

Evaluative Questions for the Teacher

Aspects of performance to listen for, when teaching and coaching

General presentation

1. Knowledge of the music: Is it there?
2. Knowledge of the composer?
3. Knowledge of the style?
4. How the piece is made?
5. What is important from moment to moment?
6. Intention: Is there enough feeling, and the appropriate feeling, behind the notes?
7. Is the performer/ensemble inspired?
8. Energy: Is there enough or too much, and is it used correctly?
9. Are the musicians in control of the music or the other way around?
10. Is the character of what is coming out correct, and is it strong enough?
11. Is there stage presence? What is coming out? Is the performer playing for the room?

Musical elements

1. Tempo: Is it too fast or slow? Steady or not?
2. How is the pulse? Consistent or weak?
3. Dynamics: Is there enough contrast? Have extremes been reached?
4. Are crescendos and diminuendos effectively executed?
5. Rhythms: Do they have the right character suited to the style of the music, and are they engaging?
6. Phrases: Lengths and shapes? Rise and fall? Commas, periods? Cadences?
7. Does the music develop as it progresses? Is there variety in repetitions? Is there appropriate treatment of sequences?
8. Timing: Is it effective? Is there awareness of it? Variety?
9. Voicing: Is it distinct enough? Do different lines need different characters? Are there colors, articulations, dynamics, in the voicing? Is it like conversation?
10. Silences and rests: Are they respected and used effectively?

Instrumental elements

1. Articulation: Is a distinction made between spoken and sung music? Between musical consonants and vowels?

2. Is the articulation matched between instruments when it needs to be?
3. Are the articulations different enough when they are supposed to be?
4. Acoustical projection: Are all notes and details heard well enough?

5. Colors: -Are there enough? Are they strong enough? Are they appropriate to the music?
6. Texture: Is it correct - thick, thin, plush, clean, transparent, etc?
7. Is the sound production healthy?
8. Vibrato: Is it slow, fast, wide, narrow, serving the music? Is there variety? Does it change with the music?
9. Use of bow: Using enough? Is there variety in pressure, use of sounding point, and speed?
10. Intonation good?
11. Pianists: Use of pedal – enough, too much, in the right places and the right way?

Ensemble elements:

1. Communication between performers: Is it there? Does it come across to the listener?
2. Responsiveness between performers: is it there?
3. What is the basic metabolism/personality of the group?
4. Roles: Is everyone aware of the roles their parts play from moment to moment?