

Rehearsals

Tips for the Instrumental Conductor
(Feldman, chapter 12)

Practice or Rehearse

- What is the difference?
 - Skill acquisition?
 - Understanding the music?
 - Enjoying the music?
- Individual versus corporate
- Amount of practice with repetition can vary by experience level of the ensemble as well as difficulty of the piece, and amount of rehearsal

Macro-Micro-Macro

- Play a section-Fix the problems-Play it again
- Diagnosis-Prescription-Checkup
- Planning and conducting a rehearsal is essentially *problem-solving*

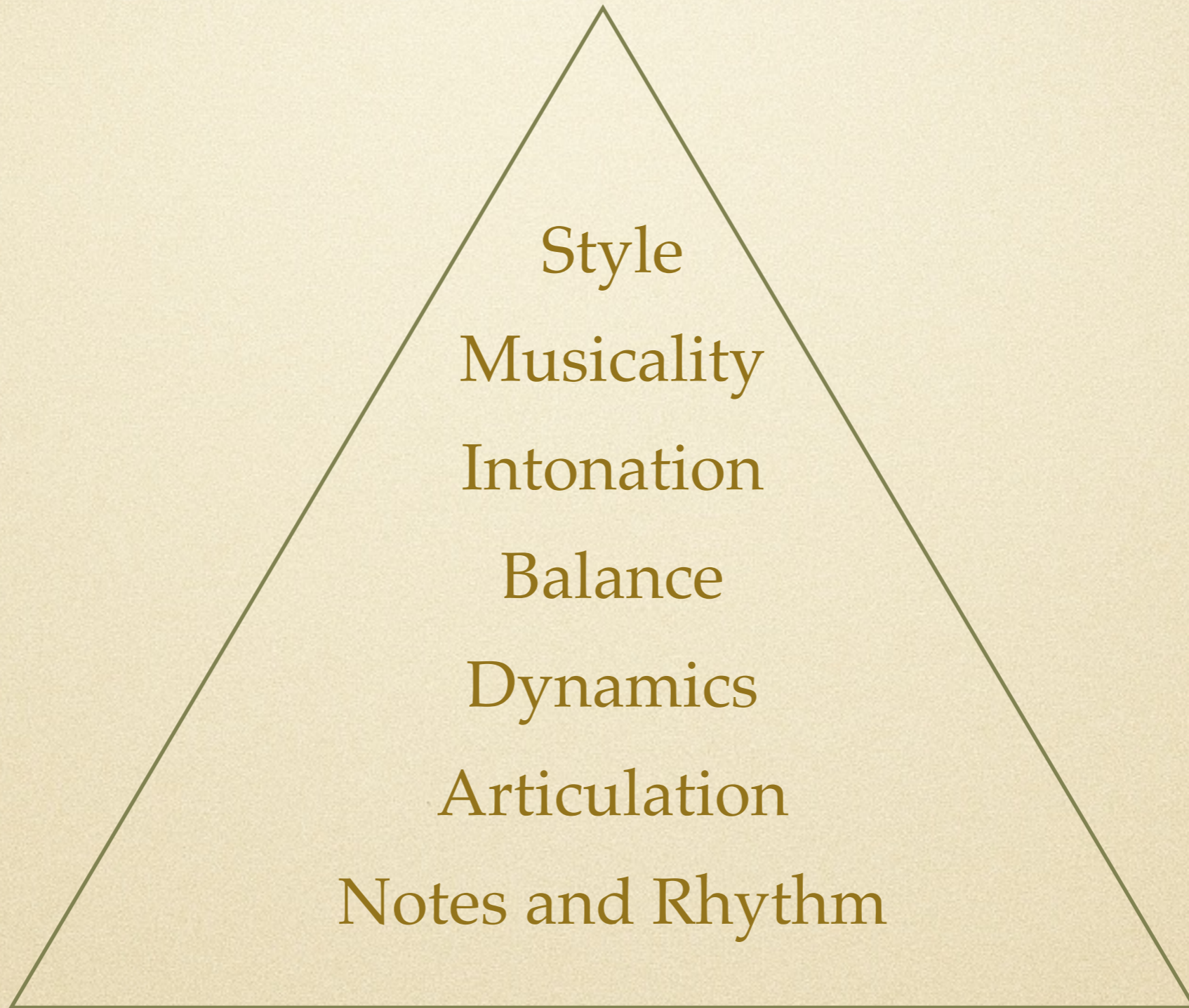
Diagnosis

- Most important is to know what you want to hear (score study)
- Anticipate common problems and, before the rehearsal, plan your way of fixing them
- HEAR when you conduct...if you can't, stop conducting--it is probably less important than really hearing
- RECORD rehearsals to allow you to listen for problems without worrying about conducting

Divide and Conquer

- When you hear a problem, ask a small section or even individual to play it
- Spend as little time as needed to fix this one problem, then, have everyone play that section again
- If problem not fixed, try different prescription
- Modeling (singing, playing, gestures) and analogies often work best

Pyramid of Priorities



Problem/Solution: Fast technical passages not together

- slow the tempo
- play with snare drum clicks on the subdivision
- play every other beat of 16ths
- note by note
- chunking, 5 notes, then 9 etc
- use different rhythms
- start at end and work backwards
- schedule a playing test
- redo with opposite articulation

Problem/Solution: Rhythm not played correctly

- subdivide
- rote teaching
- remove ties
- work dotted rhythms with all 16ths
- mark beats in music
- loop rhythms
- divide rhythm and pitch
- sing it or pat/clap it

Problem/Solution: Intonation

- play *in tone* first, then *intune*
- one person with tuner, rest by ear
- match against drone note
- use piano for basic intonation with less advanced students
- have ensemble sing correct pitch
- check instrument slides and strings
- tendency of instrument, partials
- alternate fingerings and add keys in woodwinds
- check against open strings

Problem/Solution: Ensemble not playing together

- silent rehearsal-conductor doesn't talk
- close eyes and LISTEN
- new seating arrangements
- single out sections and listen
- use metronome
- outside of class experience with chamber music
- clear conducting for entrances
- group moving to the music

Problem/Solution: Balance problems

- pyramid-bottom up
- seating in ways to help
- adjust dynamics in parts ahead of time
- singing
- play rehearsal recordings back
- highlight melody
- choosing proper repertoire

Problem/Solution: Not following conductor

- play sans conductor
- memorize and look at conductor
- look up
- show gestures and be consistent
- vary warmup with conducting
- don't conduct when you don't have to
- teach students how to conduct

Problem/Solution: Phrasing incorrectly

- modeling
- mark high point of phrase
- change bowing to be musical
- add words to phrase
- put breath marks in
- teach bow distribution

Problem/Solution: Playing stylistically (musically) wrong

- analogies
- listening to other pieces in same style
- do opposite for contrast
- conducting style
- incorporate style in warmup
- principal player model
- sing style
- defining the term - *staccato, etc.*
- teach style before needed in music