

Mrs.Booth

Orchestra 3 H

3 November 2014

Fall 2014 Reflection

Starting this year, the second violin section gained many new players that are on different levels and while we had a very good start off, our section is still the weakest one out of all the others. Our new players range from beginners to intermediate players, but I strongly believed that they are very talented and have the potential to grow very fast if we could invest in them in the correct way. The major problem that we have is that they have a habit of using very little bow where more is needed and playing over the fingerboard, thus even when the number of people increased, our sound as a whole did not. This is something that can't be fix right away, so we'll just have to work on breaking this tendency over time. To me, our section members have very good relationship with each other and that is something that I am very thankful for. The members respected us leaders when we talk and they listen to our suggestions, then give their own opinions once in a while. They also cut me some slack when I screw up and overall the atmosphere is just very light in general. I hope that will not change as the year go by. As one of the section leaders, I will continue to try my best to bring everyone playing together as well as doing all I can to help those who need to practice the basic more because I want them to enjoy playing, but the only way to do so is for them to like the sound that they produce. One of my wish is to establish a strong foundation for the second violin section by the time Stephanie, Terry and I graduate, so that the new leaders will have more time to advance the section rather than going over all the basic. Because if all of our players are strong, we can always designate one or two violinists to work with beginners and leaders work with the rest. But I honestly do not know how to approach this idea or whether this is too farfetched or not, maybe we won't even be section leaders by that time. But what comes will come, for now, second violin will put all our focus on our intonation and articulation.

Of course, in order to be able to lead the section well, I have to practice so that I can play well enough to do so. My goals from the September assessment include playing tremolo, shifting to second and third position, sixteen notes rhythm as well as sight read music. So far, I think I have not fully realize my goals because even if I am quite comfortable shifting, if the music is of a faster tempo, my intonation would be horribly off and without practice I will not be able to play the music. This connects to the sight reading goal in which I think I am improving with my counting. Sometimes I can hear how the rhythm sound like in my head and that is very helpful. I will continue to work on this skill. Tremolo and fast sixteen notes still makes my arm hurt, but it is nothing that I can't handle. I haven't really practice this skill after we finished playing Symphony 25, but since Passacaglia and Boreas reused this skill, I will have a chance to practice this again. A few other things I want to add to my to do list are up bow staccato, Romantic style vibrato, habit of stretching and music theory, chords especially. Up-bow staccato is something that I need for an upcoming TriM performance, but I am still unable to get it. My staccato lacks consistency and sound. They are very soft compare to what I hear from the videos I watched and it is a big challenge for me right now. The reason I want to learn Romantic style vibrato is because this type of vibrato needs to be wide, and I believe this could help me with my stiff vibrato better. I have a few simple slow pieces like Schubert's Ave Maria and such that I could work this skill on. My arm and wrist sometimes ached after playing because I don't stretch as much anymore, and this may sound ridiculous but I really don't want to get carpal tunnel and then have to stop playing. That's scary. For music theory, I was able to learn a lot this year on Sonata style and musical expression and analysis. I really appreciate how you incorporate things like this into our study. I hope to learn more from you. I am especially weak at theory, so other than sight reading, I want to learn about chords and the notes in each chord. This at first was for the purpose of messing around on the piano, but then after the fall concert I realize that knowing what notes to play in a chord is very useful when we have to suddenly play something random. For example, we had to played Canon in D suddenly during the fall

concert and the only reason I was able to play along was because I have played this piece before. But what if it was a different piece? If I know the chord and what note to play I can play along even if I never play the song before. My mom also brought this point up the other day, and I figured it'll be good to work on this a little at a time. Other than that, I am also meddling with music arrangement – simple, not full orchestral – but as of now, I have very little to nothing. I only transcribed a piece, but that's not arrangement. Although I think this could help with counting in my playing.

In conclusion, practice is still the foremost priority before I can do anything else. I will continue to work on tremolo, shifting, sight reading as well as up-bow staccato, vibrato and my knowledge on music theory. I hope to achieve these skills at the end of this year if possible to contribute to our last concert in the spring, if I do my part and everyone else do theirs, maybe a standing applause with a “Bravo” can happen.