.
- 7) Prepares students with skills needed for the post-education music industry.

Elements that make a successful improvisation:

- 1) Students are producing characteristic sound qualities and are correctly executing fundamental skills on their instruments.
- 2) Students are watching, listening, and reacting throughout the process.
- 3) Contains complete and coherent musical ideas as well as musical contrast and creativity.
- 4) Contains practical technical challenges not impossible for the musicians to accomplish.
- 5) Successfully uses any requirements assigned by the teacher (specific fundamentals, articulations, range, form, pitch, etc.).

Tips for implementing improvisation in the large performing ensemble:

- 1) Some students excel when given freedom, inexperienced students can often benefit from structure. Provide clear and reasonable expectations for students including specific techniques/fundamentals to use such as range, length, scales, articulations, dynamics, form, etc.
- 2) To develop contrast, introduce basic forms such as ABA and ABAB, using examples when possible from within the existing ensemble repertoire. Make sure the improvisation for the B section is different from the A section.
- 3) Try to use specific fundamentals and challenges that are present in the ensemble repertoire that the students are working on. This will make the improvisation both relevant and useful.
- 4) Expose students in advance to improvisation, soundscapes, atonality, and any relevant recorded content before the project begins to give them context for the sounds they will make/hear.
- 5) Be nurturing as the teacher's demeanor can greatly affect the process and product (particularly in a subject that is perhaps unfamiliar and new). Make the project fun.
- 6) Not knowing the answer to a question is okay. Do not be afraid to ask for advice from and collaborate with local professional educators/improvisors.
- 7) Set goals for the students. One week can be used to focus on a specific fundamental within the improvisation, then add new fundamentals cumulatively once per week.
- 8) Do not overdo it. The point of this project is not for your students to become professional improvisers. The point is to create an opportunity for a meaningful and useful musical experience that transfers into and positively affects your students' overall musicianship. 5 to 10 minutes once or twice a week is great.

Simple Improvisation Project:

- 1) Group the musicians into 3-4 sections
 - a. brass/woodwinds/percussion OR
 - b. high-voice/mid-voice/low-voice OR
 - c. left side of room, middle of room, right side of room, etc.
- 2) Start with mid-range longtones at *p-mp*.
 - a. Cue an entrance for everyone but there is no need to conduct rhythm or time.
 - b. Ask students to stagger breath to keep the sound continuous.
 - c. Students can play any note except the note that their neighbors to their left and right are playing.
- 3) Pick one group and use dynamics while the other groups continue playing *p-mp*
 - a. Bring the chosen group in and out of the texture of the ensemble longtones
 - b. Show gradual crescendos and diminuendos with your hands and a few sudden dynamic changes just for fun.
 - c. Bring that group back to *p-mp* and engage the other two groups the same way
- 4) Be creative and have fun
 - a. Use both hands to show two separate groups opposite dynamics
 - b. Subtly shift those dynamics to create fluctuations in the soundscape
 - c. Occasionally have one group fade away to change the texture. When they are brought back in, make them use completely different notes than before.
- 5) Next time...
 - a. Try an ABA form. The B section just needs to be *slightly* different in order to create contrast. Perhaps focus on a different fundamental in the B section.
 - b. Think about how you can conduct these improvisations. How would you normally show a staccato with your baton? How about a tenuto? These don't need to be in a conducted pattern to physically show these articulations.
 - c. What instruments in the ensemble are doubling parts in the orchestration of your ensemble repertoire? Maybe they could be a group in an improvisation to get them to listen to each other more across the ensemble.
 - d. What scale(s) is being used in your repertoire? Maybe students could improvise only using notes from that scale(s).
 - e. Maybe there's a tricky rhythm in the ensemble music you're working on? Have the students take the rhythm out of context played on a single note of their choice (not the same as their neighbors). Use the rhythm in the background against longtones. Make the rhythm move to different groups within the ensemble and use different dynamics. Make it the B section of the improvisation.

Notes
