

Soloing With Success

by Bill Russell Scott

Three years ago I began a concerto program for my high school symphony orchestra that has made a tremendous impact on the quality of that ensemble. In the past, soloists had been selected by a competition. Students would audition in the winter and the winners would perform with the orchestra the following spring. While the performances were acceptable, I always sensed a certain disdain on the part of the orchestra members. Many felt slighted that a small minority was getting all of the attention.

A different approach was needed. In the spring of 1985 I informed the orchestra that during the following May we would split the 100-member group into two orchestras of equal ability and perform an all-concerto concert. The string students would be

permanently assigned to one of the two orchestras; the winds and brass would work with each ensemble on a rotating basis. Assistant conductor Paul Buyer and I would share the conducting responsibilities. Students would not audition for a solo opportunity. Instead their selection would be based on a mutual agreement between the conductor and the student. I invited students who felt they were interested in performing a concerto to discuss the possibility with me. We then formed a committee consisting of the student, private teacher, and myself to select a concerto that would be viable and beneficial for both the performer and the orchestra. We chose concertos one year prior to the performance so that the students would have the entire summer to begin their work.

In May of 1986 our first concerto concert took place featuring 12 students performing 11 concertos. As more students became involved, we expanded the annual concerto concert to include 16 soloists. Since then, performing a concerto with the Spartan High Symphony has become a prestigious honor for the students. The girls dress in formal gowns and the boys wear tuxedos while the

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1988 Concerto Program

Concertino for Trumpet IV. Finale	G. F. Handel
Concerto in A major for Double Bass I. Allegro moderato	Domenico Dragonetti
Concerto in A minor for Violin, B.W.V. 1041 I. Allegro	J.S. Bach
Concerto in G major for Flute I. Allegro	Carl Stamitz
Concerto in D major for Cello II. Allegro moderato	Giuseppi Tartini
Concerto in D minor for Two Violins, B.W.V. 1060 I. Vivace	J.S. Bach
Caprice-Waltz for Piano and Orchestra, Op. 76	C. Saint-Saëns

Concerto in D major for Piano I. Allegro	F.J. Haydn
Concerto in E minor for Violin I. Allegro moderato	Pietro Nardini
Concerto in B minor for Viola I. Allegro moderato	G.F. Handel
Concerto in D minor for Violin III. Presto	Giuseppi Tartini
Allegro Appassionato, Op. 43 for Cello	C. Saint-Saëns
Concerto in G major for Violin, K. 216 III. Rondo	W.A. Mozart
Italian Street Song from Naughty Marietta for voice I. Allegro non troppo	Victor Herbert
	Eduard Lalo

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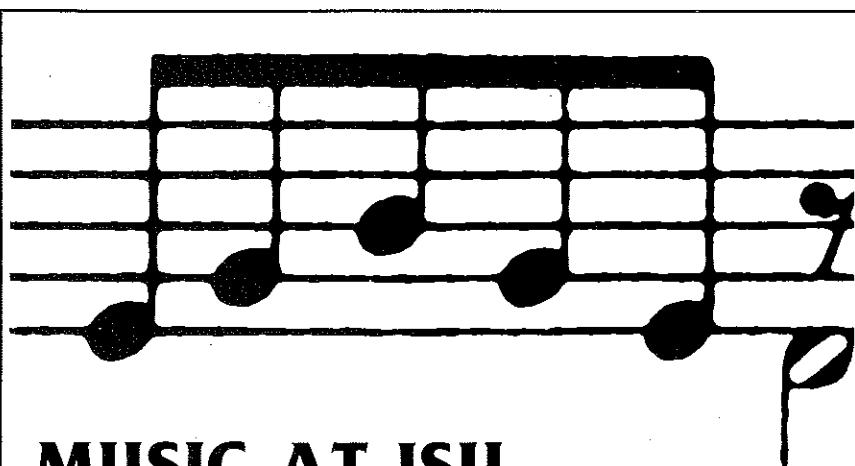
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Conductors: William Wakefield,
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June 19-June 30

Choral

"Show Choir Routines"
Clinicians: Kevin Butler,
Ann Conrad, and Steve Zegree
Dates: July 9-July 15 (I)
July 16-July 22 (II)

Music Education

Elementary Music
Workshop
Clinician: Catherine
Nadon-Gabriel
August 6-August 12

Music Education

Junior High School
General Music
Clinician: Larry Eisman
July 30-August 5

Music Theatre

The musical "The Mystery
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presented by high school
students.

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Sheila and Kirk Wahamaki,
Robert Hounchell, and
David Del Colletti

July 29-August 11

Fees:

High School

Students—\$89.50

A registration fee of \$89.50 for each workshop includes a \$23 application fee. Indiana residents in grades 9-12 receive one semester hour university credit which may later be used as elective credit on an ISU degree program. The non-resident non-credit fee is also \$89.50. Any non-resident students in grades 9-12 desiring university credit must pay the non-resident fee of \$176.50 which includes a \$23 required application fee. (Refund available upon written request up to the week preceding workshop beginning.)

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(per semester hour)

Indiana Resident
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Indiana Resident Graduate—\$78.50
Non-Resident
Undergraduate—\$153.50
Non-Resident Graduate—\$171.50

Housing:

Room and Board (indicate on application if housing is desired.)

Students—\$85
Directors—\$78

For Further Information and Application Contact:

Music Workshops, Continuing Education and
Instructional Services, Indiana State University, Terre
Haute, Indiana 47809

Friends of the Orchestra, our parent support group, provides flowers for each soloist. Because of the length of the program, we do not allow curtain calls. When the solo is completed, parents come onto the stage, congratulate the soloist, and present the flowers. Because parents should receive acknowledgement for their many years of musical support, we invite them on stage with their son or daughter. This is a poignant moment for everyone involved. Our local Cable T.V. station televises all of the performances and duplicates videotapes for parents. Audio recordings are also made available to the public, and the printed programs feature a biography of each soloist.

Since the program's inception, 34 different students have performed concertos with the orchestra. The majority of these are seniors and represent 26 percent of the symphony's graduating class. The concerto program for May 1989 promises to be a challenging one; to date 20 students have expressed an interest in soloing.

In addition to enhancing the performing level of the symphony, the concerto concerts have been a healthy experience for the accompanying orchestra. With split rehearsals, five more string students have the opportunity to develop leadership skills as principal players. Likewise, students enjoy performing in the more intimate chamber orchestra setting. Because of this opportunity, our players have become more sensitive to dynamics, balance, and ensemble. With the large number of featured soloists, each student realizes that he has the opportunity to perform if he is willing to work for it; thus, the feeling of being used as an accompanist does not develop.

The success of this program is largely due to its perception by the orchestra students; soloists view the concert as an opportunity for personal and individual expression through the art of music. When students see their peers playing solos, a concerto becomes a natural thing to do.

The concerto concert is a student-focused program designed to feature the soloists's abilities and highlight their talents. While the selection of soloists has alleviated the pressure of student competing against student, we do encourage a form of competition; it is that which exists when a student competes with himself for the best possible performance. □