

Missouri Music Educators' Association  
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***"I Don't Have Time for Score Study!"- Score Study***

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In this packet, the reader will see a 5 Step Score Study system. A conductor's work in preparing a score should always lead to the building of their intent: what kind of musical interpretation, expectation and problem solving for the ensemble. In addition – I hope this system will help conductors in their own score study process and evolution.

Musical Examples from:

Benjamin Britten's *Simply Symphony*, Mvt. III *Sentimental Saraband*, Oxford University Press.

## STEP 1: LOGISTICS OF THE SCORE

- Tape loose pages from your score.
- Is the score too small? Blow up pages to a size you don't have to strain to see. Mini scores are much cheaper than full size – however, sometimes you pay the price straining to see the notes.
- Do you need to Spiral Bound your score?
- Do you need to laminate your front and back cover to help with longevity?
- Do you need to put it into a three ring binder?
- Do you need to separate your systems? If you have trouble using the double lines to separate your systems, you could go the big step, and separate the systems with a line. I use a red line – and not just any ordinary red line – I use an “EXPO Vis-à-vis” red marker. The line is thick enough and it doesn't bleed through the paper. \*\*\*BEWARE OF SHARPIE MARKERS\*\*\*



## STEP 2: IDENTIFY THE INFORMATION YOU HAVE

- Reinforce dynamic areas
- Locate and identify large tempo areas – in addition to small *rit.* sections the composer intended.
- Time signatures
- Repeated areas (if any)
- Instrumental/choral effects: *col legno*, *pizzicato*, muted, stopped, falsetto, etc.
- Percussion needs
- Solo lines
- Instruction translations – translate your foreign languages you are not familiar with. Nothing worse than dodging a student's question about a translation by asking them if they have looked it up – when clearly, you haven't.
- Score history/Composer Information

Page 1 and page 5 of score cont.



Benjamin Britten: English  
(11/22/1913 - 12/4/1976)

Premier: 1934

Op. 4 - for str Qtet or orch.  
Dec. 1933 - from piano Suite  
Dedicated to Audrey Alston (Britten 17  
vla teacher)

### III SENTIMENTAL SARABAND

*in 3*

*a little slow & heavy*

Poco lento e pesante

VIOLIN I

VIOLIN II

VIOLA

VIOLONCELLO

DOUBLE BASS  
(ad libitum)

*for  
orch.*

Handwritten notes: *more più f* (under measure 1), *f simile (same)* (under measure 4), *dim. Less* (under measure 7), *arco* (under measure 8).

Handwritten notes: *dim.* (under measure 16).



more agitated  
restless

5 Più agitato

Handwritten annotations: *marc. molto* (above staff 1), *sustain* (above staff 2), *f sost. arco* (above staff 3), *(marc.)* (above staff 4), *D.B. arco* (circled, above staff 5), *ff pesante e marc.* (below staff 5).

Printed annotations: *mf cresc.* (above staff 1), *mf cresc.* (above staff 2), *mf cresc.* (above staff 3), *ff pesante e marc.* (below staff 5).

Handwritten annotation: *simile* (above staff 1).

Printed annotations: *sf* (below staff 1), *ff* (below staff 2), *ff* (below staff 3), *ff* (below staff 4).

Handwritten annotations: *ff* (circled, above staff 1), *ff* (circled, above staff 2), *ff* (circled, above staff 3), *sf* (circled, below staff 4), *ff sf* (below staff 5), *pp* (circled, above staff 6), *pp* (circled, above staff 7), *pp* (circled, above staff 8), *pp* (circled, above staff 9), *pp* (circled, above staff 10), *pp* (circled, above staff 11), *pp* (circled, above staff 12), *ff* (circled, below staff 12).

Printed annotations: *ff* (below staff 1), *ff* (below staff 2), *ff* (below staff 3), *ff* (below staff 4), *ff* (below staff 5), *pp* (below staff 6), *pp* (below staff 7), *pp* (below staff 8), *pp* (below staff 9), *pp* (below staff 10), *pp* (below staff 11), *ff* (below staff 12).



more agitated  
restless

5 Più agitato

Handwritten annotations: *marc. molto* (above staff 1), *sustain* (above staff 2), *f sost. arco* (above staff 3), *D.B. arco* (above staff 4), *ff pesante e marc.* (below staff 4).

Printed annotations: *marc.* (above staff 1), *mf cresc.* (above staff 1 and 2), *(marc.)* (above staff 3), *ff pesante e marc.* (below staff 4).

Performance markings: *val* (above staff 1), *mf* (above staff 1 and 2), *f* (below staff 3), *ff* (below staff 4).

Handwritten annotations: *simile* (above staff 1), *ff* (below staff 1), *ff* (below staff 2), *ff* (below staff 3), *ff* (below staff 4).

Performance markings: *val* (above staff 1), *ff* (below staff 1), *ff* (below staff 2), *ff* (below staff 3), *ff* (below staff 4).

Handwritten annotations: *ff* (circled, above staff 1), *ff* (circled, above staff 2), *ff* (circled, above staff 3), *sf* (circled, below staff 1), *ff sf* (below staff 2), *pp* (below staff 3), *pp* (below staff 4), *ff* (below staff 4).

Printed annotations: *ff* (above staff 1), *pp* (above staff 2), *ff* (above staff 3), *pp* (above staff 4), *ff* (above staff 4).

Performance markings: *val* (above staff 1), *ff* (below staff 1), *ff* (below staff 2), *pp* (below staff 3), *pp* (below staff 4), *ff* (below staff 4).



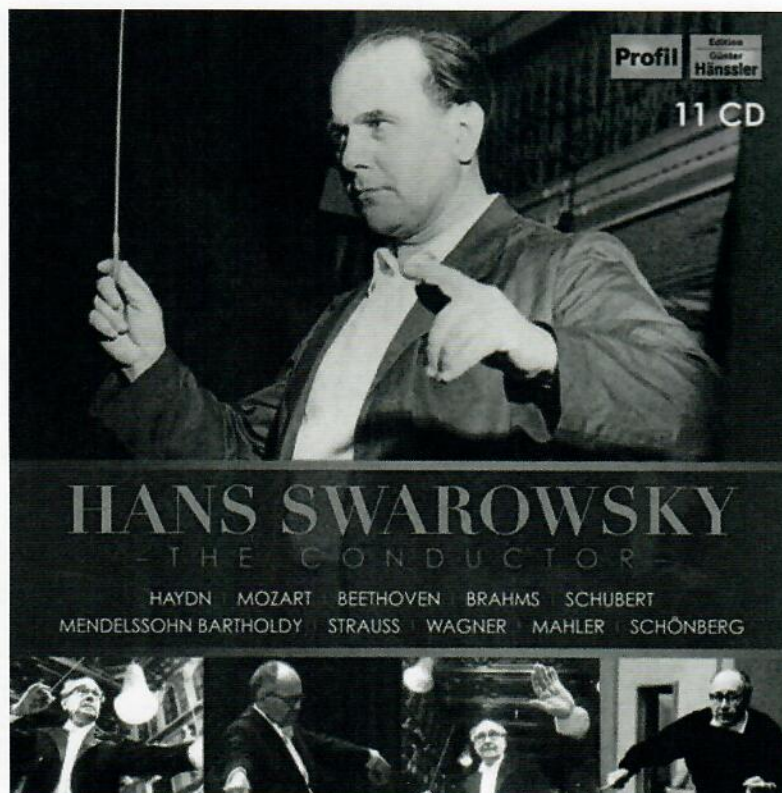
## STEP 3: READING YOUR SCORE – FINDING THE PHRASE

Finding the phrase markings tends to take the longest. By sitting down and reading the score and how it might sound in your head will actually make this process easier in the future. You will begin to identify the up-beat measures vs the down-beat measures. This in turn will reveal itself as the Antecedent and consequent of phrases.

Phrases can be determined with: Rhythmic pattern, Harmonic relationships, motivic ideas, Melodies, and Counterpoint. It can also be a combination of some of these items.

Marking Phrases: Hans Swarowsky's method uses three elements:

1. **A solid line** = beginning and/or end of phrase, and usually both. (I mark this with a blue solid line)
2. **A "V" marking** where the phrase might split = the division of the antecedent and the consequent.
3. **Numbers:** a Number with a "+" sign to the right indicates more measures in the phrase are ahead. While a "+" on the left side of a Number indicates the number of measures left in a phrase. For example: an 8 measure phrase would be marked as **4+ V +4**.





Premiere

# SENTIMENTAL SARABANDE

*in 3*

*a little slow & heavy*  
**Poco lento e pesante**

*4+*

*+ 4*

VIOLIN I

VIOLIN II

VIOLA

VIOLONCELLO

DOUBLE BASS  
(ad libitum)

*pizz.*

*less meno f*

*mf*

*dim.*

*mf*

*dim.*

*mf*

*dim.*

*mf*

*dim.*

*mf*

*arco*

*mf*

*more più f*

*f simile (same)*

*dim. less*

①

*4+*

*+ 2+*

*+ 2*

*dim.*







## STEP 4: MUSICAL CHOICES BASED ON SCORE

- Determine bowings
- Breath marks
- Tempo changes
- Ensemble tendencies: We all know what ensembles tend to do. If you teach string orchestra, you know that every ensemble from Elementary School to the New York Philharmonic will rush some kind of pizzicato section.
- Identify and choose your Subtext: happy, sad, mad, mysterious, etc.

A handwritten musical score on aged paper, featuring six staves. The score is annotated with various musical notations and handwritten notes in blue and brown ink. At the top, there are three measures with handwritten notes: "2+", "+ 2+", and "+ 2. se". The first measure is circled in blue and labeled "6". The score includes dynamic markings such as *ff* (fortissimo), *sf* (sforzando), *pp* (pianissimo), and *pp* (pianissimo). There are also handwritten notes like "Surprise" and "V" (likely for breath or bowing). The score is divided into sections by blue lines, and there are blue arrows pointing to specific measures. The overall style is that of a student's or teacher's handwritten analysis of a musical score.



## STEP 5: THE PEDAGOGY

It will not be enough to just mark the score in steps 1 – 4. You will have to acknowledge how to make your musical choices work.

In the previous example, Britten has put in bowings of his own. However, in order for me to achieve the surprise crescendo that I want, I have to be able to explain how to make this work on the string instrument. A conductor shouldn't be afraid to explore making different sounds with their ensemble. Keeping in mind that the basics are still being observed:

- Posture
- Placement
- Uniformity among sections of the same musical line
- Good intonation

A handwritten musical score on aged paper, featuring five staves. The score is annotated with various musical notations and handwritten instructions in blue and brown ink. At the top, there are three measures with notes marked with accents (>) and dynamic markings like *ff*. Below these, the score continues with notes, rests, and dynamic markings such as *ff*, *sf*, *pp*, and *ff*. Handwritten annotations include:

- At the top: "2+", "+ 2+", and "+ 2. se" in brown ink, with blue arrows pointing to specific notes.
- On the left: A circled "6" in a yellow circle, and blue circles around notes on the first three staves.
- In the middle: "set Vib." in brown ink, and "Frog" in brown ink on the right side.
- At the bottom: "\*Flat Hair\*" in brown ink, "Don't Face" in brown ink, and "set bow upper 1/3 & quick bow speed" in brown ink with a blue arrow pointing to a note.
- On the right: "Vibrato" in brown ink with a blue arrow pointing to a note.
- Blue arrows and lines connect various annotations to specific notes or measures throughout the score.



## **Adjectives for Music**

This is a fantastic website:

<https://www.words-to-use.com/words/music/>

For questions, please feel free to contact me directly.

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