

All-State: The Cello: Salient Features for Technical and Musical Growth

presented by Joshua Koestenbaum

Joshua Koestenbaum's masterclass was outstanding — he was very funny, very kind and very persistent. He made several main points to the students that we audience teachers will be able to use in our teaching.

Koestenbaum spoke about all instruments needing to be well-adjusted in order to avoid muscle tension on the part of the performer and emphasized using less muscle work to have more fun. He suggested that students need to be aware of tension in the shoulders and upper arms and reminded them that the instrument holds up the bow. Students should not have to place fingers in a stiff bow grip, since that limits freedom and builds tension. Left hands need to drop from above the string with very little

involvement from the thumb.

Koestenbaum was very encouraging to the students and emphasized phrasing and emotion. He said, "I don't care about the



Cello Masterclass Participants: Daniel Ericksen, Scott Nes, Ali Jones

music. I care about the shapes." He spoke about becoming identical with the music one is playing and suggested always memo-

rizing a piece so the sheet music doesn't get between the performer and the audience. Fear in performance is something that all musicians face and he told the students that they need to find ways to face their fear and then go back to focus on the music.

Hands tend to get cold when a performer gets an adrenaline rush and Koestenbaum suggesting visualizing something hot, and what it feels like. You can actually warm your hands this way! The same concept could be applied to relaxation — wonderful for an audition or performance.

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