

Deliberate Practice in Learning Music

Kata Practitioner Day
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Purpose

- KPD: Sharing experiences on making scientific thinking a practical skill, which anyone can learn through practice.
- My Presentation: Start the day with some thinking about how adults learn, and the role of deliberate practice in developing new skills.

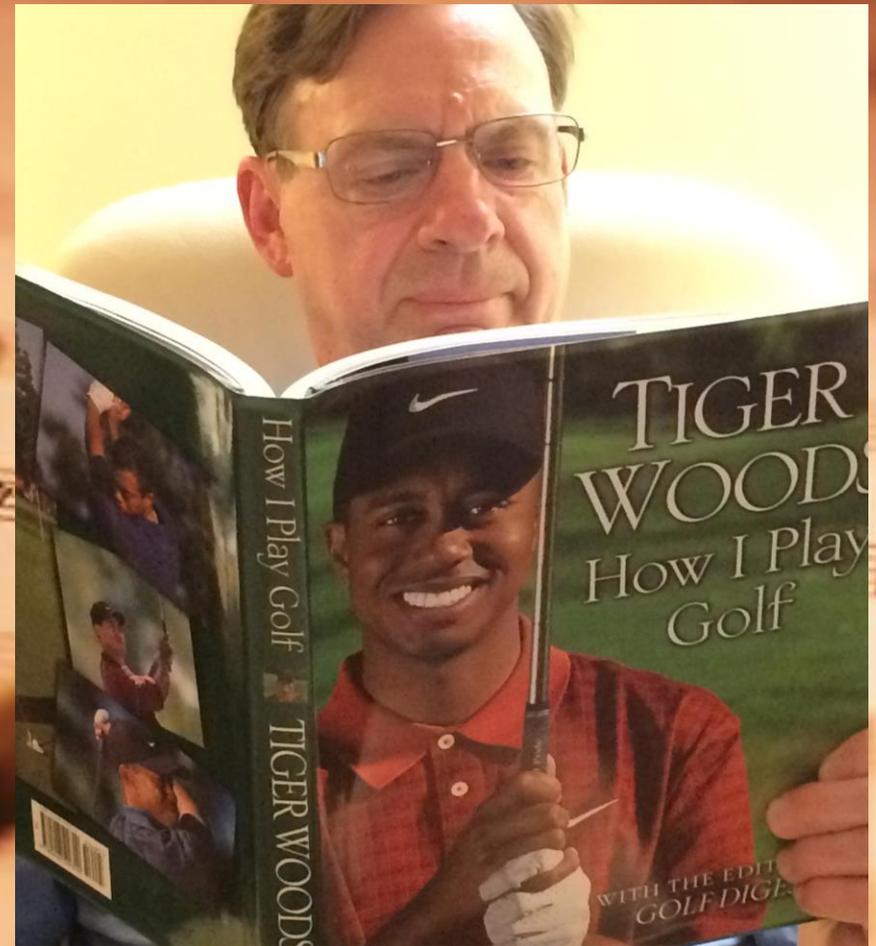
Agenda

- How not to learn/practice
- Ingredients of Deliberate Practice
- Deliberate Practice in Music, generally
- Deliberate Practice in Music, specifically
- Suggestions for all teachers and learners
- Questions?



How not to learn

- Trying to teach myself
- Spending hours at the driving range
- Attempting to play golf



Paths to success in learning new skills

- Take lessons from a professional
- Practice productively
- Let go of adult mental roadblocks
- Realize that we can't always feel exactly what our bodies are doing
- Self-evaluate non-critically
- Keep a journal, with reminders



Some Ingredients of “Deliberate Practice”

- Passion, enthusiasm, motivation
- How you practice is important, not just simple repetition.
- Work on your errors. Get outside your comfort zone.
- Get immediate coaching input for corrections. *Practice make permanent.*

Deliberate Practice in Music

- Practice intentionally
 - Set goals (long-term and short-term)
 - Keep a practice journal
- Practice S-L-O-W-L-Y (“The more slowly you learn something the more slowly you’ll forget it”)
- Develop muscle memory
 - Practice mindfully
 - Practice musically
- Use principles of variety and repetition



Deliberate Practice in learning how to play an instrument

- Good teaching
 - Good modeling
 - Teaching how to practice correctly
- Practice mindfully and regularly
 - Keep a journal
- Use audio and video feedback
- Use both private and group lessons
- Listen to recordings and attend recitals



Deliberate practice in participating in a large ensemble

- Practice one's part individually
- Practice in a sectional rehearsal
- Learn and practice *listening* skills
- Learn and practice *watching* skills



Deliberate practice in learning how to play in a handbell choir

- Learning to play one or two notes at a time
- Exercise
 - Singing “Happy Birthday” the way a bell choir would (approximately)

Cors. / 1
Tpts. 2

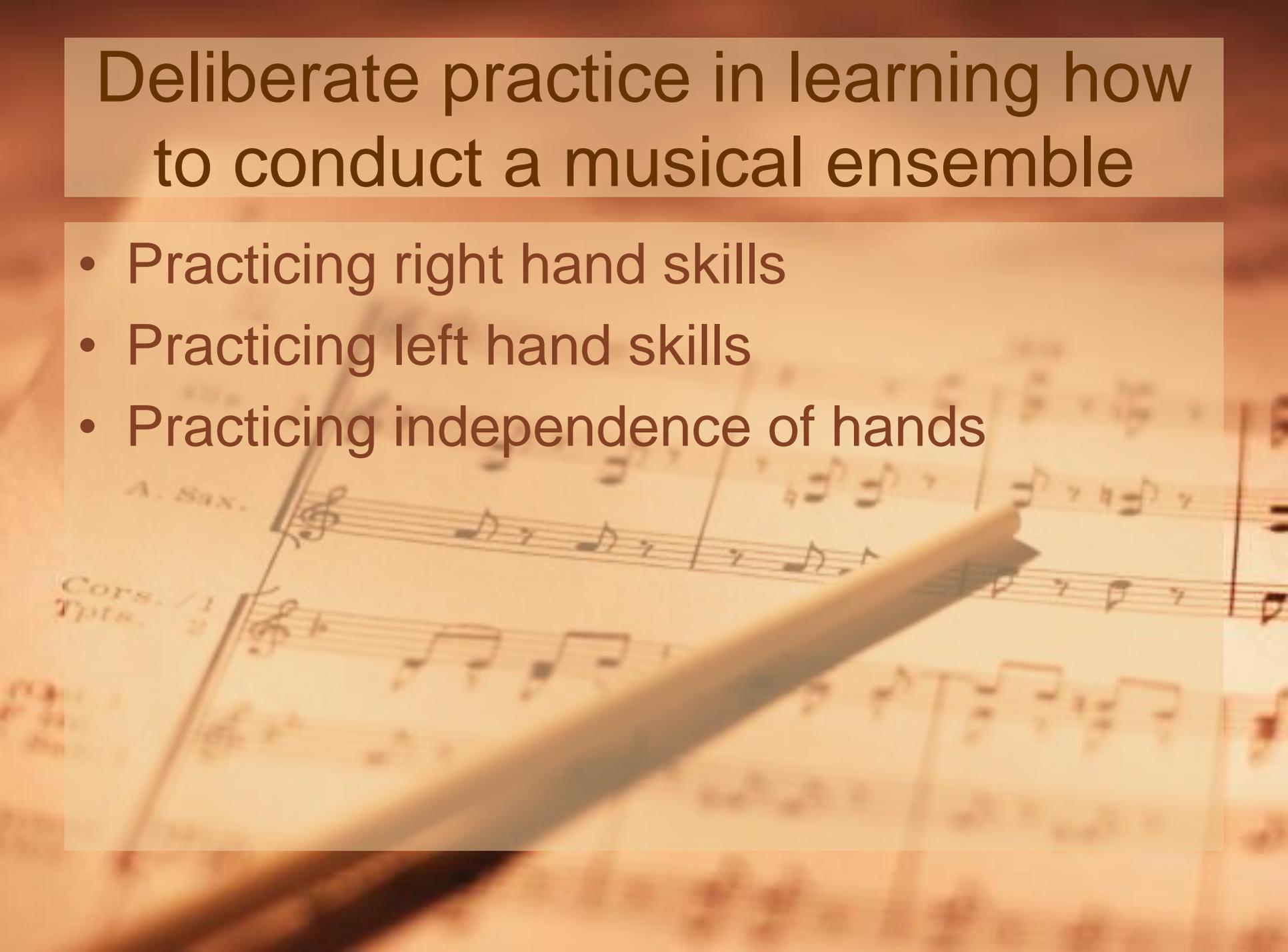


A. Sax.

Cors. / 1
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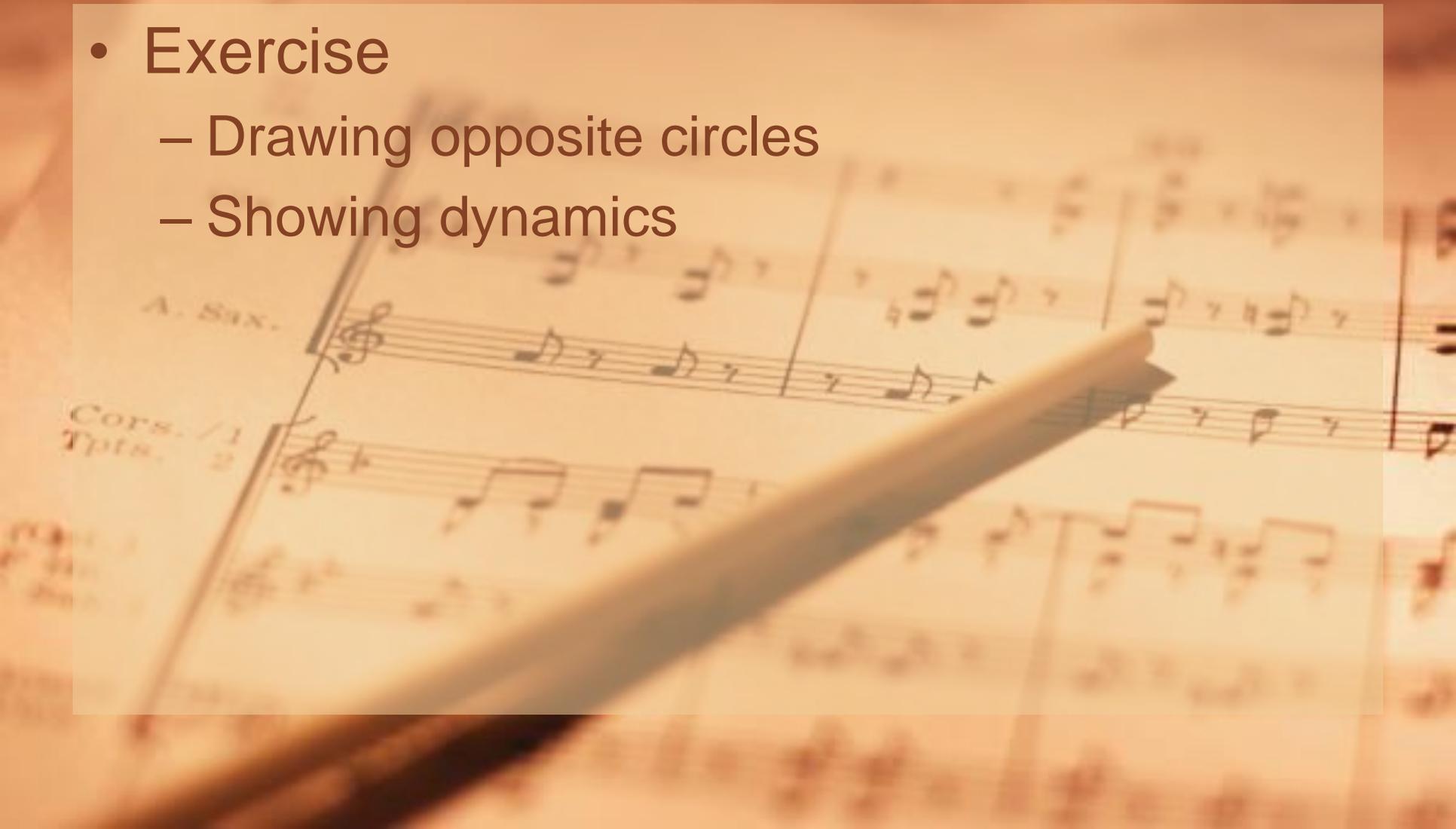
Deliberate practice in learning how to conduct a musical ensemble

- Practicing right hand skills
- Practicing left hand skills
- Practicing independence of hands



Deliberate practice in conducting

- Exercise
 - Drawing opposite circles
 - Showing dynamics





Suggestions for TEACHERS on learning for mastery

- If the student hasn't learned, the teacher hasn't taught.
- DEMONSTRATE, then have them try. "Teaching isn't telling."
- Learn with the body. Let the student experience it.
- Let the student repeat the exercise as many times as necessary, but correctly. Give corrective feedback to work on the errors.

Suggestions for LEARNERS on learning for mastery

- Practice slowly and one chunk at a time.
- Get a coach!
- Write it down.
- Fake it till you make it.
- Remember how you learned as a kid.
- Try redirection.
- Start with simple routines. You won't be an expert right away.

What were some of the first things you remember learning as a child?

- How to tie your shoes
- How to tell time
- How to read



Adults aren't that different from children

- Embrace new challenges.
- Be ready to learn.
- The better you can do something, the more you want to do it; the more you do it, the better you become at it.
- And the more fun you have!

Questions?

