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Finding focus : using external focus of attention for practicing and performing music

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Propositions

Susan Williams

1. Musicians' technical skills would benefit from finding and exploring their own meaning behind each phrase of their repertoire.
2. The more expert a musician is, the more distal their focus should be during performance. Focus tends to be less distal under stress – knowing this can help a performer to consciously adjust focus outwards.
3. A goal for a practice session should be achieving high engagement rather than faultless playing.
4. Matching challenge and expectations with skill level enables engaged and successful learning and performance.
5. Success is largely dependent on an individual's belief in their ability to learn.
6. Giving students choices helps to enhance motor learning
7. Giving less feedback can help a student learn.
8. The size of a court trumpet ensemble reflected the prestige, power and wealth of rulers in Baroque times.
9. Louis XIV was largely responsible for the lack of repertoire and virtuosity of trumpet music in France during his reign.
10. We could improve attendance for classical music concerts if we find ways to help the audience to feel more involved and connected – to the music, the performers and to each other.
11. Trying to follow the conductor often degrades a musicians' own performance and ensemble playing.