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TECHNIQUES OF MUSIC CAMP CONDUCTORS EASTERN ILLINOIS STATE COLLEGE SUMMER, 1954 - SUMMER, 1957

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by

Vance H. Kercheval

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INTRODUCTION

This topic is a variable one. Most of the traits or goals mentioned in this paper are, and will be, basically the same to each individual. The differences or possibly discrepancies, will appear in interpretation of these lesser parts as goals or techniques and the unification of them into the main objective. These interpretations are essentially my own and reflect no one else's views or feelings toward them. Some of them can be interpreted by a few words or sentences. Wherever this is done, I feel that clarity and meaning should not be given over to volume. Some interpretations may seem to be too explanatory, but on each of these points, stating the technique is not enough. I feel that there must be an explanation for each to clarify what and why each was done.

Many of these techniques will be, in the main, the same for two or possibly all three men. This may be, although each man is a unique individual in himself.

The past tense is used throughout the paper only because these observations were made during the stay of each of the men, which is now the past tense.

CHAPTER I

MR. WESTON NOBLE

TECHNIQUES USED

Mr. Noble, in my belief, was one of the better men available to work with this age group. Many of the techniques he used are commonly used among the choral directors of today. Some of them may seem to be very obviously standard, but one has to know Mr. Noble as a person to realize why so many of them were so effective.

He started out his week by having the chorus sing with three fingers held vertically in their mouth. This was done to create an open tone sound and feeling on the vowel "ah". The tone on this vowel is much more brilliant with open mouth and throat than with normal, half closed position. With the mouth at normal speaking position, the vowel has the sound of "uh" instead of "ah". The difference in the sound of this vowel can be demonstrated by singing the vowel "ah" and changing the position of the jaw, up and down, and changing the position of the corners of the mouth out and in. The difference is very noticeable and is very often used wrongly.

Another of his many lesser goals was to emphasize very strongly the value of music. His main philosophy is much the

same as my own in that there is nothing this world more pleasing, nothing more the center of life, than music. What would the world be like if all the music in it was suddenly stopped?

Blend and balance in music can be illustrated by many things. It is the combination of many parts with no one being stronger or overbalancing than any other. One may be made stronger, but only for a certain effect or sound. Present day coffee, for example, is the putting together of many varieties of coffee. The blend depends on the amount of each variety added. If another effect or taste is desired, more or less of one or more varieties are changed in proportion to the other ingredients; thereby, changing the blend and balance of the finished product. As you can see, many things can be done and the product is purely up to the individual taste. Thinking in this vein, can any one person incorporating their own ideas along these lines be wrong?

Another technique used by Mr. Noble was the idea of letting individuals listen to the rest of the group and thereby get a picture of the whole group and be able to see just what was being done. He would have one or possibly two persons leave their places in the chorus and just listen for awhile. This was very good in that most of them had a chance to hear things that they would ordinarily not be able to hear as a singing member of the chorus. It works the same way in any musical group. Usually individuals do not know what is going on (music-wise) in the other sections

and never know what the whole group sounds like. For instance, many children go through their entire schooling not knowing what their chorus or band really sounds like because they never have had the opportunity to hear the group as a whole. Concentration on their own part or parts is part of the answer as to why they do not know. One very good way to cope with this problem is to do as Mr. Noble has done.

Mr. Noble did something that is very seldom seen, but is a very wonderful thing. It should not be classified as a technique for if it was used as such, it would lose its real meaning.

At the end of the so-called pep talk before the concert, he and the chorus bowed their heads for a short prayer. Putting oneself in place of a chorus member, this would have had a tremendous effect. The first part of the program was sacred music and, as it was being sung, the chorus seemed to have a sincere feeling in singing that had not been sensed before. Although the chorus had been most of the time, there was just a certain something there that hadn't been up till that time.

MOTIVATION BY REWARD

Mr. Noble was the type of person that was very quick to praise anything that was done well. He made a great point of this particular thing. The slightest improvement in anything done brought forth a kind word such as "good job", or "well done".

Although it was somewhat overdone, the chorus did not show any signs of this being true. The sincerity with which he paid each compliment held the negative reaction to almost nothing.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

There were many things about Mr. Noble that may not be rightfully personality traits, but were things concerning him that made him the man he was. They have been included in this section to help the reader realize fully what kind of person he was.

The sincerity with which he went about doing everything was one of the main things that impressed everyone. Every word was spoken with intense meaning. This ties very closely to another trait - that of his voice. He could say only a few words - and when he did - he seemed to weave a spell over everyone listening.

Mr. Noble's actions, attitude, personal interest in what he was doing and his facial expressions all lead back to the first trait mentioned, sincerity.

REACTION OF STUDENTS

Two ways to judge the success of a conductor in a situation such as this are: the finished product and the reaction of the students to the experience. In Mr. Noble's case, the reaction was tremendous. No person with whom he had contact that had anything but praise for the job well done and for the man as a conductor and teacher. The audience even seemed to sense the relationship that had prevailed for the entire week. A person cannot make boys and girls sing long hours for an entire week; get the reaction that Mr. Noble did, without having, to coin a phrase, something on the ball.

CHAPTER II

DR. MYRON RUSSELL

Dr. Russell of Iowa State Teachers College last year developed a very find band. He returned this year sporting quite a reputation in the eyes of the campers. This is not necessarily a technique, but it is well worth mentioning.

He had a way of giving examples of tone and technique to the members of the group that an improvement could be seen almost immediately. This is something that should be done by all band directors and it is a genuine pleasure to see a man of his caliber do it in such a wonderful way.

Along with giving examples, Dr. Russell incorporated the learning of alternate fingerings for all instruments, especially the woodwinds. (Clarinets, oboes, flutes, bassoons and saxophones.) He is a woodwind specialist and his knowledge along these lines is quite broad. He demonstrated many of these things himself on his own instruments. He is an excellent performer as well as teacher. One of the first things he did on Monday morning was to get the band to watch the conductor. He accomplished this by playing a scale in irregular time and if a person wasn't watching, it would be very obvious. He carried this over into the music by taking a Spanish March and at a natural phrase ending or breath spot, he stopped, paused a moment then

started again. In fact, he did this on the concert and one person very obviously was not watching and continued without the rest of the band and the conductor. Everyone was very surprised to see that many of that size group really on their toes.

The band was also taught to react to Dr. Russell's style of conducting. The two extremes being: beating time very wildly would be interpreted as full tones and hard attack, whereas beating time in a very small restricted area would be interpreted as softly and lightly.

Dr. Russell also stressed the value of good music. He included two so called heavy numbers on his Program "Symphony in Bb" by Fauchet and "Allegro Con Crazia" from the third movement of Tschaikowsky's Pathetique Symphony. This number was especially valuable in another sense. It is in 5/4 meter and is very difficult to merely feel your way along. The band had to be able to count in order to be in the right place at the right time. It was a very pleasant surprise to see that the band did such a good job of such a difficult number.

MOTIVATION BY REWARD

As has been stated before, Dr. Russell is a very brilliant man. The motivation of the children achieved under him was not necessarily for the camp alone, but for future playing in their own high school bands. He taught them appreciation for things well done and a pride in the organization. The members of this camp band went home with many improved ideas as to how to play, how to act when on stage, how to act in a rehearsal and many other things that many bands have been trying for years to achieve.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Sincerity again is one of the prime traits of Dr. Russell. He seemed nervous and talked quite fast, but it was because of the sincerity he feels in doing a job and doing it well. He seemed a little hard to get to know, but one probably has to have much closer contact with him to get to know him well.

REACTION

Even though the students benefited greatly from this experience, there was not the outward reaction that had prevailed the week before. It was a younger group than the previous week and an all together different type of people. The only way to explain the difference in the two groups is that the second group didn't seem to react as openly as the first.

CHAPTER III

MR. NILO HOVEY

This was Mr. Hovey's first visit to Eastern and he left an impression on everyone connected with the camp that will not be forgotten for sometime.

Mr. Hovey used the same techniques as did Dr. Russell in getting the band to watch and in reacting to style of conducting. This is really a very accepted practice among band directors and is quite common.

The whole tone of Mr. Hovey's rehearsals was "work, work, work", "learn, learn, learn". He was all business most of the time. He instilled into the group immediately the idea of doing a job well or not doing it at all. Along with this "work, work, work" he explained the purpose of everything done. One of his jobs during the week was to conduct a seminar for a college class and everytime he would do something new, he would explain why to both the band and the group of college students observing the rehearsal. Much good was gained from this because it gave on the spot explanations for things one would normally ask questions about.

Mr. Hovey used one technique that was seldom seen. He trained the band to have a very keen sense of balance between sections and parts. He used his hands at different planes or levels for different dynamic levels. For instance, the left hand, which was used for the lower brass and lower reed sections of the band would react thusly: ff (loud) mf (normal tone)

left hand

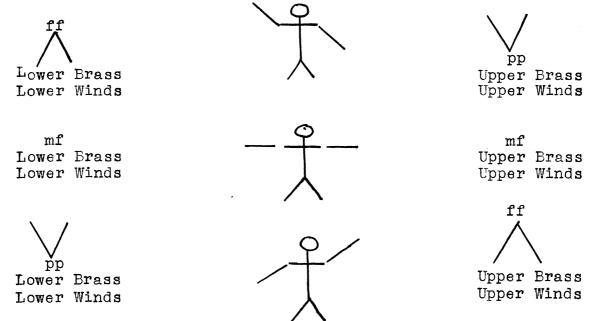
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(soft)

At the same time, the right hand, used for upper brass and upper reeds, might be at the same or possibly a different dynamic level, thusly:

oud) right arm normal tone) oft)

Whenever he changed this balance from (ff) in the upper instruments and (p) in the lower instruments to (p) in the upper and (ff) in the lower, one got the effect of turning a radio dial from full treble to full bass.



This is getting quite technical but since it was one of the most spectacular things done during the week, it is quite important.

Mr. Hovey stressed the importance of each individual member of the band. It is the old adage of - your band is never better than the people sitting on second and third parts. This is something that many have tried to incorporate into their teaching for it is one of the truest things that have been said about hands.

MOTIVATION

Here again the motivation took place toward the own school bands of the individual members. The ideas of balance of section and parts, pride in the organization, as well as a better musical background.

Mr. Hovey made more of the personal praise angle than did Dr. Russell. When he said "good job trumpets", one could almost see the trumpet section swell with pride that they had done a job worthy of such praise.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

One of the most outstanding personality traits of Mr. Hovey was his poise and stage presence. Being a large man with a large voice, he created a very dynamic impression wherever one would happen to come in contact with him.

One had much more of a chance for personal contact with Mr. Hovey than with the other two conductors and it didn't take long to find out just how humble and sincere a man he really was. Many times at the dinner table we would discuss different aspects of music and teaching and he was very willing to lend an ear to our various problems and ways to cope with them. Being a very learned person, he often times led the conversation into aspects of music that were far from my small realm of knowledge. One title that fits him very well is: "A Gentleman and a Scholar".

REACTION

The group liked Mr. Hovey very much as a person and a conductor. Being the type of person that he was, the group reacted more profoundly toward any technique, either new or old, that was used. The band, having much better personnel than the pervious week, went farther musically. The program of music was much more appealing to a high school group; therefore, creating a team spirit that also seemed to be lacking the week before.

The emotional reaction after the concert was tremendous. Many campers wanted to stay for another week, under Mr. Hovey.

CHAPTER IV

MR. ARTHUR REDNER

TECHNIQUES USED

Mr. Redner, in his three years of association with the Eastern Music Camp, has had very good results. His techniques are primarily the same as those of many other choral conductors, and were used very effectively in achieving the goal desired for a camp chorus. One of the main objectives of music camps is to learn and improve the facits that we have through contact with more learned people in the field of music, and this goal was certainly accomplished.

One of the very good things that was done by Mr. Redner was to give quick, on the spot examples to clarify a certain word or phrase meaning. For instance, the word "new" is pronounced as "few", not as "moo". Many times during the course of a rehersal, he would stop the chorus and ask, "How is ------pronounced?" Then the chorus would answer in unison, "------". In this way, the chorus members seemed to remember more vividly the importance of correct word pronunciation and clear diction. Because of this, much of the re-working of numbers was not needed, thus valuable rehersal time was saved.

Mr. Redner was all business when it came to being prompt. As can be expected in groups of this size, there were always the few individuals who had a tendency to not pay much attention to time or its meaning. After the first day, and a few public performances along this line, lateness practically disappeared.

As far as the selection of music was concerned, it was one of the better programs presented at the camp. There was not a real easy number on the entire program, but yet it was found to be very interesting and musical. One fact that impressed me was the fact that the hardest number on the program was in the novelty vein, thus combining work (technique), and pleasure (fun singing).

Being a hard working individual, Mr. Redner seemed to instill into this chorus the sense of finishing any task that was undertaken, and doing it in the shortest possible time. This was especially evident in the latter part of the week when several of the chorus members became quite hoarse from such intensive singing, but refused to quit despite this handicap.

MOTIVATION BY REWARD

Mr. Redner was quick to praise. "Good job", "well done", or "very nicely done", were very often heard after the chorus or an individual section had worked hard on a particular passage or number.

The chorus was at all times treated as adults. Even in his manner of speech Mr. Redner would say, "OK <u>men</u>, let's do it once more". This is one thing that students of this age group enjoy hearing and it was well used.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Mr. Redner is a very friendly, likeable person with an excellent sense of humor and a bagful of witicisms. He was always ready with a joke or humorous remark especially when the going got tough.

One instance stands out in my mind that proves the kind of man that Mr. Redner is. One boy had done nothing but cause trouble for Mr. Redner and the camp staff for the entire week. He had been called down in rehersals, threatened by expulsion by the camp officals and had turned into a regular nuisance. On Friday morning, for some unknown reason, the boy swept the podium and dusted the piano before rehersal. When Mr. Redner found out who had done this, he publicly praised this good deed (in front of the entire chorus). For the remainder of the camp, the boy seemed to change and turned into a normal camper, doing his job and thus enjoying the camp experience.

REACTION OF STUDENTS

The students under Mr. Redner didn't seem to react openly at first, but as the camp progressed, seemed to open up and express themselves more and more. By the end of the week, they were starting cheers for Mr. Redner which proved that they were tremendously enjoying the experience.

Also, many of the campers had come back to the Eastern Music Camp for the third consecutive year to be under Mr. Redner which also points out the fact that he was very well liked by the students under him.

CHAPTER V

MR. EMMETT SARIG

TECHNIQUES USED

In the first rehearsal, Mr. Sarig used many techniques to achieve one purpose, that of finding out just what kind of a band he had to work with. The music that was played was never an entire number, but parts of those which had a feature part for each section. In this way, by the end of the rehearsal, Mr. Sarig had a pretty good idea as to what kind of players he had in each section and whether or not they would be able to handle not only the music that they had rehearsed, but all of the music in the program that had previously been selected. The sectional rehearsals were left to take care of seating the individual performers, but it was at least known what the section as a whole could do, or were capable of doing.

Many techniques that were used demonstrated very vividly the importance of the psycholoical approach to teaching. Mr. sarig used these to the fullest advantage. For instance, the cornets and trumpets were told to hold the bell of the horn approximately three inches higher whenever they came to a trumpeting passage. When this was done, the entire section played out better, had better tones, and were much more alert just from this

one technique. Mr. Sarig verified my idea that this was done with one primary purpose in mind - that of having a job to do and getting it done.

One other technique was used very well. The students were told from the beginning that they were not going to be told, "please, sit up - feet on the floor". For a while I wondered why, for several persons in the group had very bad posture and were not being called on it. Then in the course of the rehersal, Mr. Sarig had sections to play long phrases, written in the music, and hold them in one breath. In this way, in order to have enough breath support to hold a phrase that length, the members of the band began sitting up, for they knew that correct posture was the only way they were going to be able to accomplish this. By the time the first rehersal was nearing a close, I noticed only one person not sitting properly, and yet - posture had not been mentioned, even once.

The Fun-Day Mentals written by Mr. Sarig were used mainly to get the feeling of tonality and also instill intonation consciousness into the band. They could be utilized for many purposes. Scale exercises in all keys, transposing from concert keys to the keys of the individual instruments; arpeggio exercises; triads built on each tone of major scales; examples showing tone of each chord to be played by each instrument; a Bach chorale. The triad exercise was the most used by Mr. Sarig. He

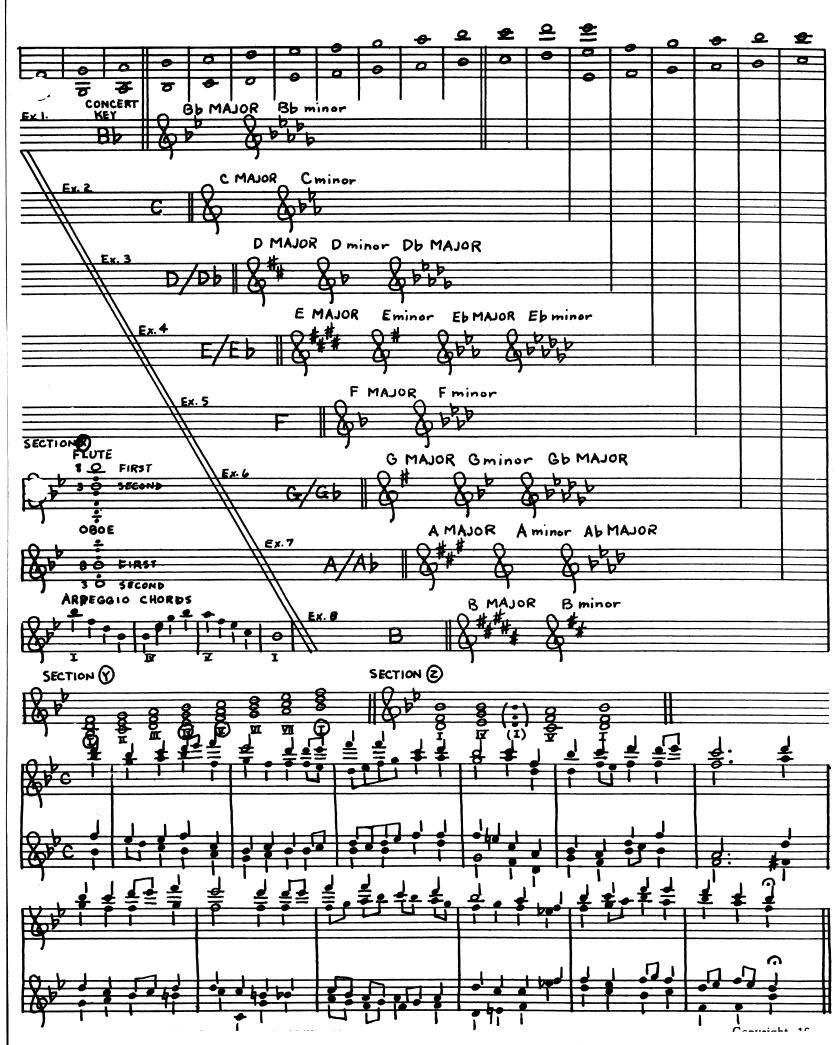
would have the band start on a Concert chord (Tonic or I). Then by half steps, the band would be either up or down, then would sing the tonic chord. This established a good feeling of tonality and intonation. This was very well used and the goal set out for was reached.

One other excellent technique used by Mr. Sarig was the use of clapping rhythms. An entire march was rehersed in this manner, with each player clapping the rhythm of their part. This technique also stressed the point that a rhythm $(\prod_{i=1}^{n})$ could not be clapped thusly $(\prod_{i=1}^{n})$. Therefore, it had to be tongued in the same manner in order to be played correctly. Mr. Sarig made great use of this technique, and it was very effective.

FUN-DAY MENTAL-S

C-INSTRUMENTS

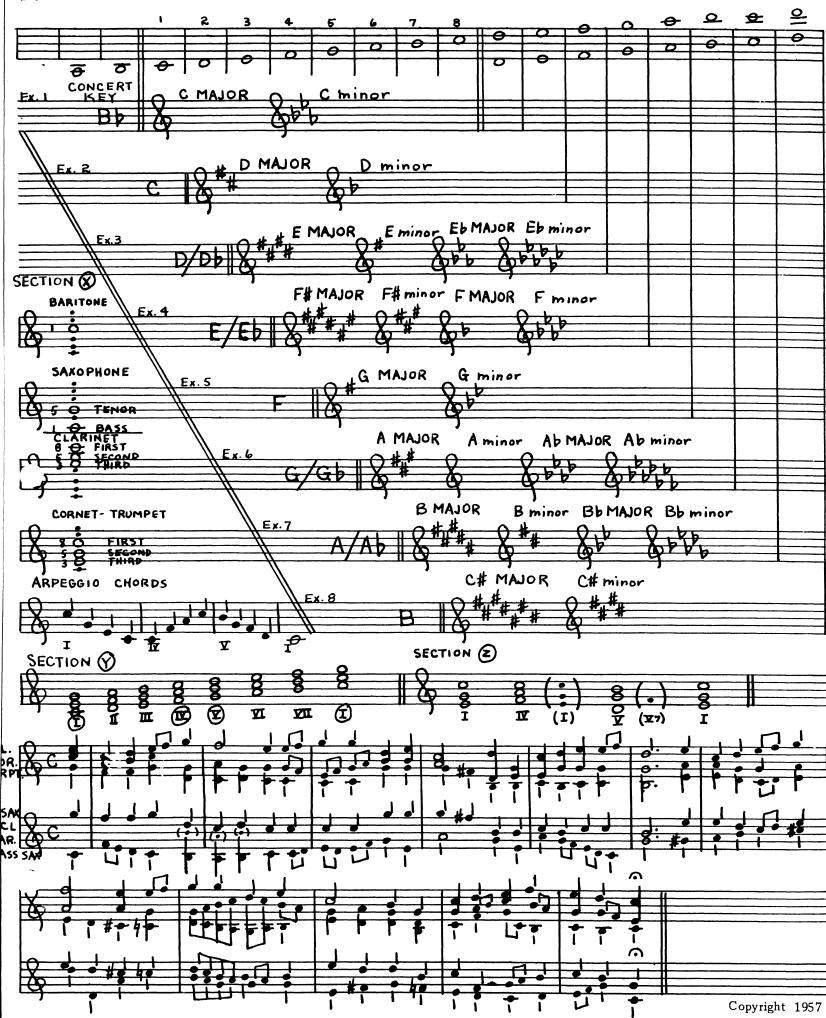
E.R. SARIG



FUN-DAY MENTAL-S

Bb INSTRUMENTS

E.R. SARIG



Eb INSTRUMENTS

E.R. SARIG



FUN-DAY MENTAL-S

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BASS CLEF INSTRUMENTS FUN - DAY- MENTAL - S

E.R. SARIG



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MOTIVATION BY REWARD

Mr. Sarig used nichnames very frequently. The term "weak sisters" was jokingly tagged onto the flutes because of their inability to blow out their part in accordance with the other parts. The reward received by them was words of encouragement whenever they achieved this goal, as well as the realization or conception of true flute tone, and the realization that they had the ability to produce such a tone.

In using the technique to find out the kind of players he had in each section. Mr. Sarig tried to build their confidence as well as improve their playing. For instance, whenever the saxophones were getting their going over, he told them that they were one of the sections in the band that is very seldom heard, but definitely should be. He brought out the point that the saxophones in the present bands carry an important part and are just as essential as any other instrument in the band. This method of encouragement was carried over to each section, but each time in a different way. The French Horns, for instance, were probably the weakest section in the entire band. Whenever they came to a feature horn part, they played very badly. Sensing immediately the embarrassment that prevailed, he immediately asked if anyone had the same part cued into their parts. Finding that the saxophones had the cues, he had the horns and the saxophones play the part together. After one time of this, the saxophones

alone were asked to play this part. Through this, the horns learned that they had to buckle down and really work to keep up with the other sections and began improving from that time on.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

Mr. Sarig was a very friendly, likeable person and held the respect of all concerned with the camp. He participated in all of their activities as if he was a camper himself, but never lowering their, the campers, respect for him. He was always willing to hear any question or problem that arose, and give as complete an answer as possible.

Likened to Mr. Hovey, he was a dynamo on the podium, always asking and pulling for more and shouting words of encouragement as he went along. Having a very good sense of humor, he kept the band in a pleasant frame of mind at all times with funny remarks and jokes, but also knew when to turn the rehersal into a serious, hard working session.

REACTION OF STUDENTS

Mr. Sarig, as has been stated, was very well liked. His participation in all events made the big difference as far as a lot of campers were concerned.

In interviews of several of the students, they had many usuable things to take home to their own bands. Although some of the techniques seemed to be overworked, the students didn't show it. Everyone enjoyed very much their week's contact with Mr. Emmett Sarig, University of Wisconsin.

CHAPTER VI

MR. NEWELL H. LONG

TECHNIQUES USED

The second week of band camp started much differently than did the first. Mr. Newell Long with his quiet manner and soft speaking voice was quite in contrast with Mr. Sarig of the previous week.

During the first rehersal, the seating of individual performers was done, which gave the band a seemingly faster start than the previous week. The sight reading was done by "plowing through" each and every number before any real work was done on any of them. This was done to give the band an idea of the entire program before any "down to earth" rehersing was started. This seemed to backfire, for the band more or less established a sloppy style which was never quite overcome. The band, having much better personnel than the previous week, seemed to not need the intense rehersing on spots. Every section was very strong, especially in the low brass and double reed sections. Mr. Long was overheard to say, "This is a better group of musicians than I sometimes get at the University (Indiana)" which coming from Mr. Long, is quite a compliment to the organization.

To give some background on Mr. Long, he is definitely a scholar in the music field. His compositions and instrumental methods are widely used and highly rated throughout the United States. In fact, three of his numbers were used in the camp program. "Yankee Doodle", "Lincoln Overture", and an arrangement of "Lazy River".

The soft, quiet voice which he used throughout the week is a hint as to the type person Mr. Long is. He is a man of all business in that he never raised his voice, but you had better be listening to what was said. Because of this trait, the band had to be quiet to hear what was said, for he told them what he wanted, and naturally expected it to be carried out. Several offenders were "shushed" by other people in their section, especially during the first day of rehearsal.

MOTIVATION BY REWARD

Being the type man he is, Mr. Long seldom gave a compliment unless it was justly deserved. He believed that the band members were there for one purpose, that of music and performance of such. Whenever any individual or section would show that they were performing to the fullest, then Mr. Long would say, "That's the way, clarinets", etc. . This type of approach is effective with an older, more musically sound group, of which this band was one.

PERSONALITY TRAITS

As was mentioned previously, Mr. Long was a quiet, softspoken person. His action on the podium followed the same pattern. His work was filled with the sincere desire to do a job and to do it to the utmost of his ability. Here again was a man with whom one would have to have much closer contact to get to know him well.

REACTION OF STUDENTS

The band under Mr. Long proved to be much the better band of the two band camps. From the start, the personnel was much stronger musically than the week before. The students seemed to have a much more serious outlook as to the performance of music and they seemed to fit in with Mr. Long's style very well. Even though the last few rehersals sounded under-rehersed, the concert went very well, which is a pat on the back to the band as well as Mr. Long.

SUMMARY

Personality, methodology, and type of music selected are the most important aspects of camp conductors that make them either a success or failure. The Eastern Music Camp had been very fortunate in finding the right men for the job and has enjoyed much success in its young existence.

Personality cannot be explained in a few words. It is a combination of many things put together into one package. A few of them are: smile, manner, sense of humor, speaking voice, and sincerity. These are only a few of the many things that help to define the word personality. As far as a conductor is concerned, manner on the podium, manner off the podium, and participation in events can also be included. The reaction of students after a week's stay with a conductor usually tells most of the story as far as the personality of the person is concerned. Many times a person is judged not on what he knows but on the type of pleasant or unpleasant personality that is involved.

The second aspect is methodology. This also can be broken down into a sequence of four steps. They are: the way the technique is presented, the way it is developed or followed up, the goal accomplished, and the carry-home value of the technique. The presentation of a technique must be clear, concise and to the point. It should be explained in such a way as to reveal the goal desired. In this way, the students know what they are

striving for, therefore do a much better job in working toward that goal. The follow-up is also very important. When an understanding of the technique is reached, then work must follow in order to accomplish the desired result. These two points are very closely tied together. There will be no real follow-up if there is not a good presentation, and the presentation falls flat if there is no follow-up. The goal accomplished speaks for itself. In everything done there must be a goal, and if attained, your work has been worthwhile.

The carry-home value is probably the most valuable part of all. The purpose of the camp is to promote and strengthen the musical backgrounds of high school students and the only way to do this is to give them something that is lasting, something that they can take home to their own bands and help to improve them in turn. This goes for band directors as well. By observation, one can see and hear things done that can be incorporated into their own teaching, therefore improving themselves as band directors and their own bands as well.

The third aspect is the type of music used during the week of camp. Does the music have any real value? Is it interesting enough to high school students? Is it too difficult? Is it too easy? Is it enjoyable to listen to? These are only a few of the questions considered whenever music is selected for a music camp program. Another thing to be considered is the fact that a conductor has no idea as to the caliber of musicians that will attend

the camp, and the music has to be selected in advance of this knowledge. Although the caliber of preceding bands is known, what is to come is not.

All programs to date have been very well received. The selection of music has had all the aspects desired for a week of concentrated rehearsal. There has been a good variance in type heavy to light - and enough contrasting numbers to keep the group on their toes as well as interested.

Eastern Music Camp, as has been stated before, has had a great deal of success since its inauguration. It has been achieving its primary purpose very well in bolstering the interest of music throughout the entire state.