

# Singing Through Your Instrument: Incorporating Operatic Techniques into Your Instrumental Rehearsals

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with  
The Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band

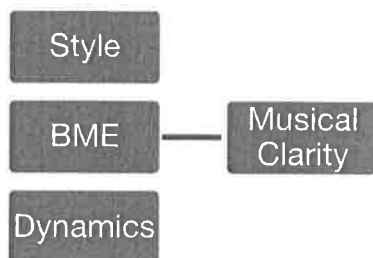
## Abstract:

This demonstration clinic will aim to provide practical strategies for the instrumental conductor to apply concepts from solo and operatic singing. Moving beyond musicians singing and matching pitch, this clinic will serve to bridge vocal and instrumental worlds by incorporating techniques and concepts from operatic singing into the instrumental rehearsal. Such concepts will include Rootedness in Playing, Spinning Notes Forward, and Operatic-style Phrasing.

*"You are the instrument! Your body makes the instrument sound."*

-Sherah Moore-Burdick

## Introduction: Achieving Musical Clarity



## Two Fundamental Concepts in Operatic Singing

1. *Rootedness: The Core*
  - a. Grounded playing begins with posture
  - b. Connection to the earth itself
2. *Intentional Look at the Music/ Text*
  - a. What has the composer written? What is *your* (each instrumentalist's) story? What is the director's story? How can your interpretations complement each other?
  - b. Find the SCOPE of the story, then break it into smaller subtexts. Subtexts are different for each performer but as an ensemble, in conjunction with director, decide what is put forward as *your* interpretation.

Fig. 1: Primary theme, mvmt 1: mm. 24 — 30

Piccolo  
Flute  
Oboe

Walter Saul, *Concerto for Flute and Wind Ensemble*, 2018. Used with Permission.

*"I have an opinion of the music, but I want to know what you think of the music!"*

- Dr. Mallory Thompson, Northwestern University

*"Find ways to complement each other with your own playing. That is what each singer does in an opera, instrumentalists need to do the same."*

- Sherah Moore-Burdick

## Looking at Instrumental Music from the Singers Perspective

1. Setting the "scene"
  - a. Foreground/ Middleground/ Background
  - b. Selling the "story" of the music

Fig. 2: Fugue statement of primary theme, mvmt. 1: mm. 90 — 107

Solo Fl.  
Ob.  
Bsn.  
Cl. 1  
Cl. 2  
Cl. 3  
B. Cl.  
A. Sax. 2  
Trpt. 1  
Trpt. 2/3  
Hrn. 1/2  
Hrn. 3/4  
Tbn. 1/2  
B. Tbn.  
Euph.  
Tuba  
Xyl.  
Mrb. 1  
Mrb. 2

Walter Saul, *Concerto for Flute and Wind Ensemble*, 2018. Used with Permission.



3. Spinning notes forward
  - a. Finding the motion of the music

Fig. 4: Secondary theme, single reed choir, mvmt 1: mm.60 — 66

The musical score for the secondary theme in measures 60-66 of the first movement of the Concerto for Flute and Wind Ensemble. The score is for a single reed choir and includes parts for Bassoon, Clarinet in Bb 1, Clarinet in Bb 2, Clarinet in Bb 3, Bass Clarinet, Alto Sax 1, Alto Sax 2, Tenor Sax, and Baritone Sax. The music is written in a key with one flat and a 4/4 time signature. The dynamics range from piano (p) to pianissimo (pp). The bassoon part starts with a piano (p) dynamic and features a melodic line with a fermata. The clarinets and saxophones provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns and dynamics.

Walter Saul, *Concerto for Flute and Wind Ensemble*, 2018. Used with Permission.

### Closing Thoughts: Where do we go from here?

#### Recommended Reading

Levitin, Daniel J. *This Is Your Brain on Music: The Science of a Human Obsession*. New York: Plume (Penguin), 2007.

Sacks, Oliver. *Musicophilia: Tales of Music and the Brain*. New York: Knopf, 2007.

Volpe, Joseph. *The Toughest Show on Earth: My rise and reign at the Metropolitan Opera*. New York: Knopf, 2006.

## Biographies

**Erik Leung**, a native of Calgary (AB, Canada), is an Assistant Professor of Music at Fresno Pacific University, where he serves as the Director of Bands and Chair of the Music Department. In addition to teaching conducting and music education, he directs the Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, the Chamber Wind Ensemble, and the Pacific Brass Ensemble. Since founding the band program at Fresno Pacific University in 2014, the Symphonic Band has been featured at the Percy Grainger Wind Festival, the College Band Directors National Association, and the Western International Band Clinic. Leung also directs the Fresno Pacific University Community Music School (CMS), an after-school program that provides free private lessons for children from underprivileged homes.

Leung earned a D.M.A. in Wind Conducting at Northwestern University (IL), a M. Mus. at the University of Toronto, and B. Mus. (with distinction) and B. Ed. degrees at the University of Calgary. His principal teachers include Mallory Thompson, Gillian Mackay, Glenn Price, Mark Hopkins, and Jeremy Brown. He has also studied conducting with Mark Scatterday, Allan McMurray, H. Robert Reynolds, Craig Kirchhoff, and Michael Haithcock. He has presented at a variety of conferences including the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, the World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles in Utrecht, Netherlands, and the national College Band Directors National Association National Conferences.

**Sherah Moore-Burdick**, a native of Fresno, CA, attended California State University Fresno and graduated in 2006 with a Bachelor's of Arts degree in voice, having studied with Helene Joseph Weil. She entered and won several competitions including the Zalud Music Scholarship, the Young Vocalist of Fresno County Award and the Bell T. Richie Award. Burdick finished her Masters in Music degree in voice at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music under Jane Randolph. During her time at SFCM, Burdick has had the pleasure of studying with Mai-Linh Pham, Richard Harrell, Kathryn Cathcart, Darryl Cooper and many other fine instructors. Mrs. Burdick has extensive experience in opera and has had the opportunities to perform the roles of Fedra in Cavalli's *L'Egisto*, Laetitia in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, Eve in *Il Primo Omicidio* by Alessandro Scarlatti, Dido from Purcell's *Dido and Aeneas*, and the soprano solo role in Poulenc's *Gloria* with full orchestra and chorus, just to name a few.

Mrs. Burdick is currently an adjunct professor of voice in the Music Department at Fresno Pacific University where she teaches voice, Master Classes, Lyric Diction and Opera Scenes. She also keeps a full private home studio of voice and piano students and is thrilled to share her home studio with her husband, Aaron Burdick, who also teaches classical voice study.