

beyond the **notes** and **rhythms**

a practical approach to musical expression

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Introduction

Beyond the Notes and Rhythms: A Practical Approach to Musical Expression is the product of a long journey in my exploration of theatre pedagogy. It began with the production of a theatrical trombone work in October of 2009 called *Eight Poems of William Carlos Williams* by David Vayo. After working with a theatre director, I realized some of the exercises and advice I was given would translate well for musicians in cultivating creativity, listening skills, and musical expression.

The exercises in chapters one, two and three are adaptations of the teachings of Michael Chekhov, Sanford Meisner via Bill Esper, and The Viewpoints Method. Obviously, many of the exercises had to be modified to accommodate music's unique characteristics, but the end result is a very effective method to teaching musical expression.

Aside from the exercises, *Beyond the Notes and Rhythms* is comprised of thirty-one unique etudes containing no musical expression markings of any sort. It is meant that the performer would not play them as written, but test the etude's potential to work in a variety of styles. Each etude was chosen or composed because of its potential to be versatile and most times it offers contrasting sections and repeated material.

It is assumed performers would ask themselves questions such as: Could this etude be legato? If so, should the articulation be a Classical style of strung short slurs or a longer slur indicative of the Romantic style? The exercises exist to help performers realize their vision to the fullest potential and to question their own interpretation.

Many of the exercises outlined are modeled on a mentor/apprenticeship relationship which seeks to mimic the way most musicians learn today, via the private lesson. Although the exercises are learned and used during lessons, they will also provide a vehicle for the student to explore during the week in between lessons. The exercises would also work well between colleagues and in ensemble settings.

It is important that the student have an advanced high school level of technical ability to work from this book. To test a student's ability level, the instructor should ask the student to repeat back exactly what they hear; then the instructor should play a musical phrase a few different ways. If the student is able to repeat back exactly what was played, he or she is ready.

Supplemental resources, including links to related web sites and audio recordings of the etudes, are housed online at www.mountainpeakmethods.com. The recordings demonstrate clearly how the etudes might be interpreted; readers are encouraged to explore their own interpretive ideas using the techniques described in the following chapters, using the recordings as inspirational guides.

Visit www.mountainpeakmethods.com and follow the instructions in the front cover of this book.

1.  

2.  

3.    