Teaching Performing Groups

Charles H. Benner

Research to the Music Classroom

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By

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FOREWORD

Research findings can be of much value in the teaching of music if they are considered cautiously and realistically. The results of any study are true for the particular circumstances in which the study was conducted, and they may or may not apply to different situations. Also, a host of factors influence the results of research involving human beings. Such diverse matters as the method of teaching; the length of time the experiment was conducted; the number, age, and abilities of the persons studied; the extent of the controls maintained; and even the knowledge by the subjects that they were involved in an experiment may significantly affect the outcome. For these reasons, a single study should not be considered final or conclusive. Research provides information, not proof in the usual sense of the word. Clearly, the more studies conducted in an area, the more information there is available, which, if reasonably consistent, encourages one to place greater confidence in the findings.

Research data must be interpreted, and all interpretation is subjective. For example, the ability of a group of twelve-year-olds to recognize intervals aurally may have been improved somewhat under certain conditions by a certain teaching method. Although the results achieved are not open to question (provided the research was carried out in a competent manner), the importance and meaning of the findings to the teaching of general music classes are a matter of judgment. Therefore, the interpretations of the research data presented in this publication are those of the author, and they do not necessarily represent the opinions of the Music Education Research Council of the Music Educators National Conference.

Research, even with all of its frailties, is the best way mankind has yet devised for unearthing objective truth. Intuition and personal opinion have their place in life, but they do not provide objective information. Because objective data can help one to make more intelligent judgments, research has a valuable place in music education. Thus, the publication of the series From Research to the Music Classroom.
TEACHING PERFORMING GROUPS

A unique feature of music education in the United States is the attention and support given to performing groups. The prominence and singularity of these organizations can be attributed to the initiative, resourcefulness, dedication, and musicianship of hundreds of music teachers who, in the decades of the twentieth century, have taught and are teaching in American schools and colleges. In secondary schools, and to some extent in elementary schools, performing groups have become the visible representation of what the public often believes is a major purpose of music education in the schools—eventual, if not immediate, participation in a performing group.

A report that in 1961 there were, in the United States, 163,000 students in secondary-school orchestras and 1,030,000 in secondary-school bands provides an indication of the extent to which instrumental performing organizations are a part of the music education structure. The number of students in high school vocal organizations totaled 1,634,000, a greater number than in instrumental organizations (48). Performing groups are similarly commonplace in colleges and universities. The public, community, and private funds expended to provide teachers, equipment, and facilities required by performing groups attest to their popular acceptance and, it may be assumed, to a common belief that performing classes have an essential function in elementary, secondary, and higher education.
Performing groups, as units or entities, are somewhat unmanageable as subjects for the kind of research that involves comparison and experimentation. The feasibility of controlling the relevant variables that are common to two or more performing groups and of isolating the independent variable is remote. There is little, if any, research that could be called "performing group research." The writer has attempted, however, to extract from a body of available related research certain clues that can be useful to music teachers who are endeavoring to examine ways of making their work with performers more effective.

The Role of Performing Groups

The role of performing groups is dependent upon definition and upon some common set of expectations. A semantic interpretation of the term "performing group" seems to justify this descriptive definition: A performing group is one that performs musical materials that require, for the fullest realization, a group of singers or instrumentalists; the skills required for the realization of the music materials (either read, memorized, or rote-learned) reside within the membership of the group; the teaching-learning effort is traditionally directed toward the effective auditory expression and interpretation of the material either for the benefit of the group itself or for an audience. There is an expectation that a performing group will contain the requisite number and assortment of voices or instruments and persons with the skills needed for the effective execution and interpretation of music to be produced.

Potential and Limitations

Since, in the majority of secondary schools, major attention in music education is given to performing groups, the fulfillment of objectives other than the mere development of performance skills for in-school music making is sometimes attempted through these groups. An example of this is the expectation that pupils "will
have skill in listening to music’ and ‘will understand the importance of design in music’” (11). Are outcomes of this nature to be considered extraneous to the essential function of performing groups, or can teaching approaches lead to the achievement of these outcomes in addition to the development of performance skills?

Research has been directed toward selected and limited aspects of this problem. A study of expectation among the choral directors in one state concludes that the directors did not expect participation in choral music to benefit the student in terms of permanent musical knowledge, and that the students performed without a personal understanding of compositional techniques (32). That choral participation does have a potential for achieving musical goals other than mere performance is demonstrated in a study of a course in choral music for which there was a seven-point outline of content (35). The class participants ranked as beneficial to their personal musical growth the singing of significant music of several periods, discussion of choral style and its components, and discussion of musical meaning.

Duerksen, in an investigation of the relationship of performance activities to listening skills, reported that “participation in performance activities in general seemed to have only minor association with the listening skills measured [recognition of repeated and altered themes],” that “many years of participation in these performance activities seemed necessary before any appreciable increase in recognition scores became evident,” and that “participation in chorus, or in chorus in combination with instrumental activities, is somewhat more productive in enabling students to develop theme recognition listening skills” than participation in band only, or participation in piano lessons only (8).

Some research indicates that the study of music theory and literature can be incorporated successfully into the rehearsal without lowering the performance level of the group. In one project, two equivalent bands studied and rehearsed ten works over a thirteen-week period. One band just practiced the music; the other band devoted ten minutes of each period to discussion of the style, theory, and composers of the music being performed. A panel of instrumental music teachers adjudicated tapes made at the beginning and at the end of the experiment.
The two bands had improved about equally in performing ability (4). Another project successfully tested a two-year curriculum designed for use with high school choral classes, with similar conclusion (33).

In another study, a ninth-grade band was randomly divided so that two days each week some of the players had a chamber music experience while the rest of the band had a sectional rehearsal of the band music. At the end of the thirty-two-week experimental period, the chamber players had improved slightly more than the others in playing as measured by individual auditions, they had gained somewhat more knowledge of music, and in terms of interest in music had a significantly more positive outlook (53).

From the studies cited above, it can be inferred that performing group participation has little effect on musical behavior other than the acquisition of performance skills, unless there is a planned effort by the teacher to enrich the performing experience with additional kinds of musical understanding.

Another outcome encountered in the literature of music education is the expectation that many music students will have the desire and the musical means to continue participation in music after high school—that in-school experience will be generative rather than terminal. The value of the school music program is sometimes questioned because of the high incidence of nonparticipation after high school. In the report of a study of the music activities of high school graduates, Ordway makes the following recommendations (39):

Emphasis should be placed on the facets of music which will be of practical use in school and community life. Instrumentalists might be given more encouragement to "play by ear." Pianists need guidance in harmonizing melodies or improvising accompaniments. Additional experience in small ensembles, vocal or instrumental, will develop more individual skill and confidence which will permit him [the student] to continue his participation in musical activities.

Admittedly, many students have only limited experience in solo performance, in small ensembles, and little, if any, experience in improvising and in creating music for personal expression—the forms of music-making that continue through adult years.

A study by Lawrence and Dachinger, who surveyed the adult
musical activities of three hundred parents of music students who
themselves had had instrumental music training in their youth
(piano; piano plus other instrument; or strings, woodwind, or
brass), revealed the following (31):
1. Thirty-seven percent of the respondents still play often or
sometimes as an adult, and 63 percent play rarely or never
as an adult.
2. Twenty-five of the subjects were completely or partially
self-taught. All of these subjects still play.
3. A student whose training is limited to two or three years
has a chance of carryover only if he has learned to
sightread, improvise, or play by ear in that period.
4. When subjects who no longer play were asked what value
music instruction had for them, 58 percent felt they had
received some value from their training even though they
do not play as adults. Forty-two percent felt it was a waste.

The studies that have been cited seem to indicate that if adult
music-making is proposed as one of the outcomes of performing-
group participation, that outcome is not being realized to a
marked degree. These directions, then, are supported: (a) the
musical experience in performing organizations should include
those kinds of learning that will provide a residual of concepts
and insights that will enable the student to encounter music in a
knowledgeable and discerning manner even though continued
performance is abandoned; and (b) modifications of existing
practices should include attention to, and initial experience in,
those forms of music-making that are functional in individual,
family, social, and community settings.

The Student

Every day, teachers reflect their assumptions about the
students in their groups–how they can be motivated, about their
musical backgrounds, and about the nature of their tastes and
preferences. None of these characteristics should be accepted as
static or unalterable. What is known about the probable hidden
and observable characteristics of members of performing groups
can provide clues as to how to begin and how to continue the
process of musical development.
**Motivation**

Motivation accounts for much of human adaptive behavior. The decision by a student to elect or not to elect music as an area of participation in the secondary school has motivational roots. The quality of a musical performance is often influenced by the motivational aura that surrounds the event. Music teachers seek ways of motivating students to practice, to memorize scores and lyrics, to be “up” for a performance. Whether teachers consciously realize it or not, the effectiveness of their work is closely related to the level of student motivation.

Little experimental research has been done to investigate and measure the effects of various forms of motivation on performing groups. The absence of such research is probably caused by the difficulty of controlling or equating all variables except the motivational device. It may be helpful, however, to consider the following (19):

1. Learning and motivation depend partly on forces outside the individual (extrinsic forces), with which he continually interacts, and partly on the individual’s psychological and functional (intrinsic) characteristics.
2. If motivation is viewed from the point of view of the behaver himself, the learner is never unmotivated.
3. Motivation can direct the individual away from as well as toward particular experiences.
4. Every person is motivated by a continuous endeavor to enhance or maintain personal adequacy.

In their efforts to motivate students, teachers must remind themselves that “there is no one formula, or strategy, or set of devices which will motivate all pupils in the same way or to the same degree” (19).

Performing organizations often have been surrounded by extrinsic motivators—award systems, contest ratings, trips, uniforms and robes, and so forth. Extrinsic motivators are not, in themselves, undesirable. Often they are tangible evidence of achievement; they give identity, recognition, and status to the individual, and in so doing they fulfill the intrinsic need for improved self-concept and a feeling of personal adequacy. Studies in the field of motivation produce fairly consistent findings that external motivating devices may set up a pattern of expectancy in the individual without which he may cease to function at all; that
extrinsic motivators are generally most effective in energizing short-term efforts; that in order to be effective for sustained effort they must be repeated; and that continued repetition must be enhanced by some form of variation, expansion, or novelty.

The effect of motivation on some aspects of the music program can be found in several studies of dropouts from school instrumental programs. Many significant factors associated with motivation have been identified as contributing to dropout—for example, the use of low motivating musical material; lack of technical challenge; and improper motivation of beginners through high pressure tactics, influence of friends, and pressure from parents. The following reflection may give a few clues as to why some students discontinue music participation (19):

Dropouts, for example, do not drop out because of either too many success experiences or too many opportunities for enhancing personal adequacy. Indeed, we have but to examine the things we have “dropped out” of, such as a club, a job, a friendship, an engagement, or a marriage, to get some idea of the reasons we are sometimes motivated to move away from rather than toward particular experiences.

The student continues to do those things in which he can have a feeling of success, and those things that satisfy his own psychological and functional characteristics. The effective teacher will be sensitive to fluctuations in interest of individuals and of the group. The teacher’s assumption that students ought to be interested often evades responsibility for analyzing why they are not interested.

Musical Taste and Preference

Taste is basically what one likes; it influences what one would seek in order to be doing what one can internalize with pleasure and satisfaction. Farnsworth refers to musical taste as “the attitudes which surround one’s contacts with whatever the group calls music” (13). Musical taste becomes synonymous with musical preference when an individual has a choice—when he is free to move toward, to ignore, or to move away from a musical experience. In other words, taste can influence the level of motivation by adding a positive or a negative factor to the internally energized disposition toward selective behavior.

Among the factors investigated as being possibly related to
taste in music are age (2, 25), sex (2), personality type (6), socioeconomic environment (2), mental ability (12), and the extent and kind of musical experience (5, 12). Also, studies have investigated the effect of familiarity and of other forms of prehearing conditioning on the response to and liking for particular styles of music (5, 46).

Current interest in aesthetic education and studies of aesthetic responses in the arts have enlarged the field of exploration and the body of information about musical taste. Hornyak explored the relationship of stylistic features of contemporary American music to the aesthetic attitudes of auditors who attended six concerts of the Exposition of Contemporary American Music (cosponsored by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music in 1965) (25). The relationship of these variables to aesthetic attitudes was investigated: musical training of the auditor, age level, educational attainment, socioeconomic background, and familiarity with the music. Among the findings are the following:

1. Affective mood was more easily discernible in traditional compositions. However, if the mood was not specified, and the auditors could not relate the mood to previously learned music-mood patterns, there was much confusion as to what the affective mood actually was.

2. Instrumental colors frequently provided a basis for aesthetic responses.

3. A significant number of auditors was able to distinguish contrapuntal textures quite readily.

4. Age level of the auditor did not significantly affect the manner in which he responded to the music.

5. Formal music training significantly affected the manner in which auditors responded to contemporary music. As the amount of formal music training increased, auditors tended to respond more favorably. However, auditors with the highest degree of formal training tended to respond less favorably to most contemporary compositions than did those with merely extensive musical training.

A synthesis of several studies supports these generalizations: (a) out-of-school influences are more dominant in molding the musical tastes of the general student population than are in-school experiences; (b) experience in more than one type of
musical activity is more effective in influencing preferences toward "classical" and "art" music than is experience in a single type; (c) regardless of kind and extent of musical experience, teenagers show a predominant interest in the popular music of their time; and (d) the musical preferences of teenagers are subject to modification just as other behaviors are influenced by the formal education process.

In summation, musical experiences in school have more effect on listening attitudes than on taste itself. Taste is culturally and sociologically influenced, and although educational influences have a measurable and in some instances a marked impact on taste, one’s musical preferences ultimately are personal and individual. If students in performing organizations in schools and colleges are conditioned to listen to the music they perform—to perceive its texture and the relationship of melodic elements, and to observe the compositional devices on which the essence of the composition depends—they probably will perform better, and they also will be able to retain some of the concepts, insights, and attitudes needed for musical discernment.

The Teacher

The person who works with performing classes is engaged primarily in the process of teaching. The phrase "director of a performing organization" recognizes that a music teacher’s assignment often includes responsibility for numerous tasks of organizing and administering. The term "conductor" is not used in this discussion; conducting is regarded as a means of coordinating group music-making, and subsumes that the requisite performing skills already have been developed.

The Teaching Process

A simple definition of teaching is that it is "the process whereby one individual enables another to learn something more quickly than he would on the basis of his own trial and error" (27). A more extended definition is that teaching is the process of selecting, organizing, and making available the perceptual and informational input, of arranging the physical setting, and of influencing the social and psychological environment (of the
learner) so that optimal learning takes place. There are numerous criteria for evaluating teaching, but in the extensive literature of the assessment of teaching there is recognition that the ultimate criterion is the impact of the teacher’s teaching on the learner’s learning.

Characteristics of Effective Music Teachers

Teaching is a process that involves an interaction between two or more individuals. The characteristics of the teacher are factors in the interaction that either augment or limit the social and psychological environment of learning. The complexity, and often the uniqueness, of the social and psychological environment that surrounds the activities of a performing organization limits the possibility of definitive research. However, research does provide some clues about teacher characteristics that contribute to positive environments as distinguished from those that contribute to neutral or negative environments.

In a study based on the opinions of 3,725 high school seniors concerning best-liked and least-liked teachers, the four most frequently mentioned reasons for liking a teacher best were (20):

1. Is helpful in school work, explains lessons and assignments clearly, and uses examples in teaching.
2. Cheerful, happy, good-natured, jolly; has a sense of humor and can take a joke.
3. Human, friendly, companionable, “one of us.”
4. Interested in and understands pupils.

Corroboration of the above study can be inferred from the results of an informal study, conducted by the writer, in which more than one hundred college music students were asked to identify an outstanding teacher in their school or college experience and to describe the characteristics of that teacher. The characteristics mentioned most frequently were:

1. Showed interest in students as individuals.
2. Knew his subject well.
3. Was broadly educated and interested in other fields.
4. Had a variety of ways of making explanations.
5. Was patient with those who didn’t understand.
6. Was dedicated to teaching.
7. Assumed that every student could achieve and would give him individual help.
Those students in the same group who identified a music teacher as their outstanding teacher mentioned these characteristics:

1. Was interested in the students—not just in himself.
2. Knew what he wanted [in musical performance] and knew how to get it.
3. Could inspire the students to work hard, but knew when to relax.

In a study by Ehlert investigating causes of failure among employed music teachers, the five causes of failure most frequently identified were lack of personality, lack of teaching skill, poor discipline, lack of knowledge of the educative process, and poor organizational skills (10).

Studies of the characteristics of the successful music teacher indicate that the psychological attributes include directedness, optimism, and a disposition toward methodical organization (15), and that successful instrumental music teachers, when compared with unsuccessful teachers, were more stable in moods and emotions and "more self-confident with regard to their professional and personal lives" (34).

The findings of studies of teacher effectiveness can be useful both to the prospective music teacher as he assesses his personal potential for success and to the in-service music teacher as he strives to modify his attitudes and teaching behavior to correspond more closely to the characteristics associated with successful teaching.

**Rehearsal Techniques**

The authority for what distinguishes good rehearsal techniques from those that are less good is found more frequently in what is reported as successful practice than in experimental research. Music teachers tend to accept certain truisms: each rehearsal should be planned; the objectives should be identified; the participants should be aware of what the goals are in order to have specific targets for their individual and group effort; the participants should share in the evaluation of how much and what was accomplished; each rehearsal should have promptly-attainable as well as long-range goals, there should be variety in mood, difficulty, and nature of the musical elements contained in the
musical materials; achievement will depend on principles such as those that recognize level of motivation and the advantages of distributed effort; the prevailing attitudes of the participants are affected by how the rehearsal ends as well as by how the rehearsal begins.

Van Sickle explored the extent to which players and directors of school instrumental groups are aware of the facets of group dynamics that operate in rehearsal activities with concern for (a) the internal dynamics of the rehearsal group, (b) the effect of the group as an environment for the individual, (c) the effect of the individual on the rehearsal, and (d) the effect of the external environment on the rehearsal group (50). The study concluded that “the public school music group in rehearsal is affected by dynamic forces similar to those operating in other kinds of groups” and that “directors of public school instrumental groups were not aware of the group forces and are not using them to enhance the social and psychological setting of the group rehearsal.”

In the research and literature related to rehearsals, there are implications that point to the importance of teaching competence based on understandings and procedures that go beyond mere skill in conducting.

Memorization of Musical Materials

Some memory factor is associated with every kind of learning that is associated with the performance of music. Involved in the performance of music is kinesthetic, or psychomotor, memory. Even though the performer has recourse to the musical score, fluent performance is dependent upon proprioceptive anticipations and learned kinesthetic patterns. Many technical drills are devised to establish a roster of motor patterns congruent with compositional techniques. The term “memory,” when applied to the performance of music, encompasses psychomotor as well as cognitive recall.

Performance of music without the score has become a part of certain performance traditions. Although the “psychological or artistic justification for memorizing the musical score” may be questioned (37), and memorization in many performance settings may be mere compliance with tradition or a mental “tour de force,” teachers frequently are involved in preparing students for
partially- or wholly-memorized performance.

The phenomena of memory and of forgetting and the factors that facilitate or inhibit memorization have been extensively explored. These generalized principles, derived from an extensive body of research in psychology, can be applied to the memorization of music: (a) the appearance of familiar items or patterns in new music to be memorized facilitates memorization; (b) awareness of related and altered patterns in the parts to be learned facilitates memorization; and (c) awareness of the manner in which the various parts are constructed and of how the various parts are related to the whole facilitates memorization.

Whole and Part Learning

Many teachers of performing organizations are searching for more efficient procedures in achieving rehearsal goals. A practical problem often is whether to rehearse or practice an entire composition repeatedly or to practice and learn segments.

There is evidence that the most economical unit of presentation in whole and part methods of learning should be thought of in a qualitative sense rather than a quantitative one. The degree of superiority of the whole method varies with the degree of consistency and unity within the identified unit. Within the complete composition there may be numerous discernible units. In music teaching, the determination of what constitutes a qualitative unit of learning requires the application of knowledge of musical forms and employs judgment based upon musical knowledge.

In discussing whole and part learning, Hilgard states that “the problem remains an important one, at least for those people who have to memorize the lines of a play or a musical selection” and cites these factors for consideration (23):

1. The more intelligent the subject, the more likely the whole method will prove advantageous.
2. The advantages of the whole method increase with practice in using it.
3. When practice is distributed rather than massed, the whole method becomes increasingly favorable.
4. Material that is meaningful and unified tends to favor the whole method.
5. The total length of the material, the actual sizes of the
parts, and the number of parts making up the whole must be considered. (There is no simple rule here, for it is quite possible that very short and very long passages will profit from the whole method, with in-between ones favoring the part method.)

6. A disadvantage of the part method is the time required to connect the separately learned parts. Methods that get around this difficulty will reduce the advantages of the whole method.

7. Following the separate learning of the parts, attempted recall may reveal more mutual interference among the parts with some material than with others. Hence, the disadvantage of the part method may depend upon the material to be learned.

Providing an opportunity for gaining a concept of the whole work contributes to productive learning of parts of it. Awareness of the organization of the parts in forming the whole (form, augmentation and diminution, theme and variations, and the like) will enable the learner to conceptualize the interrelationship of parts, and the relationship of parts to the whole. The teacher’s decisions will be influenced by the length and nature of the composition, the experience of the participants in dealing with the compositional devices employed by the composer, and the mental abilities and experiential maturity of the participants.

**Massed and Distributed Practice**

In rehearsal periods, there is frequently much review, repetition, and reteaching. The rehearsal is basically group practice, and the subject of massed or distributed practice is germane to efforts to increase efficiency in preparing a group for performance, or to extend the scope of materials that can be read and studied for purposes other than public performance.

Investigation in the area of massed and distributed learning effort thus far has generally yielded results favoring distributed practice over the massed approach in the learning of skills (23). The comparative ineffectiveness of massed practice is attributed to the development of a negative drive to avoid repetition. The internal inhibition may consist of fatigue, boredom, or a combination of these and other factors that seem to accompany the process after a response has been repeated with very little time.
allowance for recovery between trials. This kind of inhibition weakens an activity and results in rapidly diminishing returns even though motivational factors might still be strong. Satiation can weaken drive to the extent that productivity is halted. In school situations, extended periods of intensive but unproductive rehearsal are often activated by the pressures of preparing a too-long program for a too-near performance date.

The Conditions of Performance

The conditions of performance are those related to the performer himself, the characteristics of the physical setting in which performance takes place, and the audience. It can be hypothesized that the conditions present within the performer are affected by certain influences that precede performance—the effectiveness of rehearsal and practice in producing feelings of confidence and security, the motivational aura that has been generated to surround the performance event (for example, the importance of the occasion or the importance of performing well for a particular audience), and attitudes developed during rehearsal toward the program repertoire. The difficulty of designing and reenacting essentially similar conditions prior to and during a musical performance has been a deterrent to experimental research that might test these hypotheses. Exploration of the effects of the conditions of musical performance is therefore suggested as an area for future investigation by researchers in music and psychology.

The Performer

For some persons the performance event serves as a tension stimulant that causes them to do their best. For others, the tension stimulant may contribute to an impairment of motor skill. Some tension may be helpful, but for all persons there is a limit beyond which emotion becomes detrimental. Only a wise teacher can motivate performers to produce maximum performance without exceeding the limit beyond which the emotion-induced tension becomes harmful.

Factors that adversely affect performance have led to an investigation of stage fright. The symptoms of stage fright arise
from the actions of the autonomic nervous system and the adrenal glands. This emotion, which is related to fear, disorganizes the physical organism. Discomforting symptoms such as sweaty palms, heart palpitations, breathing difficulties, and reduced secretions from the salivary glands are experienced. The singer or wind instrumentalist may experience breathing difficulties, the brass player’s lips may become dry, and the violinist or pianist may find his performance affected by perspiring palms and involuntary foot and hand movements.

Analyses of the origins of stage fright lead to the conclusion that (a) it may be a learned experience resulting from a previous unsuccessful experience or from identification with other persons whose stage fright has been observed; (b) it is associated with feelings of insecurity and inadequacy; (c) it may result from the individual’s inability to adapt quickly to a complex social situation; and (d) it may be induced by the threat of audience evaluation. Basically, stage fright is an emotional response to a situation in which the drive for self-enhancement is in jeopardy.

Studies of stage fright in the field of speech give some indication of the possible origins of the phenomenon (3). A study by Naruse deals with methods of therapeutic intervention that were applied in dealing with stage fright among athletes (38). The techniques used were: (a) psychological and physiological relaxation, (b) detachment from sport life (dissociation from reality), (c) catharsis and self-understanding, (d) mental rehearsal, and (e) mental warming up. Although these techniques were applied to champion athletes and are classified as forms of self- or hetero-hypnosis, the techniques themselves can be applied in a variety of performance situations.

Teachers who coach individuals and groups for musical performance might profitably employ systematic devices based on psychological principles. From the following summary, practical inferences can be made by the music teacher:

1. Anxiety about a performance is influenced by the degree of readiness.
2. Time spent in extra rehearsal or practice may be ineffectual if the extra effort is conducted in a way that results in an inordinate build-up of anxiety.
3. Anxiety is lessened if the performance event is preceded by a sequence of less stressful successful experiences.
4. Anxiety is lessened by familiarity with the setting and with the physical components (for example, practicing in the same auditorium and on the same piano).

5. Overt mention of and attention to stage fright may strengthen fear responses rather than weaken them.

6. Anxiety-reducing techniques should be selected on the basis of an analysis of the dominant cause of the anxiety and on knowledge of the subject's capacity to adapt and adjust to the real or assumed challenge or threat of the performance situation.

The Physical Setting of Performance

Research concerning the physical properties of rehearsal rooms, auditoriums, and concert halls deals primarily with the acoustical properties of the space. The function of such rooms is to accommodate people and the kinds of sounds that will be produced in them. The acoustical properties of rehearsal and performance rooms affect the auditory feedback that, in turn, provides cues necessary for the musician or speaker in controlling sound production, in articulating, and in making the successive adaptations he must make during a performance. The acoustical properties of the rehearsal or performance space are also a critical factor in the work of the music teacher, for he must be able to hear the entire ensemble if desired dynamic levels, intonation, and balance are to be realized.

The manner in which a performer makes successive adaptations to the auditory environment is described by Havlicek, who investigated the effects of abnormally delayed auditory feedback on the frequency of performance errors and the coherency of performance (21). The conclusions, based on a testing situation in which unfamiliar musical compositions were sight-read by a group of college instrumentalists, are:

1. During musical performance with delayed auditory feedback, there were significantly more errors than with synchronous feedback.

2. The effects of delayed auditory feedback were equally disturbing to players of all types of musical instruments used in this experiment (woodwinds, brass, string, and piano).

3. The effects of delayed auditory feedback on musical
performance are similar to its effects on speech as stated by other experimenters; that is, a general slowing down, an increased number of articulatory errors, occasional complete stops or blocking, and the occasional addition of extraneous material.

The suitability of concert halls for accommodating the dynamic ranges produced by a symphony orchestra playing a succession of concerts has been investigated by Winckel (51). The investigator went on tour with the Cleveland Orchestra and made acoustical measurements in fifteen concert halls. Winckel reported that:

1. Nearly all auditoriums in the universities and colleges checked on the tour were treated with acoustic tile over large areas. This was done to ensure good room characteristics for loudspeaker reproduction, but the owners were unaware that this treatment makes the auditorium unsuitable for live musical performance.

2. To a certain degree, there is a feedback mechanism that varies the impedance of the voice generator or of the instrument to get the best adaptation.

The design of multipurpose rehearsal rooms and auditoriums often necessitates compromises in optimal acoustical conditions for a specific purpose. Adaptability for multipurpose use is being enhanced by mechanical apparatus that can alter the acoustical properties of the same room or auditorium to accommodate differing sound sources and feedback requirements.

The Audience

The composition and characteristics of specific and of typical audiences have been reported. Studies of the age, socioeconomic, and musical background characteristics of audiences that attend concerts and support symphony orchestras have been undertaken by symphony orchestra associations. DeJager reports the findings of a survey undertaken by sociologists to explore factors influencing concertgoing among the regular patrons of the Utrecht (The Netherlands) Symphony Orchestra (7). The responses of audiences to programs of contemporary music have been reported by Hornyak (25).

Research directed toward an investigation of the factors that affect the psychic and empathetic interaction between audience
and performer could be an area of further investigation. For example, does physical distance between performer and auditor affect the empathetic relationship? Does the common physical arrangement that provides a stage at one end of a hall with the audience "out there" provide optimal identification between audience and performer? Does the theater-in-the-round arrangement have an empathetic advantage, or merely an auditory advantage? To what extent would a similar physical arrangement be advantageous for musical performance of certain types? Other questions can be asked: What audience behaviors other than applause are perceived as feedback? Is there nonauditory feedback, and if so, what adaptations does the musician make to it? How does duration of a recital or concert affect the level of audience receptivity? Do intermissions affect the empathetic relationship between audience and performers? How do sociological changes affect performance practices?

Until such time as controlled experimental research investigates the relationship between performer and audience, performance practices will continue to be determined by tradition and subjective assumptions. Directors of performing organizations, particularly at the college level, often carefully plan programs that will impress fellow musicians and professional peers. If audience apathy and waning attendance are recognized problems, a social psychologist might have some helpful suggestions.

Bibliography and References


12. Erneston, Nicholas, *A Study to Determine the Effect of Musical Experience and Musical Ability on the Formulation*


