

Hats

Appropriateness is situational. What is normal and functional in one context can be completely inappropriate and even detrimental in another. Take, for example, the standard baseball cap: appropriate on a baseball player or a football coach, while a football helmet works on a football player and definitely not on a baseball coach. A top hat is expected at a formal 18th century function or onstage with Guns 'n' Roses, but it's not a great option for a day at the beach (unless you like sun exposure and unwanted attention). As musicians, the majority of our time is spent in solitary practice and rehearsals. The mindset that is productive in this setting is almost guaranteed to sabotage a performance if used outside of the practice room. Noted violin pedagogue Ivan Galamian described 3 different attitudes or foci: Building, Interpretation, and Performance. I like to think of them in a slightly different order: Analysis (Interpretation), Construction (Building), and Performance (... Performance).



Analysis

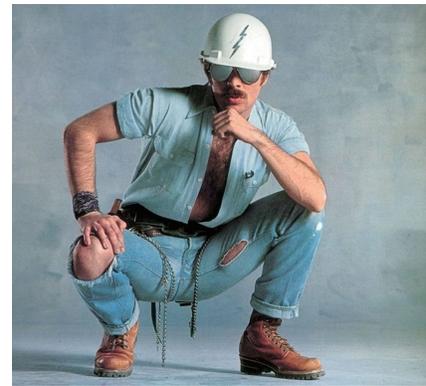


This is the part of the process that will form the basis of your strategies for the Construction phase. It involves immersing yourself in the music. Listening and score study will make up a large part of this time. Cast your net wide to avoid being overly-influenced by one single performer/ensemble. Examine different editions, and seek out Urtext or manuscripts where possible so that you can make your own choices and understand the alterations made by editors. It begins with informing your aesthetic and making choices about your interpretation. This will include analyzing the overall form and structure of the piece including harmony and phrase structure. Style considerations will also come into play. HIP (Historically Informed Performance) is no longer a fringe or niche pursuit (nor has it been for quite a

while); ALL performers need some exposure to performance practice techniques even if they are performing transcriptions on a modern instrument with a modern bow and steel strings. Be HIP or be SQUARE (Sub-Quality, Uneducated, And, Random, Execution). Decisions about color, character, and emotional content should also be undertaken at this stage. All of this will provide the framework for your construction. If you are only focused on abstract accuracy in the Construction phase, all it takes is one mistake, and you now have nothing to offer.

Construction

This is where you will translate your musical intentions into mechanics. Anything technical belongs in this phase. It all starts with intonation, continues with intonation, and is followed by intonation. Intonation is the single greatest challenge in a performance as poor or inconsistent intonation will distract the listener from other aspects of your performance. It is no secret that intonation and rhythm issues are the top reasons for getting cut at an audition. The issue is not that players are unaware of the importance of these 2 fundamentals. It is that students frequently underestimate the depth, preparation, and dedication required to perform consistently at a high level. Bowing choices to illuminate your phrasing decisions, and decisions about appropriate bow strokes and articulations for the repertoire at hand need to be addressed. Body awareness, general ease, and releasing excess tension should accompany every part of the construction process. Create a solid strategy for metronome work over the time that you have available for preparation so that everything has a chance to settle and integrate. Burton Kaplan's essential book "Practicing for Artistic Success" contains numerous detailed and thoughtful procedurals for this kind of work. Hopefully you have honored the intent of the Analysis phase so that Construction is all about the "how" and not about the "what".



Performance

This is where we frequently get into the most trouble. Now any focus on conscious execution or technique will inevitably result in a subpar performance. The subconscious mind is the



most effective executor of fine motor coordination. We have to program our corporeal machine, and then get out of the way. Sports psychologist and author Dr. Bob Rotella sums it up succinctly: “Train, then trust”. The time for thinking about mechanics has long past. You have 3 things to focus on during performance:

Move.

Breathe.

Sing.

The 3 phases stages of preparation and execution should proceed from the complex to the simple so that by the time we are at the concert/audition/recital/etc. we have done everything in our power to have a chance to access our higher selves and perform effortlessly “in the zone”.



FRACTAL FRIDAY TOPICS!

Please submit comments or suggestions for future topics to davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com

NITEHOOD Coupon!

20% off plus FREE shipping. Valid through March. Go to www.nitehood.com

FRACTAL FORUM: Friday Forums are on “pause” for the moment

NEXT FORUM:

2/7 @ 10AM PT.

Fractal Fingering “deep dive” continues...

MORE SPECIAL GUESTS!

Hal Robinson (February date TBD)

Paul Ellison (date TBD)

FRACTAL BASSIST Channel on YouTube (Coming Soon!)

This invite-only YouTube channel will be a continuation, development and place to share these ideas and principles. Although the entire Fractal Fingering course and samples are available online and at DiscoverDoubleBass.com, this channel will provide a forum for more in-depth content and to address questions on a more individual basis.

If you have any questions, comments, ideas you'd like explored, or inspiration you'd like to share please email: davidallenmoore@fractalbassist.com.

With Love,

D