

MUSC 337

Final Conducting Self Evaluation

Due electronically by 1:30pm on Wednesday, May 17

Name: KAREN YONKERS

***BEFORE viewing your video**, write a paragraph (minimum 100 words) describing your immediate reaction to this experience. *Be sure to include things that you thought went well, along with those things that you wish would have gone better.*

I really enjoyed this experience, and the entire conducting class. It was amazing to finally hear the entire orchestration as Tichelli intended. I thought that I was finally approaching conducting of all the parts, (not just the melody), and had a good idea in my ear of what I wanted. I was able to hear and fix some things (bassoon cues, leading tones, flute rhythm inaccuracies). I could have spent some time with the English Horn, but due to limited rehearsal time, I let some things go there. I realized after hearing the opening, that my rehearsal plan really didn't need to be used. They were sounding so nice. However, I began to be more intensive in my listening, and had plenty to do. I tried to first show in my conducting gestures (before talking), and I think they were very strong this time. There were a couple places I wanted to refine (the staccato part, and the underlying swells of the triplets...I don't have the score in front now of me to cite exact measures). I felt I had really passed a level in conducting intent and wish I could have had more time in front of musicians to practice this. Communicating through gestures and facial expressions was good today.

***AFTER watching your video**, write a paragraph (minimum 100 words) summarizing your observations. As you compare your perceptions with the reality of the video, consider the effectiveness of your rehearsal techniques AS WELL AS your conducting gestures. *Be sure to comment on aspects that you perceived differently than in your initial response.*

As far as rehearsal planning, there were so many ways to go with this. I had intended to show the form, comparing A and A', then B. Taking the piece apart in this way, however, did not feel natural. The ensemble was picking up much of what I wanted without dialogue. So, midway through, I decided to drop the "plan" and just have them play, fixing as we went. I feel like the rehearsal time was more effective and flowed much better when I began doing this. If it would have been a less skilled group, then maybe taking section by section would work. As far as techniques, I believe my score study helped me in error detection (mentioned above), and with balance. For example, knowing that the clarinet part needed to predominate when she had melody. My eye contact was good, but I looked at the score more than I thought I had, and even closed my eyes at a point when I should have been directing the horns. I do think my gestures were much improved from before. Not consistently. Like the second to last chime cue in the run through was not real defined. I worked on the final release extensively, and I

placement was one area in which I believe that I improved quite a bit. Then there is the learning curve for making the changes happen. I think that aspect probably lasts forever.

I still struggle with control of musical moments. Both with expressing forte or phrase peaks smoothly in the Tichelli and LH pulsing in general. I have to remind myself to pull elbows out and reach forward as a basic stance. I also need to take time to scan the ensemble, think tempo, and breathe in the style along with prep beat. The legato conducting is still not automatic, either. These things will come with time, and then I can just continue to reflect and improve. Recording myself would be a good way to do this.

I learned that conducting is much more than beat patterns. Although I **knew** this, I hadn't really thought about it. I was able to learn from creating program notes (notes for my recital, too), *deep* score study and flow charts, and very detailed reflections on the in-class activities. Second hand experience through playing under the other conductors also lent to my overall understanding of conducting depth and breadth. I was able to put some of this immediately into practice also at Innocademy with my small group there. Thinking through prep beats, how to express them, prepping through eye contact *before* the prep beat, support with LH during the prep beat is an example of one detailed technique that I had never followed through on before in conducting. I think that I came in with basic teaching and personality skills which are strong, and conducting gestures is an element I was needing more refinement in. Having taken my first conducting course five years ago, it was a good review of beat patterns. This class helped me see beyond that in an organized way.

In comparing my Personal Conducting Inventory in February to the one in May, I have some common words to describe my conducting experience. Subbing and instrumental ensembles which I play in are common. My experience was updated in a sense by the addition of MUS 337 labs and Innocademy Band. I also added the word "developing" to show that my conducting experience had expanded, but also to denote the fact that I had not "arrived" yet in the conducting realm. It was interesting that the two things which excite me about conducting remained essentially the same, although I worded them a bit differently. I like making music and I like working with people. However, at closer inspection, I think that my latter ways of expressing these concepts was more collaborative in essence. In February, I said "making music" in May I said "the music - sharing it with others" And the second thing which excites me about conducting went from an inculcate "instilling love of music in students" to "the people- working together to create music". Somehow, my conceptions of conducting have changed to a joint, shared, experience with the ensemble instead of "directing". Interestingly, my two fears also remained the same: "miscommunication" and "getting into a rut" (February) or "routine without progress" (May). The things I do well as a conductor category became more specific in May. I'm sure this is due to the fact that my definition of what a conductor does and the elements of conducting were more familiar to me after the course. Finally, the areas for improvement also had some commonality: prep beats and consistency. In February, my focus seemed to be more on the communication with the ensemble, and in May my areas for improvement were more specific to conducting details. This was interesting to comparing the two inventories, since I had forgotten completely what I wrote in February.