

Teaching Philosophy

The most fundamental underlying difficulty in teaching students from a young age about the complexities of Music is tied to what makes capable adult musicians and contributing members of society, emotional acuity. My experiences in being educated about music, how to execute its concepts, and create a lasting connection with audience members draws on a comprehensive and intentional examination of self. To encourage free exploration, and consideration of new information, requires a student to be free from the confining nature of fear, both of failure, and operating under a falsehood.

As a teacher, I consider the greatest effect I can make in a student's life to help them find a personal truth about music. Something that is universal but only truly understood by them. To do this, I have to first teach the basic components of how music works, and how to engage with it. Not just as an art form, but as a communicative and social force. As an example, I can facilitate these things by illustrating why choral singing is a common practice, as much as helping students to find value in participating in ensemble musical activities. I further facilitate independent thinking in my students by showing them how I as a performer think and critically analyze work for performance. Leading by example instills in my students a desire and motivation to understand more and seek greater knowledge and ability in the medium of musical expression.

Each overarching goal; self-actualized critical analysis, deeper understanding of musical and communicative functions, social unification toward a common message and goal, and personal courage to question and challenge what is known, requires a curated instructional approach. Demonstrating the network of common themes and elements in a seemingly disparate mass of esoteric information requires a clear understanding of the most basic components of music, why they exist and how they developed. Through a comprehensive understanding of this, I can create an individualized plan for each student under my tutelage, introducing common simple themes through different modes that reach every student in a way that allows them to respond from a position of intellectual strength.

Creating music is intensely personal, how a student comes to an understanding of it is intertwined with a personal perception of their ability to perform music. I will make every effort to instill in my students an understanding that placing themselves on the binary continuum of qualifiable statements is counter-productive to developing as a musician. Statements that include "good" or "bad" will be discarded in favor of "communicative" or "distracting". By removing the opportunity for self-attribution of worth that is so harmful to musical growth, my students gain a crucial tool to developing life-long learning practices, and the continual use of music as a medium for self-expression, exploration, and practical communication far beyond the classroom.

Finally, as with any communicative medium, its links to every other form of knowledge and discipline are apparent in everyday life. Physics, math, sports, language arts, engineering, biology, chemistry, world history, among a pantheon of others. All these disciplines and more can be taught effectively using examples found in the everyday practice of musical performance and study. My experiences and adventures as an adult and matured professional performer of music has called me to draw on many of these similarities and to expand my interests to help me further understand concepts in music and in the world. Demonstrating these every day links to students through interaction with colleagues in separate fields is an important component in promoting music in a person's everyday life.