



TOUCHPOINT

The Division of Education Newsletter

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VOL. 1 • Issue 38 • March 18, 2014

A Note from Dr. Tim

Greetings. In this edition of *Touchpoint*, Peter Warshaw, Fine Arts Director for Leander ISD, shares the second installment in his article series describing a comprehensive process for improving the overall sound of your ensemble.



By Peter Warshaw

Striving for CPR* In the Sound of Your Band *Clarity, Purity and Resonance

TRI-M MUSIC HONOR SOCIETY



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Follow the link below to an absolutely CAPTIVATING article by Pat Barnett, National Chair for the Society of Music Honorary Organizations and Illinois State Tri-M Chair. Pat does an outstanding job of sharing his personal Tri-M journey in a relevant and inspirational way.

[Click here for the full article.](#)

Our Next Issue Featuring:

An article by Bruce Carter, Director of Bands at Jackson Academy, Jackson, Mississippi.

In Our Last Issue:

Improving Music Education by Using the Lean Business Model by David Branson

[Click here for the full article](#)

This is the second in a series of articles designed to provide the reader with some conceptual exercises that can help guide their students toward producing a beautiful ensemble sound. In the first article, I wrote about the importance of every student producing the most clear, pure, and resonant sound possible, beginning with their concert F (remember, horns can be on concert C), then transferring this sound to adjacent pitches.

The next step in this process is to move from note to note, which is a completely different skill and requires different thought processes.

Adding Motion

Once each new note is established at the same tonal and intonation level as concert F, then the students are ready to begin the same careful approach to moving from note to note – either with a rest in between the notes, or connected. The resultant sequence, as more notes are added, would be in the style of one of Remington's standard exercises for trombone:

- F to E to F
- F to Eb to F
- Continue, one note at a time, extending a tritone down to concert B
- F to E to F to Eb to F, and so on, extending a tritone down to concert B

As before, resist the temptation to move on until the tone and intonation quality of each note matches when the note was played by itself. In younger bands, it may be necessary to reach a stopping point in the exercise on a particular note that will take more time to refine, such as concert Db.

Once the downward Remington series is polished, the students can then begin moving upward:

- F to F# to F
- F to G to F
- Continue, one note at a time, extending a tritone up to concert B
- F to F# to F to G to F, and so on, extending a tritone up to concert B

Keep in mind that if your French horns are still on concert C, the band will be moving in parallel fifths. This is actually not a huge issue, in my opinion. Remember my earlier statement about beginning each exercise from a point of comfort for each

player. I would much rather deal with the intonation variances of parallel fifths than the warbling of French horn players who are in an uncomfortable or uncontrolled register.

There are many variations on the above exercises, such as:

- Divide the band into two groups, half moving down from concert F in the Remington sequence and the other half sustaining on concert F as a kind of drone...then have them switch parts and repeat.
- Divide the band into two groups, half moving up from concert F in the Remington sequence and the other half going up from concert F. Have them switch parts and repeat.
- Divide the band into two groups, half moving down from concert F in the Remington sequence and the other half moving up from concert F. Have them switch parts and repeat.
- Repeat the basic exercise, moving from concert C instead of concert F.
- Divide the band into four groups, one moving down from F, one moving up from F, one moving down from C, and one moving up from C (this is very difficult, and I only used it in a few of my more advanced section rehearsals).
- Keep the band in unison/octave, and have them move from concert F to E to F# to F, then from F to Eb to G to F, etc.

Points to Remember

Make sure to relate the skills necessary to perform this exercise to the music being rehearsed that day. This will provide greater acceptance, especially from older students, of the need to spend significant amounts of time in these drills.

In summation, here are the most important points I would like readers to remember from this article:

1. The goal of each exercise is for each student to produce a clear, focused, and resonant sound that is characteristic of the instrument on every note they play.
2. Set the students up for success by providing measurable goals and advancing through every task sequence one item at a time.
3. Once the ensemble reaches a note on which they lose tonal focus, that is as far as they go that day. Continuing the exercise serves only to reinforce improper sounds which can lead to acceptance of lower standards.

I wish you all a great concert season and hope this article has provided you with a few ideas to help your ensemble sound its best!