

All-State: Comprehensive Musicianship Through Performance

presented by Leyla Sanyer

compiled by Faith Farr

(as reported by Marianne Buchanan, Connie Conrad, Cassandra Herold, Kevin Martin)

Leyla Sanyer, presented CMP — Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance — a model for presenting a piece of literature to students that seeks to help the students understand more than the notes, for example the musical form, key signature relationships, rhythmic relationships and historical context. CMP is essentially a system of studying literature which emphasizes thorough score study/lesson planning. The CMP model is designed to expose students to a holistic view of the music being played. Improvisation and composition are also part of the process.

Ms. Sanyer's first session was a model rehearsal, using several of the pieces which she had subjected to thorough study within the CMP context. Her style of introducing a new piece began with a singing sequence in which she played a theme from the new piece and the students sang it back. The call and response method then progressed to the students playing back what they had been singing. This is a great way to introduce ear training and work on memorization at the same time.

After briefly introducing a new piece, Sanyer moved to a different piece by telling the students clues such as time and key signature or nationality of the composer, instead of just the title. She then progressed to a movement sequence which introduced a difficult rhythm from the piece. The passage containing this rhythm was then rehearsed, allowing students to understand the movement sequence within its context.

Sanyer (as part of her lesson planning) pulled out several terms and concepts from the music, and rather than giving students the information, she supplied a dictionary and had a student offer the given definition, which was subsequently discussed. This is a good time to hand out some recipe cards.

The cards can be kept in the music folder to write new musical terms with definitions. The musical concepts used were also compared and contrasted with musical ideas in other pieces. Students were also given an opportunity to write a visceral response to the music being played.

The CMP model has five key areas: **Selection, Analysis, Outcome, Strategies** and **Assessment**. A diagram of the model shows each of these areas in a circle; a teacher wishing to incorporate this model into her teaching could choose any one of the five areas as a starting point, allowing her to fit the model into her individual teaching style.

The **Selection** area asks teachers to collect basic information about the piece and how it will be used, such as the type of program, level of difficulty and instrumentation. It also looks at various musical elements, such as rhythm, harmony, form and style as components of study. **Analysis** asks how these elements are used, as well as what other compositional elements can be found. Students can also investigate historical and cultural traditions associated with the piece. In analysis, one will want to find the "heart" of the piece whether it be a rhythmic or melodic motive, a structural element, or some other component that brings the piece to life.

Outcomes are associated with what the teacher wants the student to learn, and should cover three areas: feelings, knowledge and skills. Both long- and short-range outcomes should be addressed; several compositions can be used to address an outcome. **Strategies** are the "how" — how does a teacher guide the students to the desired outcome. Consider that there are many ways in which students learn, and thus material should be presented in various

formats to ensure that students develop a complete understanding. The CMP model is a very collaborative learning style. If there are some students who don't understand, let them work as partners or in small groups. Students learn from one another, not only the teacher.

The final area CMP addresses is the **Assessment**. Assessment should occur at all stages in the learning process. Before starting a piece, ask what the students' goals are — what do they feel they need to work on? While working through the plan, assess both how the students feel about their progress and how you (the teacher) feel about the progress. Are you on track to reaching your goals? After the section of work is completed, choose an appropriate assessment tool — a performance, a portfolio, a test, self-critique or other culminating project — through which the students' work can be evaluated.

Because of time constraints, Sanyer was not able to do a full teaching of a piece. She did, however, open a window into a thorough method which works very effectively for her and other directors. Within the context of the model rehearsal, she offered a list of descriptive words to explain how the learning took place. These are: movement, singing, writing, imagining, discussion, create, compose, history, research, analysis, compare/contrast, transfer, improvise, and related arts. Of particular note was the emphasis on thorough lesson planning and the positive effect it can have on student learning in the orchestra classroom.

Leyla Sanyer is a high school orchestra teacher from Oregon, Wisconsin. Comprehensive Music Performance (CMP) has been designed and used in Wisconsin. †