

Clinic — Teaching String Techniques has Never been so Easy!

presented by Kirk Moss — reported by Faith Farr

In his clinic presentation, Kirk Moss gave us a thorough overview of the *Sound Innovations* series published by Alfred:

- *Sound Innovations: Sound Development: Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique — Intermediate String Orchestra* (green book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips and Kirk Moss
- *Sound Innovations: Sound Development: Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique — Advanced String Orchestra* (purple book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips and Kirk Moss
- *Sound Innovations: Creative Warm-ups: Exercises for Intonation, Rhythm, Bowing, and Creativity — Intermediate String Orchestra* (gold book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips, Kirk Moss, Matt Turner and Stephen Benham

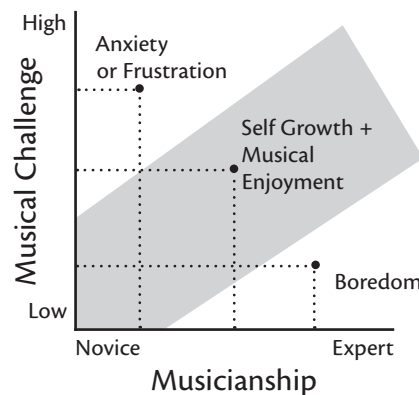
Books are available both physically and digitally. Through SI Online, teachers, students and parents can access multimedia resources including play-along tracks (for every line of music in the green book and select lines of music in the gold book), video lessons from expert musicians and teachers, and supplemental content with additional repertoire for practice and reinforcement. Kirk also mentioned the newer books in the series:

- *Sound Differentiation: for Beginning String Orchestra* that provides differentiated parts for 15 well-known tunes—perfect for a variety of teaching situations, including odd or incomplete instrumentation, or when working

with a mix of ability levels.

- *Sound Orchestra: Ensemble Development for String or Full Orchestra* that can be used when starting winds and strings together.

Kirk showed us a chart from David Elliott's book *Music Matters* that relates musical challenge with musicianship. To avoid boredom (because the music is “too easy”) and anxiety or frustration (because the music is “too hard”) we need to build technique and sound skills. Frustration is not having the



technique to play musically. Self growth and musical enjoyment come when the musical challenge appropriately matches the musicianship level. Helping students develop good technique increases retention and student satisfaction.

Kirk took us through various one-line exercises from *Sound Innovations* designed to develop sensitivity for controlling bow speed, weight and contact point. He cov-

ered classical bow strokes including martelé, collé and spiccato, and contemporary bow strokes like the chop. Left hand development includes finger patterns and shifting exercises. Kirk recommended playing 3 octave scales with the first two octaves in quarter notes, and the top octave in half notes—to have more time to attend to the bow and left-hand precision required in the high register.

The gold book includes a *Sound Creativity* section. Using 8-measure chaconnes in classic, Latin and rock styles, students are given guidelines for creating melodic, rhythmic and bowing variations. The gold book ends with an introduction to the Arabic/Turkish taqsim form. This section of the book equips students to improvise by moving from the familiar to the less familiar.

Kirk is convinced that kids can do anything; we just have to teach them how. Teachers make a difference in the lives of students—keep doing what you are doing!

At the University of Northwestern-St. Paul, Kirk Moss is Dean of 2 colleges and 12 departments from Engineering to Music; he brings a creative lens to STEM areas. He is a past national president of the American String Teachers Association, five times chaired the ASTA National Orchestra Festival, and held office on ASTA's Executive Board. He has coauthored Sound Innovations series method books for Alfred Music.

Faith Farr has been editor of this magazine since 1996. ‡