

**Sam Houston State University - School of Music**  
**Symphony Orchestra Course Syllabus**

**Course:**           **ENS 117.01: Symphony Orchestra** (1 credit hour)  
                  **ENS 317.01: Symphony Orchestra** (1 credit hour)  
                  **ENS 512.01: Graduate Ensemble** (1 credit hour)

**Semester:**       Fall Semester, 2007

**Classroom:**     Fine Arts Building, Room 202 & 201

**Meeting Times:** Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 12:00 noon. - 12:50 p.m.  
                          Tuesday, Thursday: 12:30 – 1:50 p.m. [Full]  
                          Wednesday: 4:30 – 5:30 p.m. [Sectionals-Strings]  
                          Additional rehearsals as assigned by the instructor

<b>Instructor:</b> Professor Carol Smith	<b>Phone:</b> (936) 294-1358
<b>Office:</b> Room 325, Fine Arts Building	<b>Email:</b> csmith@shsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b> MW 9-10/Tu 2-3, other times by appointment//anytime via email	

**Symphony Performance Dates:**

- **October 5 [Fri] SHSU Symphony; UHBC; 7:30 p.m.**
- **November 10 [Sat] SHSU Symphony; UHBC; 7:30 p.m.**
- **China Tour: November 15 - 26**

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

...the study and performance of a wide variety of repertoire for Symphony Orchestra. There will be a particular emphasis on the standard literature for the full orchestral complement of instruments. This ensemble is a laboratory course, used to apply the musical skills being developed in the class, applied studios and academic music classes.

**Philosophical Base of the Ensemble:**

It is the desire of the conductor and faculty of this university orchestra to strive to enhance and expand pre-existing knowledge and information of its members about music and the performance of music through exposure to the major orchestral literature, as appropriate. It is imperative to seek this information and the attendant understandings through prepared rehearsal and sight-reading experiences and the highest-level performance experiences possible. It is always and only through the thoughtful, thorough, long-term preparation of each and all participants that the highest level of development of the performance group (and the individual musicians therein) is achieved. REMINDER: “Quality has no limits.” [Eschenbach].

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### Orchestra Student Assistants:

- Orchestra Library located in the School of Music Building, Room 204; 295-359
- Ryan Gilchrist, China Trip Manager
- Jenny Gann, SHSU Symphony President
- Lynda Ford, Student Assistant to Dr. Smith
- Letty Fuentes, Student Assistant to Dr. Smith
- Rachel Namkin, Senior Student Attendance Manager
- Kathryn Estes, Senior Orchestra Librarian (Strings)
- Lynda Ford, Senior Orchestra Librarian (Winds)
- Lee Rivera, Orchestra Librarian
- Katie Reeves, Orchestra Librarian
- Scott Patrick, Orchestra Librarian
- Steve Martin, Senior Student Assistant/ Orch. Mgr.
- Scott Patrick, Student Assistant/Asst. Orch. Mgr.
- Bradley Jacobs, Student Assistant/Asst. Orch. Mgr.

### Our collective job description is as follows:

- Take responsibility for preparation.
- Always define rehearsal as a work place.
- Continue to express leadership skills through individual expressions of character and integrity.
- Accept the level of discipline that is necessary for the performance of music.
- Remember that excellence is often inconvenient.
- The only agent of change leading to tremendous personal growth on which one can depend is one's untiring personal commitment to daily, ongoing practice.

Two great teachers, conductors and musicians express their philosophies:

- **Leonard Bernstein** said often, "You cannot ever have too much passion in your life or in your music making. Being cynical enough to deny that passion is the 'booby' prize in life."
- And, you have heard me quote **Christoph Eschenbach** speaking in his early years in Houston when he said, "We will continue to build upon what has been achieved. Quality knows no limits."

### COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To gain wider access to technically challenging music.
2. To successfully pursue a wider variety of music such as orchestral overtures, tone poems, full symphonic works, concertos, operas, and musical theatre repertoire.
3. To develop more in-depth knowledge of musical styles and compositional techniques associated with major composers of each style period.
4. To develop more comprehensive ear training and sight-reading skills through prepared "reading" experiences using the major orchestral literature.

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5. To develop skills which lead to more advanced ensemble routines which will assist in the development of more musical independence and sensitivity in each performer.
6. To contribute to the development of skills in each student which helps guide the student into being a more active participant in more musically-literate performances.
7. To refine skills from previously-learned musical and technical concepts which greatly enhance the students' abilities to generalize those concepts and skills and synthesize many or all of these concepts into musically-proficient and artistically-conceived performances.
8. To continue to develop and refine aural skills with, at least, regularly assigned listening to professional orchestral recordings of works assigned to prepare for each concert.
9. To help students develop an overall awareness of the larger purposes--musically, historically, and personally--to which they belong when becoming a part of a performing group at the university level.
10. To continue to develop an understanding and appreciation for the performance of music from within a performing organization which will stir the desire for continuing participation in such an organization after undergraduate (and graduate) degrees have been completed.

### **Additionally, the following objectives will be the focus of the work in this course:**

1. Consistent and punctual attendance in the class includes being prepared to start class on-time; full participation by the student in all class endeavors, warm-ups, and rehearsals. Students should have all equipment needed in all rehearsals/performances.
2. Development of ensemble skills includes the expectation that each student will be involved in centering and matching intonation, balance, blending of sound, matched articulation, appropriate phrasing, on-going development of tone and proper support for the sound.
3. Full and active participation in class activities includes having all musical assignments prepared prior to rehearsal time (including, but not limited to, preparation with a tuner, a metronome, accurate counting of rhythms, setting bowings and determining appropriate and accurate fingering patterns for notes and scales, and accurate production of pitches and quality tone in order to insure a secure approach to quality intonation).
4. Full and active participation in all concerts and performances includes all aforementioned objectives in conjunction with a public performance, including all dress rehearsals. Proper attire is also required (see Course Materials).

### **COURSE MATERIALS:**

1. All music is the property of the University. Students may be assessed a fee for lost, damaged, or abused original parts. **Students are expected to bring assigned parts to ALL class meetings. Students are expected to make appropriate marks on the parts in pencil. Further, students are expected to number all measures of each page of music.** An overview of measure numbers will be posted to assist in this process. Students will supply their own black three ring binder. **All music is expected to be placed in the binder by each student for use in rehearsals and performances.** Other folders for special occasions will be supplied by the Orchestral Division of the School of Music.

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2. Students are expected to provide the necessary accessories and equipment such as strings, fine tuners, mutes, reeds, valve oil, metronomes, etc. as required to properly and appropriately perform the music that has been assigned for the class/ensemble.
3. Students will also be responsible for acquiring their own concert attire as follows:

**Gentlemen:** Black tuxedo

- coat (no tails)
- trousers (black)
- white formal bow tie
- white formal vest
- white tuxedo shirt
- black socks
- black dress shoes

**Ladies:** Black dress/dress slacks & blouse

- dress length should be to the floor
- sleeves should be long to the wrist or formal coat/long-sleeved
- dress or other clothing should be black in color
- black hose
- black shoes

### COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- **EXAMINATIONS:**

The SHSU Symphony will perform three-five concerts during the course of each semester. Each of these concerts is a **major (and public) examination**. Due to the nature of the class in which all students enrolled are performers in a performance ensemble, it is not possible to hold a "make-up" dress rehearsal or performance for a student who, hypothetically, might miss a dress rehearsal or performance. **Therefore, no type of make-up exam will be given and a grade of "F" will have to be recorded for missing any dress rehearsal or performance.**

**Performances:**

A major goal of ensemble membership and rehearsal is to have musically successful performances. No successful or unsuccessful ensemble is so due to the efforts of only a few of its members. It is, of course, the result of the work of all of its members in collaboration with all others.

Performing is a skill that can only be acquired by performing. Performances reflect on the ensemble, the individual members, the School of Music and the University. Please note the attendance policy concerning performing [See above].

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

**General Information on Assignments:**

Students will be assigned parts for music that will be rehearsed and prepared during class time for performances. Assignments may be informal (assigned during class as music is being distributed) or formal assignments (assigned by the conductor, the appropriate applied faculty in consultation with the conductor) or listed on part assignment sheets on the bulletin

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board located outside Room 201. Each student is expected to master assigned parts in the areas of:

- developing a quality characteristic tone quality
- developing the smaller motives and ideas as well as large, overarching phrase shapes
- correct rhythmic figures
- accurate pitches
- matching intonation
- matching articulation
- matching musical styles
- matching and proper dynamics and balance

An accounting of each student's work in each rehearsal will be recorded based on their demonstration of mastery over the assigned parts (and criteria listed above)

### Specific Information on Assignments for the Symphony

Each week (Thursday or Friday) assignments for the following week will be posted on the Symphony board (on the assignment board outside Room 201). Preparation of these assignments will be expected and allows for the regular coordination of parts and a well-paced rehearsal.

Music will be distributed and checked-out to each player immediately before and at assigned times during specific rehearsals. **Additional parts will not be distributed without the public consent of the conductor. Please note this rule. The librarians do not have permission to copy additional parts for anyone without the consent of the conductor.** Should additional music be needed, each individual player must arrange, in advance (prior to the day of the rehearsal) of rehearsals, with the librarians to secure those parts.

### Section Rehearsals:

Sectionals for strings are scheduled for each Wednesday afternoon from 4:30 - 5:30 p.m. (Music Building, Room 202). Each section of Symphony winds and percussion will be scheduled by the principal player (in collaboration with all other players in the section and faculty members who may be involved) in each section to work each week. "Emergency" rehearsals will be scheduled only in extreme cases and should never occur more than once or twice in any one semester, if ever. Announcement of such a rehearsal would occur at least one week prior to that rehearsal.

### Dress Rehearsals:

Dress rehearsals are most often scheduled one day before each performance. Typically, the rehearsals are scheduled for a three-hour time period (usually 7:00 - 10:00 p.m. or 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.) in the hall in which the performance is scheduled for the following evening. On performance days, each string section and each wind and percussion section will meet with their individual sections to warm-up and musically and mentally prepare as a section [for at

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least one hour during that day at a time to be determined by the section leader in collaboration with the section members]. Each member will be in attendance for each of these pre-concert sessions, always scheduled before 4:00 p.m. on the concert days.

There may be other occasions in which this pattern will vary somewhat, necessitating other rehearsals or section rehearsals which are associated with a particular event or performance. Discussions and announcements regarding such plans will be distributed as soon as they are confirmed with the proper authority. Many such rehearsals are pre-planned into the rehearsal and concert performance schedule. Consult the attached calendars and mark personal calendars so as to avoid any conflicts with the printed schedules. **Most often, certainly when possible, “extra” rehearsal time is returned to the students in the form of “compensatory” time at a later time in the semester. Compensatory time will also be given for “first dress rehearsals” scheduled for each semester [as found in the list in this syllabus].**

Rehearsals are to be used for the **coordination of prepared parts**. The members of the ensemble are expected to prepare prior to each rehearsal to the best of their ability and rehearse in an efficient and professional manner. A professional commitment to these standards, to the ensemble and to its members is essential for successful rehearsals and performances.

- **GRADING PLAN: The common ground for final grading procedures will be, generally, as follows:**  
Assignments: 40%  
Exams: 60%
  1. no extra credit is available
  2. a student who is unable to complete daily assignments should drop the class
  3. grades will not be curved
  4. See information related to grading listed under “Attendance.”
  5. **Any student who fails to attend a dress rehearsal or performance will, quite naturally, have to receive an F for the performance examination.**
- **ATTENDANCE:**  
**General Information on Attendance/ University Policy:**
  1. students will not be penalized for three or fewer absences
  2. a student's final grade will be lowered 8 points for each absence past the 3rd absence
  3. a student's final grade will be lowered 4 points for each tardy
  4. a student is counted as being in attendance when all of the following take effect:
    - a. the student is physically sitting in his/her assigned seat
    - b. the student has all materials necessary to perform the music as required
    - c. the student and the instrument are properly warmed-up
    - d. the student is attentive and ready to participate in class

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### **Specific Information on Attendance & Grading Policies for the Symphony:**

Attendance and punctuality are **required**. Please note and respect this point.

When problems arise, the first level of response expected must always be **direct communication** (use of the phone). **Document by e-mail** each/every discussion, major question or any other form of communication that is needed related to the student's participation in class.

The following policy is standard for all major ensembles at Sam Houston and was developed by the conductors of those ensembles to insure uniformity and fairness of student policies.

\*\*\*An ensemble is dependent upon the successful participation of all of its members. Consequently, all rehearsals and performances -- whether during the regularly-scheduled class time or not -- **are required**. Unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty and may affect ensemble membership or financial assistance.\*\*\*

\*\*\*Any member of an ensemble who misses a dress rehearsal or a performance will receive a failing grade and be removed from the ensemble. \*\*\*

**Eight points will be deducted from the student's numerical grade for each unexcused absence. Four points will be deducted from the student's numerical grade for each tardy. (Rev. 9.2.99) Two tardies will equal one absence for grading purposes.**

Recognizing that there are legitimate reasons to miss a rehearsal, an absence may be excused for grading purposes by permission of the conductor. All requests for an excused absence will be made **in writing** at the earliest possible moment and, most advantageously, at least two (2) weeks prior to the absence. Emergencies will be considered on a case by case basis. **NO work related absences will be excused.**

Since the purpose of rehearsal is to coordinate parts, rehearsal time cannot actually be made up. However, it is the plan that should any rehearsal time that is missed, excused or unexcused, will be made up with the conductor of the group at an arranged time, when possible.

Failing to notify the conductor about any of the issues discussed regarding absences or tardies or following procedure could result in the **immediate dismissal from the ensemble**. **NOTE: Notifying the office, a student in the ensemble or a faculty member of an absence does not constitute an excused absence. Direct communication by telephone AND e-mail is expected.**

See **Ensemble Attendance Form** in envelope attached to the Symphony board. Documentation of illness is mandatory.

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- **GENERAL COURSE INFORMATION:**

**Policy Statements:**

Please sign and return the attached Syllabus Acceptance Form which is a part of a contract stating that you have read and understand the requirements, grading policies, and goals of this course.

Your grade for this course will be determined by the fulfillment of these minimum requirements and expectations, your attitude and work ethic, and, quite naturally, by the discretion of the professor.

**Performance Schedule:**

- Please see attached. **Note:** Attached you will find the dress rehearsal and performance schedule for the Fall 2006 season. Any concerns about scheduling conflicts must be discussed with the conductor on or before Friday, September 1, 2006.
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- **ACADEMIC HONESTY:**

The Faculty Handbook states that “the University expects all students to engage in all academic pursuits in a manner that is, simply, above reproach. Students are expected to maintain complete honesty and integrity in the academic experiences both in and out of the classroom. **Any student found guilty of dishonesty in any phase of academic work will be subject to disciplinary action.** Furthermore, it is expected that the University and its official representatives may initiate disciplinary proceedings against a student accused of any form of academic dishonesty including, but not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work which is to be submitted, plagiarism, collusion and the abuse of resource materials.”

Should such a situation be found to exist in the work in the SHSU Symphony, students would immediately be reported and disciplinary proceedings would be initiated.

- **PROPER CLASSROOM DEMEANOR/RULES OF CONDUCT:**

" Students will refrain from behavior in the classroom that intentionally or unintentionally disrupts the learning process and, thus, impedes the mission of the university. Please turn off or mute all cellular phones and/or pagers before class begins. **Students are prohibited from eating in class (except on specified occasions), using tobacco products, making offensive remarks, reading newspapers, sleeping, talking among each other at inappropriate times, wearing inappropriate clothing, or engaging in any other form of distraction.** Inappropriate behavior in the classroom shall result in, minimally, a directive to leave class or being reported to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action in accordance with university policy."



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- **OTHER COURSEWORK ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS:**

**Americans with Disabilities Act:** According to University policy, requests for accommodations **must be initiated by the student**. A student seeking accommodations should go to the Counseling Center and Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) in a timely manner. Every semester that the student desires accommodations, it is the student's responsibility to complete a Classroom Accommodation Request Form at the SSD office and follow the stated procedure in notifying faculty. Accommodations for disabled students are decided based upon documentation and need on a case-by-case basis by the Counseling Center

**Religious Holidays:** University policy states that a student who is absent from class for the observance of a religious holy day to take an examination or complete an assignment scheduled for that day within a reasonable time after the absence. The student, not later than the 15th calendar day after the first day of the semester, or the 7th calendar day after the first day of a summer session, must notify the instructor of each scheduled class that he/she would be absent for a religious holy day (Faculty Handbook, §§1.02-2.01).

### **Visitors In The Classroom**

The class will be host to visitors at numerous times during the semester. These visitors may include faculty, parents, potential students, other classes, etc. **All courtesies should be extended to visitors at all times.** When visitors are present, the class will proceed as usual. We will work to avoid being distracted by visitors or any such change in the normal routine of the class. **Any class member who would like to bring a visitor to class should obtain permission from the instructor prior to that time.**

"Unannounced visitors to class must present a current, official SHSU identification card to be permitted in the classroom. They must not present a disruption to the class by their attendance. If the visitor is not a registered student, it is at the instructor's discretion whether or not the visitor will be allowed to remain in the classroom." (from University Policy)

### **Course/Instructor Evaluations**

Students will be asked to complete one or two course/instructor evaluation forms toward the end of the semester [one official and one unofficial].

### **Points of Emphasis:**

An attitude and work ethic of the highest quality are expected...really.

No...really!...no talking in rehearsal.

Use of binders/pencils/bars numbers/equipment is mandatory.

Put away chairs and stands following each class. Each person is responsible for his/her chair/stand each day.

Additional music **will not** be distributed without the consent of the conductor...no exceptions.

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- **Symphony Student Leadership Council**
  - Jenny Gann, SHSU Symphony President
  - Mario Aguillar
  - Tarvia Bell
  - Annie Bellamy
  - Kathryn Estes
  - Lynda Ford
  - Letty Fuentes
  - Nigel Hosein
  - Thomas Murphy
  - Rachel Namkin
  - Katie Reeves
  - Lee Rivera
  - Marilyn Tovy
  - Chrisy Warren

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**SHSU Symphony and Chamber Orchestras**  
**Performance Dates for 2007-2008\* [Tentative]**  
SEE ALL ATTACHED CALENDARS

## **Musical Guidelines for Practice and Performance**

Steve Gullledge

### **Rules of Musicianship**

A musical phrase is best described as a complete musical thought; or sentence. A phrase can either independently stand on its own or it can create sustained interest over time. A performer's job is to acquire the technical skills on the instrument to effectively communicate the musical idea while not allowing the technique to overshadow the musical result (the music should always sound easily performed).

### **Follow the meter**

Identify strong/weak beats within the meter:

- 4/4 = strong beats 1&3, weak beats 2&4
- 3/4 = strong beats 1, weak beats 2&3
- 3/8 = strong beats 1, weak beats 2&3
- 6/8 = strong beats 1&4 (In 6), 1&2 (In 2)

*Multi-Meter: Organization of the rhythmic pulse will determine strength relationships. Reminder: The movement of music through sound and silence is always organized time, even when it is "not organized." The patterns of music are many. When the music is organized with multi-meter movements, know that one can always depend on the music patterns being reduced to groupings of 2 and 3. Even groups of asymmetrical rhythms will be organized into groups of 2s and 3s within each bar. Always strive to find the lowest common denominator of consideration when analyzing the different elements of music one finds when preparing, whether it be etude, excerpt, concert piece or solo work.*

### **Follow the shape of the line**

General architecture of phrase construction is ascending or descending lines:

- Ascending lines: Is the line leading to a particular note within the phrase?  
Is the line relaxing away from previous point of tension?
- Descending lines: Is the line leading to a particular note within the phrase?  
Is the line relaxing away from previous point of tension?
- Breath: The shape and length of the line can determine the number of your breaths. Breathe where the MUSIC needs to breathe and develop the skill to maintain your sound from breath mark to breath mark.
- Vibrato: Vibrato can create intensity through the line or relax tension away

*Use this architecture to guide you through the notes and points of emphasis, either moving forward or away from each other.*

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### Rhythmic Direction

Functions of consecutive notes:

- 2 note patterns: 1<sup>st</sup> note strong, 2<sup>nd</sup> note weak (unless otherwise noted).
- 3 note patterns: 1<sup>st</sup> note strong, 2<sup>nd</sup> note weak, 3<sup>rd</sup> note moves to 1<sup>st</sup> of next group.
- 4 note patterns: 1<sup>st</sup> note strong, 2<sup>nd</sup> note weak, 3<sup>rd</sup> note strong, 4<sup>th</sup> moves to 1<sup>st</sup> of next group.

### Play what is on the page

Does it say accented? Staccato? Forte? Piano? Crescendo? Diminuendo? Ritardando?

Accelerando?

These are some of the 'absolutes of musicianship'. Use the printed instruction as a point of departure for how to construct your own ideas. Stay as close to the 'printed road map' of the piece as you can. If the things you add do not ADD to the music, then it is taking AWAY from it.

### Key Signature/Accidentals/Cadences

- Allow the function of individual notes to guide you through your construction of a phrase.
- Identify important cadences (measures of resolution -- often every 4 bars depending on tempo of piece).
- Identify the 'color notes' (notes marked with accidentals).
  - Color notes – can create tension or resolution, depending on what happens before or after them.
  - Music will function one of two ways: Either moves towards the next note or comes away from the previous note. Identify the function and exaggerate your performance of the note.

### Levels of Listening

- Perspective from the audience: Is your audience musicians and colleagues or friends and family?
- Friends and family listen with their hearts; musicians and colleagues listen with their brains.

*Your audience will listen on the following levels: As you practice, work to allow your audience to listen at level five.*

#### Level 1: **Aesthetic Quality: Sound.**

*Does the sound you produce invite someone to listen to it? Is it clear? Is the tone resonant and ringing? Is it free and 'easy to listen to'?*

*If your audience enjoys the first thing they hear (your tone) then they will proceed to listen at the next level.*

#### Level 2: **Notes: Rhythms**

*Is your performance free from 'crunches'? Can you play every note and rhythm with your best sound? Your audience will be able to discern what an 'ouch' note is, or what a wrong rhythm might be. These are major distractions that cause your audience to become 'uncomfortable', thus taking away from the enjoyment of the performance.*

*Accomplish these goals in your practice; your audience will thank you.*

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### **Level 3: Dynamics: Style**

*Does your performance create interest through contrast? Ex: This was a loud note, this was a soft note, this was a long note, and this was a short accented note. If there is a specific musical notation (instructions) the audience should be able to visualize the notation on the page based on your performance.*

### **Level 4: Phrase Construction: Architecture**

*Can you hold the attention of the audience from one phrase to the next? Is it obvious where the beginning of your musical sentence starts and where it ends? The structure and performance of your phrasing should organize the musical ideas to allow your listener to 'follow along'. Can the audience understand where the 'peak' or climax of the piece is? Is there logic to your musical decisions? Ex: not getting too loud too soon, or getting too soft too soon. Can your audience follow the progression of the piece?*

### **Level 5: Emotional: Artistic**

*Can your audience sit back and enjoy the performance? Can your audience listen comfortably and relaxed? Does your audience fall in love with the PERSON as well as the music?*

## **Levels of Performance**

- Perspective of the performer
- You are your most critical listener
- Play to satisfy yourself
- Most invested physically and mentally
- You can not be an audience member AND performer at same time, be actively involved in your performance
- Representing yourself as a person and performer

### **Level 1: Aesthetic Quality: Sound**

*Do you make your best sound?*

### **Level 2: Notes: Rhythms**

*Do you play every [ right] note and rhythm **correctly** with that sound?*

### **Level 3: Dynamics: Style**

*Do you play what is on the page? Dynamics, Style, Articulations, Tempo Changes [and more!]*

### **Level 4: Phrase Construction: Architecture**

*Do you have complete musical thoughts? Is there a connection between musical ideas? Do you convey the musical idea (exciting, mysterious, happy, sad)? Do you lead to the most important note and then come away from it? Musical interest is created by "tension – and – release". Notes are not casual 'sounds', they have independent functions and those functions are to create tension – and – release within the structure of a phrase. Put these elements together to create as much musical drama as possible.*

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**Level 5: Emotional: Artistic**

*Are you convinced in what you are trying to convey musically? Are you convinced “this is how the piece should be performed”? Are you offering your personality through the instrument? Do you tell your story? Is the drama of the piece brought out through the performance?*

*When you begin to answer the majority of these questions with a convincing “yes,” you are becoming a musician. When you answer all of them in the affirmative, you have found the gift of true musical performance and you are on your way to musical artistry.*