

Russell Gray

THE MESSANOIC METHOD

A Conductor's Toolkit



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The Messanoic Method

by Russell Gray

Hymn tunes arranged by Matt Shaw

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Introduction

Messanoic is a made up word based on the Greek word Metanoia meaning 'change of mind'. The full meaning however is somewhat more involved. In the New Testament, the word metanoia is often translated as 'repentance'. This kind of repentance is not about regret, guilt or shame. It implies making a decision to turn around, to face a new direction. The word Messanoic has the same meaning but I have applied it as a musical principal. A musical change of mind.

This method is designed to help your ensemble develop a sense of togetherness in the way they respond to the music they see in front of them. It will help them cultivate a kind of hive mindset; thinking as one.

I suggest the optimum time to use this book in conjunction with one of the 30 specially arranged hymn tunes supplied, is during the first 5 to 10 minutes of your rehearsal. By doing this you will not only increase the productivity of that rehearsal time, but also improve your ensemble's ability to respond to visual stimulus from the written music and from the conductor's gestures.

The method is divided into five parts, enabling you to focus on specific areas of the ensemble's techniques. They are:

- Sound, Balance, Intonation and Dynamic Control
- Articulation
- Improving Focus
- Improving Rhythm
- The Last Chord

I have developed this method over many years of conducting all kinds of ensembles, in many different countries around the world. It has helped me win over 50 competitions, including 14 National Brass Band titles.

Using this method has always resulted in significant improvements in ensemble playing. I would like to wish every Conductor success instilling this method into your group. I hope it will help release your mind, enabling you to achieve a new level of music making for both your ensemble and your audience.

Russell Gray, 2019

6a Here are 2 further variations;

Mannheim - Friedrich Filitz

7

Mannheim - Friedrich Filitz

7 This exercise is about extreme dynamic contrast. Using a hymn tune in 4/4 time, and playing in crotchets, the ensemble should play the first note pianissimo (pp), the second note fortissimo (ff), and continue alternating between pp and ff on each beat. It is important to maintain the contrast between the dynamics throughout the hymn tune. To make this more interesting, try a hymn tune in 3/4 time.

Ellers - Edward Hopkins

etc.

Pentecost - William Boyd

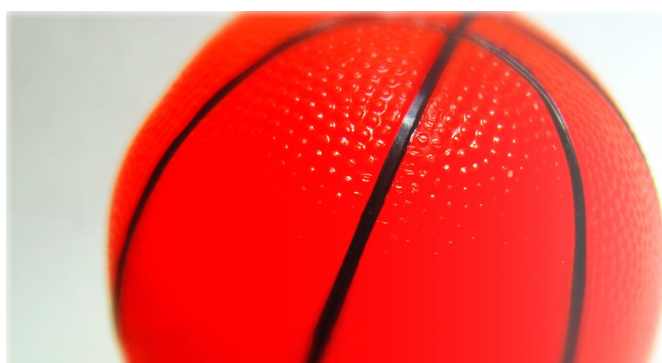
etc.

- 1 It is important to allow your ensemble to play the selected hymn tune as written:



- 2 Now ask your ensemble to play the hymn tune in crotchets. The objective is to achieve a uniform style of articulation throughout the band. Repeat this exercise 2 or 3 times, until everybody (including conductor) finds a consensus. This then represents the ensemble's 'default' articulation, when no other information is present above or below the music.

- 3 Again, ask your ensemble to play the hymn tune in crotchets. This time, imagining that there is a tenuto line (_) effecting each note. A tenuto, by definition, is a form of accent, known as an agogic accent. This style of accent affects the duration and/or dynamic of a note. Imagine your default articulated note (as discussed above) as a spherical ball, like a basketball. The tenuto-affected note could take the shape of a rugby ball; the player is required to increase air pressure throughout the duration of the note, giving it a heavier feel. Repeat this exercise 2 or 3 times until everybody (including conductor) finds a consensus.



4 Now extend the transposition upwards and downwards:

As written:



Down a semitone:



Up a major 3rd:



Up a perfect 4th:



These examples are just the beginning; It is encouraged that you explore other transposition possibilities!

5 The next two exercises will help your musicians improve their personal reading abilities, by enabling them to increase their efficiency at internalising and processing what the music is asking of them:

5a Allow your ensemble 30 seconds to memorise their part, and then ask them to turn their parts over and play the selected hymn from memory. Do this exercise a few times using different hymn tunes on each attempt.

5b Allow your ensemble 15 seconds to memorise their part, and then ask them to turn their parts over and play the selected hymn from memory. Do this exercise a few times using different hymn tunes on each attempt.



8a Following on from exercise 8, whilst playing triplet quavers, at some point during the hymn tune the conductor should indicate 'change' (either vocally or with a gesture), at which point the groups change to play the next triplet quaver in the sequence. This can be done more than once during a single run through.

CHANGE

Lloyd - Cuthbert Howard

Group 1

Group 2

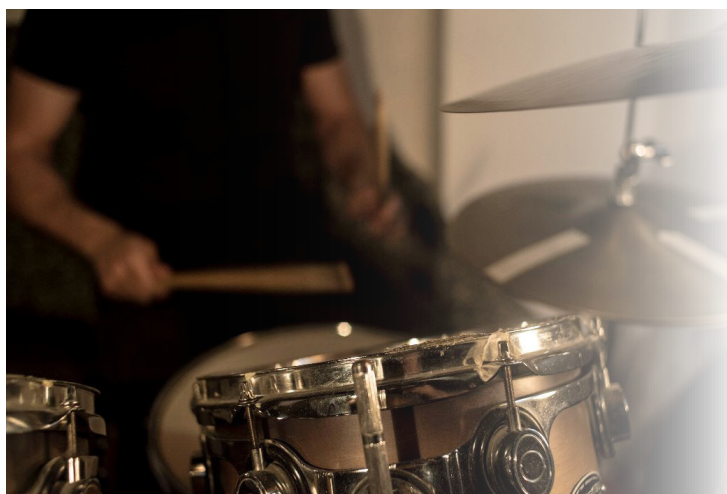
Group 3

CHANGE

CHANGE

etc.

The image shows a musical score for three groups (Group 1, Group 2, and Group 3) in 4/4 time, featuring triplet quavers. The score is divided into two systems. The first system is labeled 'CHANGE' at the top center. The second system is labeled 'CHANGE' at the top center and 'CHANGE' at the top left. The third system is labeled 'CHANGE' at the top center and 'etc.' at the top right. Each group's part consists of a series of triplet quavers. The first system shows the first two groups playing, and the second system shows the third group joining in. The third system shows the first two groups playing again, indicating a rotation of groups.



The following exercises are designed to help your musicians take responsibility for tempo, rather than relying totally on the conductor

- 9 Using the last chord of your selected hymn tune, ask your ensemble to be prepared to count to 8, multiple times. They will play the chord as a quaver on 1 every time, then on the first count through also play on 8. The second count through, they again play on 1, but this time on 7, with a rest on 8. This pattern should continue to reduce through the count, example below;

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

5 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

9 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4

12 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1



Russell Gray

Russell Gray's career as a conductor began in 1998, when he was appointed as the resident musical director of the Stavanger Brass Band (Norway). Since then his reputation as an authoritative interpreter of brass band music has been acknowledged at home and abroad. Since 2008, he has been principal conductor of Molde Brass Band (Norway) and is Adjunct Professor of brass at Queensland University (Australia). Russell has enjoyed considerable success within the world of brass band competitions with leading ensembles in the U.K., Norway, Denmark, Finland, France, Switzerland, Japan, New Zealand, USA, Canada and Australia. Russell enjoyed periods as the principal conductor of Foden's, Fairey and Leyland brass bands and since 2012 has been principal conductor of Reg Vardy Brass Band, the leading band in the North of England.



A proud Scot, Russell was born near Glasgow, and came to prominence within the world of brass bands as a cornet virtuoso. During his student years, he was a member of the world famous Black Dyke Band and went on to enjoy a number of years as principal cornet of the Leyland Band. He has also produced six solo albums, including two acclaimed releases featuring historic cornet repertoire from the celebrated Arban collection of solos and studies. Russell is a Yamaha endorsed artist and is much in demand as a leader of workshops, clinics and seminars. He also leads Yamaha's star-studded NEO Brass Ensemble.

He has appeared to great acclaim at the Royal Albert Hall (London) and Symphony Hall (Birmingham) to the Grieg Hall (Bergen), Stravinsky Hall (Montreux) and the Sydney Opera House.

Russell dedicates much of his time to the development of young musicians. He has conducted the National Youth Brass Bands of Switzerland and Queensland (Australia) and from 2014-2018 he was Artistic Director of the National Youth Brass Band of Scotland.

He is a recipient of the prestigious Iles Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians in acknowledgment of his outstanding services to the brass bands.

Following post-graduate study at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Russell's career also embraces the worlds of orchestral and wind band music. In 2015, he conducted the Danish premiere of Gavin Higgins BBC Proms commission Velocity with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as guest conductor with the Cambrian Philharmonic (Wales), Wrexham Symphony Orchestra, North Wales Opera Company, the Royal Scottish National Orchestra, Bohuslav Martinu Philharmonic (Czech Republic), Queensland Pops Orchestra (Australia), Her Majesty's Band of the Coldstream Guards (London), the Royal Life Guards Band (Denmark), the Norwegian Navy Band (Bergen). Since 2014 he has appeared regularly as guest conductor with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra (Denmark), conducting many Danish and World premiers.

The Messanoic Method

HYMN TUNES

arranged by Matt Shaw



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THE MESSANOIC METHOD - HYMN TUNES

arranged by Matt Shaw

- | | | |
|--------------------|-----------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Adeste Fideles | 11. Eventide | 21. Pentecost |
| 2. Aurelia | 12. Gwalchmai | 22. Praise My Soul |
| 3. Blaenwern | 13. Hamburg | 23. Sandon |
| 4. Colne | 14. Holy, Holy, Holy | 24. St Clement |
| 5. Cuttle Mills | 15. Hursley | 25. St Constantine |
| 6. Darwall's 148th | 16. Lloyd | 26. Stockport |
| 7. Deep Harmony | 17. Loch Goil | 27. Tallis' Canon |
| 8. Deerhurst | 18. Manheim | 28. Unto Us is Born a Son |
| 9. Duke Street | 19. Melcombe | 29. Voller Wunder |
| 10. Ellers | 20. Orientis Partisus | 30. Whitburn |

THE MESSANOIC METHOD

HYMN TUNES

arranged by
Matt Shaw

1. Adeste Fidelis (O Come, All Ye Faithful) - attributed to JF Wade

The first system of the musical score consists of four staves, labeled Voice 1 through Voice 4. The key signature is one flat (B-flat) and the time signature is 4/4. Voice 1 is in the soprano clef, Voice 2 in the alto clef, Voice 3 in the bass clef, and Voice 4 in the bass clef. The music begins with a common rest for all voices. The melody for Voice 1 starts on a half note G4, followed by quarter notes A4, B4, and C5. The other voices provide harmonic support with various rhythmic patterns of quarter and eighth notes.

The second system of the musical score continues the four-voice setting. It features similar rhythmic and melodic patterns for all voices. A notable feature is a long, horizontal slur under the bass line of Voice 4, spanning across several measures, indicating a sustained or gliding bass line. The system concludes with a double bar line.

THE MESSANOIC METHOD

HYMN TUNES

arranged by
Matt Shaw

1. Adeste Fidelis (O Come, All Ye Faithful) - attributed to JF Wade

Musical notation for the first hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, and the third staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.

2. Aurelia - Samuel S Wesley

Musical notation for the second hymn, 'Aurelia'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, and the third staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.

3. Blaenwern (Love Divine) - WP Rowlands

Musical notation for the third hymn, 'Blaenwern'. It consists of four staves of music in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, the third staff contains the next four measures, and the fourth staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.

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1. Adeste Fidelis (O Come, All Ye Faithful) - attributed to JF Wade

Musical notation for the first hymn, 'Adeste Fidelis'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, and the third staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.

2. Aurelia - Samuel S Wesley

Musical notation for the second hymn, 'Aurelia'. It consists of three staves of music in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, and the third staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.

3. Blaenwern (Love Divine) - WP Rowlands

Musical notation for the third hymn, 'Blaenwern'. It consists of four staves of music in B-flat major (two flats) and 3/4 time. The first staff contains the first four measures, the second staff contains the next four measures, the third staff contains the next four measures, and the fourth staff contains the final four measures, ending with a double bar line.