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1. Musicianship

Through the ages music teachers and directors have been imploring or demanding instrumentalists and singers to apply more and better musicianship to their art. Because definition of the term "musicianship" is abstract or even nebulous, many synonyms or explanatory phrases are used in urging musicians to employ good musicianship. Commonly heard are these exhortations: "sing", "phrase", "espressivo", "project", "communicate", "with feeling", "say something", etc. Unfortunately, these terms are almost as nebulous as the parent word, "musicianship", which they are meant to elucidate.

One of the goals of this book will be to give specific instructions and suggestions which will help the performer to put usable and audible musicianship into performance. The trouble with the vague and nebulous words listed above is that they do not tell us what to do physically with the music. While these words may convey beautiful images and thoughts to the player, these thoughts will not be audible to the listener unless the player converts them into concrete and definite physical action on his instrument or voice.

Here is an aside which might illustrate my point. I have been aware, during many years of orchestra playing with the world's great conductors, that there are two basic typ of rehearsal techniques used. There is the technique use by the conductor who describes what he wants with flow ry phrases or those nebulous words listed above. In due th he might get the effect he is after, but rehearsal, large professional orchestra is limited and expansive this approach is not usually appreciated by the players (or manager). In my observation, the conductors who get the musical results they desire quickly and esciently are those who employ the second technique, hat of sing short, of being brusk, even definite words. They may be accuse kuction is never in rude, but the meaning of their doubt. Instead of asking the tra to "do something" moonlight" (a reques or to "visualize a garder in the one conductor actually me), these terse, effir er", "louder", "more le conductors will bark, "she bigger diminuendo", etc. These instructions, very poetic, give the player a definite phy perform on the instrument. And this is jective of instruction. Give the perform me instructions and he in turn will esical effect. Of course the r ically sound ideas, too, but in physical techniques to cor Back to our considerat;

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might be defined as "moderation as applied to music". In the great majority of musical situations this is doubtless true. How boring is the playing of the student who uses no expression at all, due to his concentration on simply placing the notes correctly. This is similar to the beginner learning a new language. He intones the series of words of a sentence in a monotone which reveals the fact that he can read words but does not as yet understand the meaning of the sentence. Let us correlate the speaker with the musician. In music, the individual notes would be the equivalent of the individual words in a sentence. Comprehension is only achieved when the words tes) are strung together in music, a phrase). Even to make a complete senteng then, the speaker (player) in sture some instinctive infleco make the sentence (mus tions in his voice (instra peğinning musician, like cal phrase) intelligible beginning langua is simply too involved e stuc ducing the individual nites (words) to be concerthe meaning of the phrase (sentence), let a himself within ections of sound in his inst ing voice). In mulic, the total effect of the oderation", that is, too , no one wants to he? a succato, too loud a forte ite of this, there are a grea hemselves on having the hortest staccato, etc. U often eager to display gard to the requir any aspect of r insufficiency cally righ Nevert1 hear

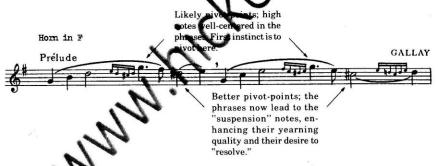


exponent of this art during my youth was the famous violin virtuoso, Fritz Kreisler, who could take ordinary tures—"cafe tunes", we called them—and play them with such elegance and expression that often half a symphony program would be set aside for him to play encore after encore of these tunes, with the audience clamoring for more.

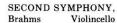
Karl Krueger, the articulate conductor of the Kansas City Philharmonic during my early symphony days, was fond of saying that a musical phrase lived. And, if it lived, it breathed. Although some of us younger musicians laughed at what we thought was a grotesque and far-fetched idea, the more I matured musically the more I began to comprehend that Mr. Krueger's idea had great depth of understanding and was perhaps the most logical and expressive way of describing a musical phrase that could have been chosen. If you will analyze your physical response to breathing you will be aware that during inhalation there occurs an increasing tension in the body-nothing extreme-perhaps just a slight tightening of shoulder and chest muscles. Then, as you start to exhale, this tension gradually lessens and the feeling becomes one of increasing relaxation. Since breathing can be a voluntary physical action, we can inhale as deeply and slowly as we please, within reason, hold this breath, and begin our exhalation at will, continuing it slowly or quickly. We have complete control of our breathing tempo, depth and forcefulness. The important thing, in this analogy of breathing to phrasin

is the feeling of mounting tension during inhalation and the gradual relaxation during exhalation. Mr. Krueger contended that a musical phrase, in "breathing", grows in tension to a certain predetermined point in the music, as when inhaling. Then, upon reaching this point, the phrase starts to relax, as when exhaling. For want of a better description of this moment when the mounting tension in a phrase reaches its peak point and starts to relax, I will hereafter refer to it as the "pivot-point" of the phrase. As one becomes cognizant of this idea and starts to apply it to his phrasing he will find it increasingly easy to identify and recognize this pivot-point in a phrase. Your opinion as to where this pivot-point occurs in a phrase may differ from that of your colleagues. No matter, this is one of the differences which makes music such an interesting art and which allows the musician's ersonality to become involved in the music. It als grates the good performers from the bad, since, althou there is no precise rule as to where this pivot-poi occur in the phrase, some choices are better

Following are a few crues which might be helpful in determining when the pivot-point occurs in a phrase. Occasionally the pivot point is located at the highest pitched note in the phrase, although this is certainly not a definite criterion. Sometimes we find this point of man numerous in a "suspension" note just before the resolution of the phrase.



Often the composer will indicate the pivot-point with a crescendo leading to it and a diminuendo leading away from it.





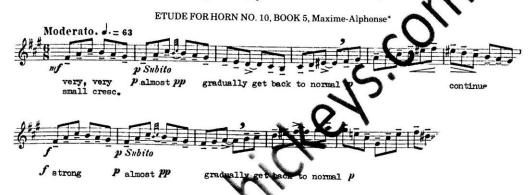
^{*}Many of the musical examples in this book will be taken from the horn literature, since, as a horn player, the author is most familiar with this music. Also, since the horn is difficult, horn music is

usually relatively simple, which makes it ideal for clear, uncluttered musical illustrations.

make a *crescendo* or *diminuendo* has, in effect, arrived at a *subito* point, whether or not the word *subito* is written. This simply emphasizes my point: dynamic changes are either made gradually (*cresc.*, *dim.*, etc.) or suddenly (*subito*, or the *absence* of *cresc.* or *dim.*).

The words or signs for crescendo and diminuendo are well understood and most good musicians can play a well-calculated crescendo or diminuendo and arrive at the new dynamic with the correct volume and without making the gradation uneven or in a "lumpy" manner. But there is a technique which can be used to make sudden dynamic changes very clearly heard and understood by the listener and this I will explain. Since the whole idea in producing an effective subito is to give the dynamic change a sharp and clear line of demarcation, perhaps even a somewhat dramatic contrast, the performer must be very careful not to "drift" into the new dynamic. This "drifting" is usually

the result of the performer preparing his new dynamic too soon, thus "telegraphing" ahead his intention to make the change. Of course this completely removes the element of surprise which is inherent in the subito effect. To prevent this drifting, slightly exaggerate the dynamic preceding the subito in a very subtle manner as the subito is approached. That is: gradually (and subtly) make a loud dynamic louder or a soft dynamic softer as the subito moment is approached. Then, on the very first notes of the subito, begin the new dynamic in a slightly exaggerated volume—too soft in p or pp; too loud in f or ff. This will result in a larger "step" between the two contrasting dynamic levels, making the subito distinct and preserving the element of suddenness which is the very meaning and essence of subito. Following is an example of how this is accomplished:



We must now regard the other aspect of the use of dynamics—that of controlling and combining our individual dynamics with that of the other performs strain ensemble so that the musical result is in complete beliance between all participants. Consider for a name at the variety of musical situations which must be taken into account when determining how loud or soft to plate when performing in an ensemble. I can think to a least six situations which have a bearing on what a name level we will choose to play.

- 1. The importance of the passage. If this is your "birment" and the rest of the ensemble is so insensifit will not stay below your dynamic level, the going to have to play above that accelevel—regardless of the printed dynamic ductor will be your best friend at such not permit the ensemble to drown
- 2. Association with other perform accompaniment part, it is y' dynamic level of the solois likely combination of (and they often do) t'

As an example: i' trombone (!) t' much loude bonist w enoug'

3. Tor



Here are two actual examples of this rhythm:

LA MER, Claude Debussy Horns 1 & 2 in F





Obviously, slow, careful practic these problems. But one help ¹ tied combinations correctly contains a set of "after-be



^{*}Extract from "200 ALPHONSE. Cor Publishers. Re