

## **Kyle Aufderhar Teaching Philosophy**

Each student is individual, with unique strengths, weaknesses, hopes and dreams. Students in a music class or ensemble represent a multitude of interests and career goals. I have the opportunity as a music educator to facilitate cooperative music-making, exposure to a diverse array of composers and repertoire, and an individual, specialized development of musicianship, which I believe are beneficial for all students. These are the components of a sound music education, and their effects on students lead to positive growth mentally, socially, and emotionally.

As a conductor, I believe that the highest level of cooperative music-making can only be achieved if I myself come to rehearsal ready to facilitate it. I believe it is important that a conductor arrive at each and every rehearsal prepared as completely as possible. This includes an intimate knowledge of the score, an aural image of the music, as well as a clear plan to progress toward that aural image. This allows for an environment that is thoroughly student-centered, as the conductor is able to devote their attention entirely to the people in front of them, and foster a cooperative experience that is artistic, connective, and meaningful.

I also believe that the repertoire one chooses to program with their ensemble is a decision not to be taken lightly. Firstly, each ensemble is different, and a conductor should program pieces that are challenging in ways that will allow their students to grow as musicians, but which are also at a level of attainability that empowers their students to feel successful. Repertoire should also be selected by considering the educational or historical value of each piece of music, as well as by considering the makeup of American classrooms and society today. I believe that it is critical to expose one's students to an array of repertoire written by composers of different sexes, races, ethnicities, and identities. This practice instills in students a critical awareness, understanding, and empathy.

Ensemble rehearsals, just like any other teaching and learning setting, require the conductor to be able to modify their instruction in order to affect individual ensembles, sections, and players. Ideally, the number of different teaching techniques available to the conductor should match the level of differentiation in musical skill and learning style inherent in each ensemble. Verbal instruction can take many forms, including: singing/modeling, description, analogy, or explanation. As a conductor, I believe that differentiated instruction should also translate to differentiated gesture. Conductors should constantly be assessing what the ensemble needs, and should be prepared to modify their gestures in order to facilitate those needs.

Finally, I believe that being an educator and conductor also includes being a role model for one's students. An educator and conductor should embody all of the qualities that they expect from their students, including musicianship, integrity, sincerity, and empathy. Students learn not only

from what their teachers say to them, but also from the manner with which those things are said. The privilege to conduct should not be taken lightly, as what and how things are said on the podium have the potential to affect students for a lifetime.

In conclusion, I believe a holistic teaching philosophy that is shaped around the students and their success is immensely important. Student success is comprised of many parts, including: academic achievement, self-efficacy, retention, and a persistence that carries a student from semester to semester, year to year, and to the successful completion of their degree. I believe that all of these are positively affected when a student is part of a university music or band program. A student's participation in something where they feel valued and a sense of belonging, goes a long way toward boosting individual self-efficacy and fighting student attrition. I believe that as a director, I have the privilege and ability to foster a program culture that empowers each student to be successful.

Finally, I believe that the success of each student can also be affected outside of the rehearsal or classroom, and I believe that my role as a teacher goes beyond my time in these spaces. As a teacher, I am invested in each student and their individual success. Often, a student's belief in themselves, their academic achievement in the classroom, and their subsequent completion of a degree is greatly impacted by a teacher's willingness to give time outside of class, by having an open door, and showing that they care.