Coaching Mozart's Quartets K. 458, K. 464, and K. 465: Techniques for a Beginning College Strong Quartet

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COACHING MOZART’S QUARTETS K. 458, K. 464, AND K. 465: FOUNDATIONAL
TECHNIQUES FOR A BEGINNING COLLEGE STRING QUARTET

By

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A Treatise submitted to the College of Music in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Music

Degree Awarded
Fall Semester, 2013
Laurel Yu defended this treatise on October 30, 2013.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I have had the great fortune of having a wonderful committee with Dr. Pamela Ryan, Dr. Clifton Callender, Corinne Stillwell, and Melanie Punter, who have all inspired me to always think outside of the box and question my ideas and thoughts.

I am forever grateful to my brilliant teacher and mentor, Dr. Pamela Ryan, with her support, she has helped me grow into a better musician, thinker, teacher, and person. It has truly been an honor being your graduate assistant for these years, and I cannot thank you enough for taking a chance on me and giving me the opportunity to work with you. To Corinne Stillwell, my life coach and cheerleader, thank you for encouraging me to write this treatise and letting me observe you as your chamber music assistant. These are lessons that cannot be read in any book or paper.

To Kristin Pfeifer, I cannot thank you enough for your patience, positivity, love, and support that help me get through each day. Finally, I want to dedicate this treatise to my parents. I could not have completed this degree or this treatise without your constant words of encouragement and positivity.
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ABSTRACT

A music student at the collegiate level should be fairly proficient on his or her instrument, hence the student’s acceptance into the music program. Although many string students have the experience of performing on his or her instrument, the student may not have had any or much experience working in a chamber music ensemble setting. Because each student has varying levels of experience, this treatise will discuss beneficial skills to help develop a string student’s ensemble experience. These skills will be categorized in three different sections: listening, communicating, and synchronizing. Listening is the most vital component to successful chamber music, let alone music itself. Communicating is essential for the ensemble to function, including both verbal and non-verbal forms of communication. Synchronizing goes along with listening and communicating because even if the first two skills are achieved, the ensemble still must be in sync mentally and physically. Synchronizing also includes the technical attributes of chamber music playing, such as starting at the same part of the bow with the same articulation and bow stroke, and having the same tempo. The examples that will be used are from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s “Haydn” String Quartets K. 458, K. 464, and K. 465. Examples will be taken from each quartet, but the emphasis will be on each skill, not on a particular quartet. The discussion of these three skills is beneficial for any chamber music coach or teacher who hopes to maximize the potential of an undergraduate music ensemble consisting of string students with varying degrees of experience.
CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Chamber music is an essential part of any musician’s development. Even the most well-known concert artist recognizes chamber music as an essential step in his or her development. In solo practice, string players work on fundamentals and coordination of the right and left hands to further develop technique while developing a sense of individual musicality. Just as students learn how to coordinate the hands efficiently, a string player should also learn how to coordinate individual chamber music parts, such as aligning a violist’s part with a second violinist’s part. The benefits of working in a chamber music setting not only reinforce the fundamentals required to play a string instrument proficiently, but also begin to develop a student’s individual musicianship. The members of the Guarneri Quartet\(^1\) all have differing opinions on how music should be played and heard, and because of each musician’s individual personality and interpretation, they would work on details in order to form a unified musical performance.\(^2\) Even at the height of their career as a professional string quartet, the

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1 The Guarneri Quartet: A professional American string quartet formed in 1964 during the Malboro Festival in Vermont. Members during include Arnold Steinhardt and John Dalley on violin, Michael Tree on viola, and David Soyer on cello (until his retirement 2002). The Guarneri Quartet has recorded the complete Beethoven string quartets, the six Mozart “Haydn” string quartets, piano quintets of Schumann, Brahms, and Dvořák featuring Arthur Rubinstein, among many other recordings. The quartet made a 45-year career as one of the world’s leading and most prominent string quartets until they retired and disbanded the quartet in 2009.


Guarneri Quartet worked through many of the basic elements of chamber music playing before going into intricate details.

Many music educators today believe that chamber music ensembles should be in every musician’s curriculum. Regardless of the setting, many educators believe that chamber music adds a new element to learning music that cannot be fully experienced by just individualized private lessons.\(^3\) This is not related to a large ensemble setting such as an orchestra or band, but specifically chamber music, with one student to a part. The observation of students in a large ensemble versus a chamber music setting is that the students have greater individual input and attention on music and music learning in chamber music ensembles; therefore the students in many of the research studies are more involved and excited about music as a general part of learning, rather than just being an instrumentalist or a member of an orchestra.\(^4\)

Another beneficial aspect with the study of chamber music for young musicians is how a chamber music setting eliminates competition with others playing the same instrument.\(^5\) A study by Darrel Stubbs, published in *Music Educator’s Journal*, determined that chair placement and seating is more valuable to students because his or her seat determines the part they will play (first or second violin). When students play in chamber groups aside from the band or orchestral setting, they are given greater confidence in pursuing what is best for themselves and the ensemble, without the competitive influence of where he or she sits.\(^6\) Based on the studies mentioned, the

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\(^4\) Ibid., 52-53.


\(^6\) Ibid., 36.
“Haydn” quartets are beneficial to each musician in the ensemble because of the equality every voice receives. Unlike early quartets written during the same time period, the first violinist does not have the most important line. Each voice in the “Haydn” quartets depends on another, and not one voice is more important than another. The essential skills to chamber music playing are valuable not only to string chamber musicians, but to any musician.

From personal experience, starting as an inexperienced student to eventually coaching chamber music, using quartets such as Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s “Haydn” Quartets are very beneficial to a musician who has little to no experience working in a chamber ensemble. Mozart’s “Haydn” Quartets K. 458, K. 464, and K. 465 will be used to showcase essential skills needed to successfully work in a chamber ensemble. With the value of chamber music study realized for students, it is the goal of this treatise to support coaches who will be working with string chamber music students. The approach will be to delve into three different categories of foundational skills: listening, communicating, and synchronizing.
CHAPTER TWO

A BRIEF HISTORICAL BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

OF WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART’S “HAYDN” STRING QUARTETS, K. 458, K. 464, AND K. 465

Arguably Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s (1756-1791) most popular string quartets, the “Haydn” Quartets, are a staple in the string chamber music repertoire. Mozart composed twenty-three string quartets, and his String Quartets numbers 14-19 are dedicated to Franz Joseph Haydn. Mozart studied Haydn’s string quartets and is quoted to have “. . .learned first the true way to compose string quartets through Haydn’s [string quartets].” Haydn and Mozart most likely did not meet until after Mozart had already permanently moved to Vienna in 1781. It is thought that Haydn and Mozart met in 1783 after a performance of Haydn’s oratorio Il ritorno di Tobia. The “Haydn” Quartets were written between 1782 and 1785, and were named for Haydn, the then-already famous composer.

It is unknown when Mozart decided to dedicate the set of quartets to Haydn, but soon after a private reading of Quartet numbers 14-16 on January 21, 1785, Haydn praised Mozart for his compositions. Haydn’s support of Mozart’s first three quartets in

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10 Irving, 13.
the set of six may have helped inspire the dedication. At this private reading, Haydn was allegedly on first violin, Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf on second violin, Mozart on viola, and Johann Baptist Vanhal on cello. In the manuscript score of the “Haydn” quartets, which is dated “1 September 1785,” Mozart wrote, “Your good opinion encourages me to offer these to you and leads me to hope that you will not consider them wholly unworthy of your favour.” After reading through the quartets, Dittersdorf exclaimed that Mozart’s quartets finally “. . .gave equal rights and fair representation for all strings,” later exclaiming in a letter to Mozart that these quartets were “. . .musicians’ music!”

Mozart admitted that he was trying to further develop some ideas on Haydn’s structure and form with these six quartets, and these quartets are the results of his experiments. Ironically, Mozart sometimes imitated Haydn’s quartets instead of changing them, as seen in comparison to Haydn’s Op. 33, No. 5 and Mozart’s String Quartet No. 16, K. 428. Being notoriously known for musical borrowing, Mozart’s “Haydn” Quartets not only reflect hints of past string quartet compositions and influences, but also pioneer new ideas for string quartet compositions.

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11 Ibid., 13.  
12 Irving, 21.  
13 Ibid., 89.  
14 Burk, 355.  
15 Furguson, 61.  
16 Ibid., 60.  
Quartet No. 17 in B-flat major (“Hunt”), K. 458

The fourth out of the six quartets Mozart dedicated to Haydn, the “Hunt” quartet, was completed in 1784 and is in four movements. The “hunting call” motif that is introduced in the first movement is related to the eighteenth century Italian term “caccia,” which derives from an earlier fourteenth century French term, “chace.” In many instances of Italian caccia, both textual and musical examples refer to descriptive hunting scenes.\(^\text{18}\) Pastime hunts by nobility during the eighteenth century are evidenced by literature and art of the time.\(^\text{19}\)

The first movement is an *Allegro vivace assai* structured in sonata form and in 6/8 meter. The first few measures’ motif gives the quartet its “Hunt” nickname.\(^\text{20}\) The exposition of this movement continually goes back and forth between tonic and dominant (B-flat major to F major) in the first twenty-six measures. The modulation from B-flat major to F major is clearly signaled with a trill in the first violin in measure 26, where the second violin and viola take over the “Hunt” motive from the beginning, which makes the quartet’s first movement monothematic, similar to many of Haydn’s string quartets. After the exposition ends in F major, the development introduces a new theme but stays in F major until measure 106, which passes sixteenth notes between voices until the recapitulation in measure 138. The recapitulation is in F major, and outlines the same


Oxford University Press. 

\(^\text{20}\) Irving, 37-38.
structure as the beginning until measure 239, where the coda begins. The coda is longer than the development at fifty measures, while the development has only thirty-nine measures. The “Hunt” motive is continuously heard rhythmically throughout the coda, but in different keys, finding its way from F major to E-flat major back to B-flat major to conclude the movement.

The second movement of the quartet, *Moderato*, is a Minuet and Trio in rounded binary form. The first part of the Minuet contains a repeated eight measures. These first eight measures are in B-flat major, outlined with the B-flat major in the cello. The second part of the Minuet has twenty measures, primarily in the tonic B-flat, with a descending fifths progression that changes abruptly at the end of the Minuet back to B-flat major. The Trio is in ternary form, which is primarily in B-flat major, and has a seemingly more melodic line in the first violin, while the rest of the ensemble accompanies the first violin.

The third movement is an *Adagio* in sonata form with different voices having the melody while the ensemble has moving notes as chordal accompaniment. The exposition of the movement inconspicuously circles around C minor, while hinting back to its relative major of E-flat in some instances, particularly in the melodic line. Each phrase has specific dynamic markings with an occasional ensemble sforzando. The development has many sequences of chromatic lines, both melodically and harmonically, leaving the tonality sometimes ambiguous. Much of the development revolves around B-flat (the dominant of E-flat major), including the three measures leading into the recapitulation, but the development concludes clearly in E-flat major. While the recapitulation is similar to the beginning, measures 3-5 are omitted in the recapitulation, giving a sense of tension and asymmetry to the phrase. The exposition’s beginning has a six-measure phrase, while
the recapitulation is only a four-measure phrase. Mozart finishes this movement with a strong B-flat pedal of eighth notes in the cello until the last note, which tonicizes to an E-flat major chord in the ensemble.

To conclude Quartet K. 458, the final movement is an active *Allegro assai* in B-flat major. Both the first and second violins have the melodic material in this movement, as seen with the Trio in the second movement. Soon after the movement begins, in measure 9, Mozart gives the second violin the melodic line with the first violin, doubling the melody in octaves. The development is based around the theme from the exposition, leading into the recapitulation. Like the third movement’s recapitulation, much of the material is similar to the exposition, but Mozart adds an extension to the closing measures to reinforce the movement’s conclusion in B-flat major.

**Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464**

Written in 1785, Quartet K. 464 is the fifth in a set of six quartets that Mozart dedicated to Haydn.²¹ The quartet is split into four separate movements. The first movement is an *Allegro* that contains a rhythmic motive used throughout the entire movement. The rhythmic motive is the same, but this motive’s harmonic function changes almost every phrase. When the recurring rhythmic motive returns, it is in a different harmonic context, and Mozart gives that motive to another voice. The first indication of the rhythmic motive is in A major, but is later harmonically altered to the dominant, in E major. The development is in E major and passes along the rhythmic motive in groups of two measures instead of four measures, which is the case in the

exposition. The recapitulation is an exact imitation of the exposition, unlike any of the recapitulations in Quartet K. 458.

The second movement of Mozart’s Quartet K. 464 is split into two sections, a Minuet and Trio. Similarly to the first movement’s rhythmic motive, there are two motives that define the Minuet. The first motive comes back in different keys, and is first seen in the opening four measures of the Minuet. The next recurring motive is a similar four-measure phrase that follows the first motive almost every time. The entire Minuet is in A major while the Trio is in E major. The Trio is more active, especially in the first violin, with triplet arpeggios around E major, while the rest of the ensemble accompanies.

The third movement is an *Andante* in theme and variations. The theme takes up the first eighteen measures, split between an eight-measure group (with a repeat), and a ten-measure group (with another repeat). There are six variations in this movement that all have repeats in them. Much of this movement is texturally split with two voices against two voices. Sometimes the first and second violins have a melodic and harmonic line that nearly seems independent to the viola and cello line. In different variations, Mozart switches the couplings of the voices from first and second violin to first violin and cello, or other pairings. Although each variation verges away from the theme’s rhythms and motives, the structure of the variations remains the same harmonically. Each variation is in binary form, starts in A major, moves to D major and ends back in A major before the next variation.

The last movement of the quartet is an *Allegro non troppo* in sonata form. Much of the movement is imitative of the first measures, with a descending chromatic line. While the movement begins in A major, the movement moves from A major to E major
to B minor and pedals on a G major chord in the cello leading into the development in measure 81. The continuity of this movement is in the first measure’s descending chromatic line, but the line ends suddenly in measure 113 with a C-sharp minor chord. This marks the end of the development, leading into the recapitulation, which refocuses the material into the beginning’s motive. The movement ends at a pianissimo dynamic with the second violin and viola having the chromatic motive for the first and last time together.

**Quartet No. 19 in C major (“Dissonance”), K. 465**

The last quartet in the set of six quartets dedicated to Haydn is nicknamed the “Dissonance” quartet. The work was completed, according to its manuscript, on January 14, 1785.\(^{22}\) The first movement begins with an *Adagio* for twenty-one measures, and primarily has dissonances in the first eleven measures.\(^ {23}\) This introduction begins with an ostinato in the cello line with a descending chromatic line, starting on C for two measures, then moving to B-natural for two measures, ending finally at E-flat at measure 12. The introduction hints at C major, but does not establish a definitive pitch center until the *Allegro*. The *Allegro* is clearly in C major, taking away much of the dissonant tension established in the introduction. The exposition uses similar passing gestures among all instruments, not favoring any particular voice. The character of the exposition changes dramatically with a new section in measure 71, playing around D minor for only a few measures. To distinguish the two sections of the exposition in the *Allegro*, Mozart uses

\(^{22}\) Burk, 362.

\(^{23}\) Ibid., 363.
triplets instead of sixteenth notes. The development sounds similar to the beginning of the
*Allegro*, but with a pedal B-flat in the cello line instead of the prominent C from the
viola. Within five measures of the development, the movement turns clearly to D minor
for a few measures, which again changes abruptly to passing staccato eighth-note lines at
measure 117. These passing eighth notes are continued throughout the development until
measure 154, where a reiteration of the beginning of the development occurs, but this
time with a pedal C in the cello instead of the pedal B-flat. The recapitulation ends
abruptly, from passing chromatic eighth notes in the first violin and viola, into the coda,
which is identical to the beginning of the development. The coda contains many of the
same elements from the initial *Allegro*, but compressed into twenty measures. The
movement then ends with a clearly outlined C major chord.

The second movement is an *Andante cantabile* in sonata form. The exposition is
broken into two different sections, the first in F major, and the second in C major. Much
of the first section has each voice imitate each other, i.e. using the same melody, but
having it played in different parts. The second section has many of the voices in rhythmic
unison, but with moving sixteenth notes in the cello. The recapitulation uses many of the
same motives from the exposition, but switches it from F major to F minor. The
recapitulation has some chromaticism in the cello line, which eventually leads the
movement back to the tonic F major for the entire coda, beginning at measure 102. The
motives that were heard at the beginning of the movement are given briefly to the second
violin, with the viola taking the sixteenth notes that were heard previously in the cello
line in the exposition’s second section. This texture remains until the *pianissimo* end of
the movement in the tonic, F major.
The third movement is a Minuet and Trio that is similar to the Minuet and Trio in Quartet K. 464. The length of the Minuet is asymmetrical and the repetition of the theme continually repeats itself in the Minuet, similar to Quartet K. 464’s Minuet. Transitional materials are introduced in the viola and cello line with chromatic eighth notes, which in turn introduce a new key. The Minuet moves through keys constantly, starting in A minor, then moving to G major, B-flat major, and finally settling at measure 64 in C major. The Trio is in C minor, and unlike the Minuet, is highly symmetrical. The first eight measures of the Trio are two imitative four-measure phrases. The second half of the Trio is broken into two groups of twelve measures each (totaling twenty-four measures). The first twelve measures are imitative in a group of six measures, and the second twelve measures are also imitative in two six-measure groups. The Trio stays in C minor for its entirety with a brief harmonic movement towards G major, but because of its high imitation and symmetry, quickly comes back and stays in C minor.

The last movement of the “Dissonance” quartet is an Allegro molto in sonata form. The exposition takes up the largest portion of the movement, staying in C major until an abrupt shift to E-flat major in measure 89. The cello line has a chromatic descent that goes to G major, which eventually leads into the development at measure 136. The development alternates the chromatic line from the cello to the viola. The development ends with a quick circle of fifths progression, going from E minor, to B minor, to F-sharp minor, C-sharp minor, G-sharp minor, but abruptly stopping and going to the recapitulation in measure 199 to E major. It is not until the coda that the tonic of C major is reestablished, which strongly concludes the movement and quartet.
CHAPTER THREE
THE BASICS OF ENSEMBLE PLAYING

Before going into the details about the three skills of ensemble playing, the foundation on which an ensemble must begin repertoire starts with some essential elements needed before ensemble playing. These essential elements span a range of necessities, from having individual parts of the edition, all performers having scores, a rehearsal space, stands, pencils, and even having multiple recordings of the work. Even though this section outlines the beginning stages of ensemble playing, these essential elements, which can be rudimentary, can be applied to an ensemble at any level.

Having a score is the most essential element for any chamber musician. Each member of the ensemble should have a score, using the same edition, preferably as close to the *urtext* as possible. Once the ensemble has gotten more comfortable with the score and individual parts, separate editions of scores can be applied to give the ensemble new and different ideas that may have been done by an editor. This will be beneficial for a younger chamber ensemble. Having one score is necessary to the ensemble, but each member having his or her own score is ideal. Although an ensemble meeting for the first time has varying levels of experience, it is helpful for the chamber music coach to help the group read the score. In some circumstances, one member of the ensemble may not be able to read alto clef, or possibly the cellist may not be able to read tenor clef, therefore it is the responsibility of the chamber music coach to help the students individually. If there are members of the ensemble who cannot read a particular clef, time can be taken from
the coaching session or outside of the session to help the students be able to read the score. Many of these issues regarding score reading will be discussed later in this chapter, particularly under vertical listening.

Equally as important to having a score and being able to read the score, is the ability to elementarily analyze the score. This includes stacking the chords from the bass note and being able to distinguish the chord type and or its relevance to the music. The chamber music coach can also help with these basic analytical necessities.

Of similar importance to having a score, it is the responsibility of the ensemble, especially an inexperienced ensemble, to have multiple recordings of the works when available. In the case of Mozart’s “Haydn” Quartets, many professional string quartets have recordings available of each quartet. Having different recordings of the repertoire can help with some of the score reading skills and basic theory skills discussed earlier. With different recordings, an ensemble can determine what they did or did not enjoy in the recording, and what they would like to transfer to their own interpretation of the music. Having a recording’s musical ideas and interpretation in mind gives an ensemble a better framework to work with at the beginning stages of learning a work, particularly if the work is new to each member of the group.

Many professional chamber music ensembles have different tactics to efficiently rehearse and work as an ensemble. Each ensemble’s own rehearsal techniques works with each member’s personality and there is no single right or wrong way to rehearse. The graduate string quartet in 2008 at the Florida State University, the Eppes Quartet, came
up with an acronym to help young collegiate chamber ensembles begin the rehearsal process independently from their chamber music coach.\textsuperscript{24}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{Score}- make sure you have a copy and know how to use it!
\item \textbf{Physicality}- Cuing, breathing, performance practice, stage presence.
\item \textbf{Rehearsal techniques}- rhythm, articulation, vibrato, matching, seating arrangements, record yourselves, pairs, turning backs to each other to play, using words for phrases, etc.
\item \textbf{Ideas}- learning how to debate and example out interpretation.
\item \textbf{Negotiation}- Getting along, fighting, respect, organizational assignments.
\item \textbf{Tuning}- Strings and chords.
\end{itemize}

The Miró Quartet, a professional American string Quartet-in-Residence at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, has nine steps that are necessary to properly learn repertoire.\textsuperscript{25} These steps are in the shape of an hour glass, with items I and V needing the largest amount of time, while item III should take the lowest amount of time. This handout helps outline how to efficiently use the ensemble’s time.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textbf{I. Preparation}- Includes practicing parts, researching and thinking about the style
\item \textbf{II. Play through the piece}- Without stopping, don’t stop and chat, chat later over coffee.
\item \textbf{III. Play through movements}- Try different things, but don’t make any decisions yet. Discuss style, musical context, etc.
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{24} Eppes Quartet, “SPRINT” Handout from a chamber music course at The Florida State University College of Music. Tallahassee, FL. Fall 2008, print.
\textsuperscript{25} Miró Quartet. “Malleable Conviction- achieving unity without sacrificing individuality” Handout from a chamber music course at The Florida State University College of Music. Tallahassee, FL. 2000, print.
IV. **Play Sections**- Metronome drills, find expressive words for sections

V. **Detailed work**
   a. Intonation
   b. Balance
   c. Ensemble

VI. **Play Sections**- Work in transitions, focus more on color and moods

VII. **Play through movements**- Let go! Get off the page and listen and adjust!

VIII. **Play through the entire piece**- Don’t stop, build stamina and concentration. Be spontaneous.

IX. **Perform for an audience**- Low stress: friends and colleagues. High stress: live radio, competitions, etc.

Many of these basic steps that the Eppes and Miró Quartets have laid out will help any ensemble get started properly. Socially, chamber music can be an enriching experience for any musician, especially for an inexperienced musician. If one person dominates the conversation with too many ideas, the chamber music coach can help mediate in coaching sessions or in observation of rehearsals. A chamber music group is not a unitary body that agrees on a unanimous idea, but four individual voices that develop a unified idea. As the Guarneri Quartet states, the four voices do not sacrifice any individual belief, they establish a uniform idea to let the audience think that the four individuals all just think alike.²⁶

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²⁶ Blum, 3.
CHAPTER FOUR
LISTENING

For a younger ensemble whose members may have differing levels of experience, listening is the first skill that makes a chamber ensemble work. This category is important for a chamber musician because the individual must focus not only on his or her own part, but also each member of the ensemble’s part. As stated earlier, each member of the ensemble, including the coach, should own the same score to review for reference. When first choosing scores, the edition should be as close to the urtext edition of the score as possible. Regardless of the edition, each member should have the same edition to use as a reference. Later, other score editions can be introduced to the ensemble to help with interpretative decisions, such as articulations and slurs. Sometimes students may blindly follow scores, which limits the ensemble’s ability to make decisions independently.

Expanding on the basics of ensemble playing, listening to a professional recording of the work is beneficial for the ensemble and the coach. The coach can point out to the ensemble what to listen for and how to read the score thoroughly. Pointing out to the ensemble that the melody is not always the most important part may give the ensemble a new way to listen while watching the score without actively performing. While listening to a recording and following along in a score, a chamber music coach can also point out which voice (or voices) has important material and why that material is significant.
**Horizontal Listening**

When listening, the group can focus on the musical score both horizontally and vertically. Horizontally, a rhythmic motive can be passed to various parts and the musicians must listen to each part independently before trying to coordinate and make a smooth, unified line. If one member of the ensemble does not listen, that line will sound disconnected. Horizontal listening can help the musicians to easily identify where gestures are passed along in the score in any of the “Haydn” Quartets.

Rhythmic motives are an important element when listening horizontally. Passing rhythmic motives can be identified without reading the score. In some instances, rhythmic motives are more important than any melodic motive because the movement may revolve around the rhythm. In the first movement of Mozart’s Quartet K. 464, a rhythmic motive repeats throughout the entire movement. The rhythmic motive is the same, but the motive changes harmonically at almost every phrase. When this rhythmic motive comes back harmonically, Mozart gives that motive to another part. For instance, in the first measure, the first violinist has most of the rhythmic motive alone (see Example 4.1), but when the motive returns in measure 17 exactly as the first measure, Mozart gives the exact same motive to the second violinist (see Example 4.2).
A chamber ensemble with younger or inexperienced players may not see or hear these similarities at first, but having the ensemble listen to this motive will benefit each individual, because at some point that motive will be given to each part. Another example
where listening will be important can be seen in the same movement with the passing of a
triplet example in measures 47 to 53 (see Example 3.3).

![Example 4.3, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, I. Allegro, measures 47-53](image)

The triplets should be played as one continuous line instead of having each
individual part stand out. The second violinist begins this line of triplets and the motive
gets passed to the first violinist and violist. During rehearsal, having each individual play
only the triplets can help the ensemble listen to the passing of the motive from one
instrument to another as part of a longer line.

There are many examples of areas where this kind of horizontal listening would
be beneficial in Mozart’s “Haydn” quartets. As seen in Example 4.3, the line is passed
horizontally amongst the ensemble. Sometimes, the melodic line does not happen
immediately after the other, as in Example 4.4 and Example 4.5.
In Example 4.4, the first violin has the melodic line, while the ensemble has an underlying pulse to maintain an accompaniment. Example 4.5 shows the cello having the same melodic line, but with the accompaniment pulse in the ensemble. The ensemble’s consistent pulse is with the second violin and the viola, acting as the bass of the ensemble, and preventing any deviation in the ensemble’s tempo. A rehearsal technique for these two melodic measures would be for the first violin and cello to play their lines together without any accompaniment and without any rhythm at first, just to solidify any intonation problems. Later, the accompaniment can be added, while both the first violin
and the cello play their lines together. To help with the listening skill, the cello should catch on to the melody when playing through the movement from the first violin, and can imitate how the melody should sound to him or her.

An aspect that makes Mozart’s “Haydn” Quartets unique is how Mozart tries to make each instrument equal in importance. Atypical of string quartets written during the Classical era, the first violinist does not always have the most important line and does not always take control of the important lines. In the fourth movement of Quartet K. 464, Mozart gives a four-measure, arpeggiated sequence of eighth notes to the viola and cello, while the first and second violins accompany. Reminiscent of the triplet figure from Example 4.3, these eighth notes not only make up the important line, but also are useful to an ensemble as material for a listening skill (see Example 4.6).

Example 4.6, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, IV. Allegro non troppo—measures 136-140

Just as rhythmic motives can be identified as material for a listening skill, melodic motives require more accurate score reading. Mozart’s Quartet No. 17, K. 458 in B-flat Major, nicknamed “The Hunt,” has a motive that gave this quartet its nickname (see Example 4.7).
One of the motives that defines “The Hunt” is seen in the first violin part with the parallel rhythm in the second violin and harmonic accompaniment in the viola and cello parts. Another instance in the same movement where a combination of rhythmic and melodic motives encourages listening in the ensemble is when Mozart passes sixteenth-note gestures between all the instruments (see Example 3.8).
Thematic materials are constantly repeated in many of Mozart’s quartets, especially in these “Haydn” quartets. Sometimes the melodic material does not repeat itself in the same voice or voices, but is passed to other voices later in the same movement as shown in Example 4.9.

The melodic material in the second violin and viola is also the same melodic material seen at the beginning of the movement, an octave lower. In this instance, the second violin has the melody, while the viola harmonizes with the melody. The ensemble should listen carefully to each other at this moment, remembering that this material came from the first violin only twenty measures ago.

Having an ensemble listen to and acknowledge passing gestures can help an ensemble focus on the art of ensemble playing instead of simply reading his or her own part. Highly common in Mozart’s “Haydn” quartets, passing gestures are seen in multiple examples and do not always start with the first violin, as seen Example 4.10.
Not all passing gestures go from a single voice to another. In Example 4.10, the passing gestures occur from a group of voices to another group of voices, which in this case are the cello and viola to the first and second violins. The cello and viola must listen to each other’s identical rhythmic material, while the first and second violin must anticipate their entrances. The ensemble must hone in on the moving lines of the eighth notes, but stay together without losing any of the energy in this *Allegro assai* movement.

Example 4.11, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, I. Adagio-allegro, measures 57-60
Example 4.11 shows another example for an ensemble to use or listen for horizontal listening. Continually passing the sequence of thirds from the first violin, this gesture frequently shows up in the first movement of Quartet K. 465.

**Vertical Listening**

Equally important to listening horizontally, vertical listening may be more complex to an inexperienced group. Vertical listening requires basic theory skills and a chamber music coach may need to help guide an ensemble to figure out how to accurately listen to each other. In the fourth movement of Quartet K. 464, there is a great moment when all of the moving notes come to a unified halt; the ensemble is not only in rhythmic unison, but harmonically moving as a unit and vertical listening is appropriate (see Example 4.12).

In horizontal listening, not much music theory knowledge is required to understand and hear the distinctions of rhythmic motives and passages, but in vertical listening, there are many attributes of music theory that would be beneficial for an ensemble to understand. In Example 4.12, a chamber music coach could help an ensemble do a harmonic analysis in each score and distinguish which parts should be more present and how to listen to the harmonic structure of these particular measures.
To fully apply the details of listening to these measures harmonically, a coach should have the bass of each chord in each measure play first, with the fifth next, followed by the third, and then followed by any other suspension to fill in the rest of the chord, all of which is done without any vibrato and at a mezzo-forte dynamic. The next steps have the fifths together and have them change pitch together to match the perfect fifth, later adding the inner voices.

This section is great for intonation training for many reasons. One intonation training benefit of this vertical listening example is that each voice has time to adjust and can easily stack these measures vertically as specified while also working on these measures horizontally. Because these particular measures are not necessarily rhythmically driven, having the ensemble play these measures with a metronome at a quarter note set to sixty is beneficial in combining the horizontal and vertical listening. The ensemble can find where each voice moves and tune accordingly to the chord. With some of the chromatic movements in just these measures, the ensemble can learn not only
how to adjust each chord with the bass note as an active drone, but also how to listen both horizontally and vertically.

An excellent example using both horizontal and vertical listening is found in just the first few measures of Quartet No. 19, K. 465 “Dissonance,” shown in Example 4.13.

Example 4.13, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, I. Adagio-allegro, measures 1-4

These measures are a great example of when an ensemble must determine how to listen to each part independently while still knowing his or her own part. Simply listening to a recording will not clarify the difficulties in each moving part. As seen in Example 4.12 with some of the suspensions and chromatic movements within held notes, Example 4.13 shows each voice moving independently, with the viola, second violin, and first violin’s entrances off by a quarter note. The only voice that maintains a consistent sense of rhythm is in the cello line.
The ensemble must horizontally listen to the measures in Example 4.13 by focusing on the cello’s eighth notes. Without listening to the eighth notes, the ensemble may come in at different times, or in this instance, at the same time, which would pull the ensemble apart by at least a quarter note.

Listening vertically with this excerpt may be difficult for an ensemble, especially after the first violin’s entrance. The tri-tone against the second violin and the half-step dissonance against the viola brutally interrupts any sense of consonance, hence the name of the quartet, “Dissonance.” Even though these set of dissonances occur only in the first twenty-two measures, the rest of the “Dissonance” Quartet requires just as much attention to listening details as any other of the Mozart “Haydn” Quartets.

Taking a look at the fourth movement of the “Dissonance,” there are multiple examples where each voice is nearly independent at points, but must actively listen both horizontally and vertically to each other, as in Example 4.14.

Example 4.14, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, IV. Allegro, measures 279-286
The texture of this excerpt has the second violin and viola in rhythmic unison against the cello’s nearly independent rhythm of eighth notes and tied quarter notes to half notes. The first violin has virtuosic sixteenth notes while the rest of the ensemble accompanies. The passing of the eighth notes in the accompaniment shows an example of both horizontal and vertical listening. Unlike previously building up the score by analyzing the music, the more active accompaniment line should be the foundation of these measures. The second violin and viola should make sure each voice is listening horizontally to each other’s rhythm before adding any vertical listening. The vertical listening should be done without any rhythm to ensure that each chord is accurate. The cello line is more independent than the second violin or viola accompaniment, and should focus more on vertical listening skills rather than horizontal. With the accompaniment focused on each other’s listening skills, the final voice of the first violin can be added and the components put together slowly at first, then increasing in tempo so that each ensemble member is listening thoroughly to the intricacies of this particular passage.

While many of the previous examples of listening are from the quicker movements, the slow inner movements of the quartets provide other examples of difficulties in listening. Having the ensemble listen to a recording may be helpful in many situations, but recognizing the intricacies of the music using the listening skill in slower movements may be more difficult for the ensemble. In some instances, the subdivided rhythm in slower movements is in eighth notes or sixteenth notes, which can be confusing to an inexperienced ensemble, especially when reading a movement for the first time. If the ensemble is not listening to the music, nor thoroughly subdividing, entrances can be easily misplayed and or misheard. Separating the slow movements into
sections and listening to the structure of the movement can help the ensemble at first. The
following example deals with the slower movements of the “Haydn” quartets and address
how to isolate each category of the listening skill.

The third movement of Quartet K. 464 is an Andante theme and variations. As
previously stated, the theme takes up the first eighteen measures, split into eight measures
(then repeated), followed by ten more measures (then repeated). The variation structure
helps the ensemble use the listening skill to approach the movement. Each variation has
its own difficulties, but is structured similarly to the others, giving a sense of continuity
between the variations that helps the ensemble find the similarities between variations.

The first violin primarily has the role of leading the movement melodically, while
the accompaniment controls much of the harmonic progression of the movement. The
second violinist, violist, and cellist must all listen to the first violinist about where he or
she wishes to take some time or to shape any part of the theme or the variations. There
are instances where each instrument takes the melody, but the first violin has control for
much of the movement. A moment where the first violinist has complete control of the
melody is at the end of the theme in measure 16. The first violinist retains melodic
priority until there is a rhythmic unity in the second violin and viola parts in measure 18
that must match together (see Example 4.15).
The ensemble can also use this portion to focus on listening for intonation, as specified earlier. In measure 18 with the triplet sixteenth notes, the ensemble can tune these sections together both horizontally and vertically. The chord can be tuned from the bass note when stacked in order. If the ensemble has difficulty hearing the chord based on the register of each instrument, the ensemble can play in a lower or higher register before trying to stack the chord. Once proper stacking of the chord has been accomplished, the written octaves can be done at an agreeable slower tempo or without any rhythm at all, going from one note to another.

Listening to a recording of the third movement of Quartet K. 464 in its entirety, and knowing all of its theme and variations through score study, will be resourceful for the ensemble to reflect on, especially when trying to determine tempos and cues in each variation, particularly transitions between each variation. Because this movement is an *Andante* tempo throughout, there should be little tempo fluctuation between each variation, regardless of which instrument takes control of the melodic line.
One of the most difficult aspects of listening in an ensemble is intonation, especially passages that are in unison. The fourth movement of Quartet K. 458 contains multiple examples of where unisons are difficult due to a quicker tempo, as in Example 4.16. For an inexperienced ensemble, this could be a point of constant dispute socially.

As shown in Example 4.16, the first violin introduces the theme in the fourth movement of Quartet K. 458. In measure 9, the first violin repeats the phrase up an octave, while the second violin doubles the melody an octave below. To first approach these octaves, the ensemble must use horizontal listening note-by-note, in the same octave. Because the first measure is similar to measure 9, the first violin can play the first measures while the second violin can play measure 9 together in unison, only listening for intonation purposes with horizontal listening. After the violins can agree on the line together, the first violin can play his or her part in measure 9 with the second violin. This should all be done slowly, and again note-by-note. Once the intonation is set here, the rhythm can be added and the ensemble can move on. The fourth movement of Quartet K. 458 contains multiple examples of unisons or octave displacements, especially in the first
and second violin. If an ensemble is working on this movement, instead of taking any of
the ensemble’s rehearsal time, the violins can work out the intonation in these sections
separately.

Each individual member of the ensemble should always be listening to his or her
own part in addition to each member’s part. Taking time out of a coaching session to
listen to a professional recording of the work could be beneficial to both the ensemble
and the coach. Listening can be done in many different ways, such as listening to a
recording as a group while reading the score together, or listening to the music
individually with a score and a particular part in which to mark useful cues. The
ensemble and coach should mark particular examples in individual scores where they feel
horizontal or vertical listening would be beneficial. Sometimes writing “Listen” or “L” in
the score can be used as a reminder for the ensemble to go back to when rehearsing. Each
player can listen with his or her own part, and if the ensemble wants, have each
individual listen with another part, especially if one part has a difficult rhythmic entrance.
For instance, if the first violin has melodic material and the ensemble has a difficult time
feeling the pulse, the rest of the ensemble can look at the cello part to see and listen for a
definitive sense of pulse. Listening is a fundamental part of music, whether it is for
learning or leisure, and the listening skill is truly the basis of building foundational
techniques in playing chamber music. Communication is another vital component to
effective ensemble playing. The way in which an ensemble communicates can determine
the relationship of the ensemble and how well the ensemble can work together.
CHAPTER FIVE

COMMUNICATING

Because a chamber music piece is by definition not a solo work, communication is an essential part of a chamber ensemble’s success. Working along with the listening skill, communication is a valuable skill that can be done in various ways. Aural communication deals with how the ensemble listens to each other, particularly specifics such as matching lengths in articulation and matching dynamics. Visual communication entails the ensemble looking at each other in order to communicate important parts in the music, such as passing motives and being in the same part of the bow. Verbal communication primarily deals with rehearsal techniques, how to socially work together as a unit without offending each other, how to most effectively use rehearsal time. Aural, visual, and verbal forms of communication will make the ensemble work together as a unit even though each player has an individual part.

Gillian Rogell makes her ensembles “spot” check each other in certain parts of the music when coaching a chamber group. These “spot” checks are used for a chamber music coach to say “spot” at any given point in a movement that an ensemble is working

27 Gillian Rogell founded the Heart of Chamber Music Institute, now known as the Apinwall Hill Chamber Music Foundation in 1999. As a violist, Rogell studied with Karen Tuttle while earning her B.A. from University of Pennsylvania, and received her Master’s degree from the New England Conservatory. Currently, she is on faculty at the New England Conservatory Prepatory School and directs the chamber music department at NEC’s School of Continuing Education. She is also on faculty at the Walnut Hill School and maintains a private chamber music studio in Brookline, Massachusetts. “Gillian Rogell” New England Conservatory Continuing Education Faculty, http://necmusic.edu/faculty/gillian-rorell?lid=10&sid=1 (accessed July 27, 2013).

28 Rogell, Gillian, Paul Katz, Jupiter String Quartet. At the Heart of Chamber Music: A Practical Guide for the player, the coach—and the music lover. Music Alchemy Studio, 2008. DVD.
on while they play. The purpose is for the ensemble to focus not on the music in front of them, but how to communicate efficiently and properly.

Visual communication can be thought of as a supplement to the listening skill described earlier, but using visual cues to signal what to listen for. These include concepts of body conducting and relaying ideas non-verbally. Visual cues are beneficial for an ensemble to coordinate together. Aural communication can be supplemented to the listening skill as well, while it can also be placed in rehearsal technique. The exchange of thoughts and ideas that a member of the ensemble may have falls into verbal communication. Putting visual and aural cues together make up much of the techniques to have a successfully functioning ensemble.

**Verbally Communicating**

Ross Harbaugh, Professor of Cello and Chamber Music at the Frost School of Music at the University of Miami, considers the way in which an ensemble verbally communicates as one of many “ensemble savers.” Harbaugh suggests communication to be timely and orderly, particularly in a rehearsal situation. One of Harbaugh’s most emphasized values for effective rehearsal technique is how the ensemble verbally communicates together through ways of encouragement and respect, rather than blaming members of the ensemble or ostracizing an individual member.29 Another point that Harbaugh makes is knowing how and when to compromise as an ensemble. For instance, if two members of an ensemble cannot come to an agreement regarding a tempo or

intonation, a proper temporary solution could be to come back to the topic after the ensemble has given the passage some more thought. Harbaugh even suggests just letting it go, and the problem may resolve itself, saving time and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships in the ensemble.\textsuperscript{30} For an inexperienced chamber ensemble, playing chamber music with a group of new musicians can be overwhelming to any individual. A primary thought to maintain while rehearsing and verbally communicating is how an individual may feel if a comment sounds like an attack. Passing blame to an individual can set the ensemble up to produce a hostile environment and can lead to a dysfunctional or rebellious result. The chamber coach can assign roles to members of the ensemble to help with rehearsals when the coach is not present during rehearsals. If the coach notices one member of the ensemble who takes over too much of the rehearsals or coaching sessions, have somebody else in the ensemble take the lead and give him or her ten minutes to discuss thoughts on how to improve a section. A part of tactful verbal communication is how to compromise within an ensemble, allowing each member to give and receive constructive criticisms.

**Non-Verbally Communicating**

Some of the most valuable forms of communication for rehearsal purposes can be non-verbal forms of communication. These include breathing and cuing as an ensemble, along with trusting each other musically. Harbaugh repeatedly suggests finding a leader, who will be the cuer, and a reader, who will be the follower.\textsuperscript{31} For non-verbal

\textsuperscript{30} Ibid., 98.
\textsuperscript{31} Harbaugh, Ross. “Ensemble Savers” American String Teachers Association Annual National
communication, trusting the leader is far more important than playing at the same time. It is up to the chamber music coach to help a younger ensemble succeed in cuing, ensuring that each member of the ensemble knows when he or she will be a leader or a reader.²²

“Spot” checking is an effective way for the ensemble to determine each member’s roles at any given section in the music. The ensemble should always know who the leader is, while the leader should always know the readers. When giving an ensemble the opportunity to “spot” each other, isolating particular examples of “spot” checks will help the musicians transfer the concept of visual communication to other examples in their music. See Example 5.1.

Example 5.1, Quartet No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 458, I. Allegro vivace assai, measures 114-117

In Quartet K. 458, the first movement has multiple examples of sixteenth notes passing between different voices in the ensemble. In this particular example, the sixteenth notes are passed from the second violin and viola to the first violin and again back to the original group. The second violin and viola can “spot” check each other and

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²² Ibid.
communicate visually to the first violin. Because these passages are not difficult to play, the quartet members actively “spot” check each other. Hopefully when passing gestures such as these are heard in other areas of the score, the musicians in the ensemble can transfer the ideas from previous instances.

Another example of where visual communication should be used is the first movement of Mozart’s Quartet K. 464, shown in Example 5.2.

Example 5.2, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, I. Allegro, measures 47-53

When coaching an ensemble, many of these foundational skills can overlap each other in hopes for the ensemble to independently formulate their own ideas in addition to the coaching sessions. The ensemble can use both horizontal listening and visual communication to effectively make the triplets in Example 5.2 one continuous line, instead of having each individual part stand out. The second violinist begins this line of triplets and the motive gets passed to the first violinist and violist. Having each individual part play only the triplets when they have the moving line can help the ensemble listen to the passing of the motive from one instrument to another.

When the ensemble is rhythmically in unison, the ensemble can look to a cuer to bodily conduct the music, adding another form of visual communication. Looking back at
Example 4.12 (page 28) from the previous chapter, an ensemble can use body conducting to help cue the moving notes. Using both horizontal and vertical listening along with visual communication, the ensemble can physically move as a unit together while knowing exactly which parts to tune to and at which point to change notes.

Example 5.3, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, IV. Allegro non troppo, measures 114-121

In Example 5.3, the ensemble should move, for the most part, as a unit. The first violin, viola, and cello in measure 116 can be the cuers using visual communication to dictate the tempo while the second violin is the follower in this instance. In measure 118, the second violin changes roles from being a follower to the cuer, and the rest of the ensemble must follow the second violin’s moving line. The visual cue here would be conducting with the scroll; not dictating each beat, but dictating when to change notes. For the cello, the conducting would be with the head, giving good visual communication with eye contact to other members of the ensemble to dictate when to change notes.

Aural communication primarily deals with how an ensemble gives and receives cues from the leader and or readers, whether it is from musical material or physical
gestures. Large breaths by the leader of an entrance can be aurally given to the readers of the ensemble. When giving large breaths for aural communication, the leader should give one preparatory breath to determine the tempo for the ensemble, while the ensemble has to anticipate and prepare to receive the tempo. Aural communication is important particularly at the beginning of sections and pieces because the aural communication determines the tempo that the ensemble must follow. Much of playing in a string chamber ensemble is physical; therefore using aural communication can help the ensemble physically move together. An example of aural communication can be seen in the opening measures from the second movement of Quartet K. 465, shown in Example 5.4.

Example 5.4, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, II. Andante cantabile, measures 1-4

The ensemble must first verbally communicate how they will come off the tied note with the viola’s sixteenth notes in the first measure. An effective rehearsal technique
could be to communicate the tempo with the ensemble all playing eighth notes to subdivide the meter, then have the viola play the sixteenth notes in the first measure, then conclude by having the ensemble play the measure as written. The next obstacle in this example is how to communicate the trills and the rhythm in the fourth measure. The communication skill is primarily with the violins, with each violin trying to mirror each other both visually and aurally. Aurally, the first violin could play what he or she thinks is the rhythm, and then the second violin could try to imitate. The violins can leave out the trill, and play the measure as rhythmically precise as they can.

This second movement of Quartet K. 465 is a useful example of the aural communication skill to an ensemble because of its multiple occurrence of grace-notes and trills that must be discussed before playing, as shown in Example 5.5.

![Example 5.5, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, II. Andante cantabile, measures 20-22](image)

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33 Musical mirroring in chamber music deals with physical movements that are imitative at the same time as another member of the ensemble. These include bow direction and placement, physical breathing gestures, and physical movement.
The first violin is almost independent from the rest of the ensemble in these measures, but the grace-notes that the first violin has must be in sync with the second violin and viola while the cello has to play off of the second violin and viola’s eighth notes. Much of this passage should be done without the grace-notes in the first violin at first, to figure out how the ensemble communicates this passage together and “spot” each other with the moving lines. The first violin should communicate with the ensemble whether he or she will add the grace-notes before or on the beat, because without knowing, the ensemble may misdirect each other and can come apart, essentially due to miscommunication.

Sometimes an ensemble can have difficulty aurally communicating even after doing a thorough score reading. A rehearsal technique that can help aural communication is having an ensemble sit back-to-back with each other. Forcing the ensemble not to visually communicate, but have to listen carefully to each individual part and group of voices can help tremendously with both the aural communication and listening habits involved with playing in an ensemble. See Example 5.6.

Example 5.6, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, I. Adagio-Allegro, measures 194-19
The ensemble should aurally communicate the *forte* eighth notes leading into measure 195, and the cello and second violin must aurally communicate the *piano* quarter note pick-ups leading into measure 196. In measure 195, the moving notes in the first and second violin are important for the ensemble to maintain a steady tempo as they emerge out of the eighth notes into the quarter-note pulse, which will help with the triplets in measure 196. To maintain the steady tempo, the viola and cello can play subdivided eighth notes to lead into measure 195. The ensemble can isolate aural communication by having the first and second violins play their moving eighth notes without any of the slurs, while the viola and cello can play what is written. Afterwards, the ensemble can play what is written, and if needed, work on another aspect of communication, such as visual communication.

In the second movement of the “Hunt” quartet, Quartet K. 458, the transition into the Trio from the Minuet, shown in Example 5.7, is an example where both aural and visual communication are important. The transition into the *Trio* possibly poses some difficulty for an ensemble and should be communicated amongst the group. For advanced groups, the non-verbal communication may come more naturally rather than discussing the transition verbally. An important factor to remember in this instance is which member of the ensemble is a leader and which is the reader.
Example 5.7, Quartet No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 458, III. Minuet and Trio, measures 29-36

In many instances, the first violin would be the leader, but in this case, because the second violin and viola have the moving eighth notes, they can either assign one to lead or they both can lead the transition into the Trio. Aurally, the ensemble must pay attention to the moving eighth notes and not just the melodic line. Visually, the ensemble must cue each other non-verbally, which includes body conducting and body movement. To help with the transition, the group can take a grand pause after the Minuet, and count out loud the new tempo of the Trio. If the communication gets lost in the transition as a whole, the group should take a pause before the Trio and let the second violin and viola count the Trio’s tempo out loud. Following counting out loud, the ensemble breathes together as a unit right into the Trio.

The inner voices will sometimes be the followers and use good aural communication to maintain a continuous pulse, while the outer voices will have to use good “spot” techniques and visual communication to match articulation and strokes. In Example 5.8, the second violin and viola have a sustaining harmony which can help lead this crescendo with aural communication, but the visual communication necessary in
these measures are between the first violin and the cello with the moving eighth notes and sixteenth-note combinations.

Example 5.8, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, II. Andante cantabile, measures 39-42

This rhythmic gesture must be passed between the cello and first violin effortlessly. The ensemble should verbally communicate how much crescendo they wish to do, and the second violin and the viola can lead the crescendo while using aural communication from the first violin and cello.

To add an extra layer to how the ensemble must communicate with each other, the articulation and style of the eighth notes must also match. The sooner an ensemble can compromise on the length of the eighth notes, the easier the section and transition will be. In some cases, a different bowing may determine the type of articulation necessary for the moving lines. See Example 5.9.
Example 5.9, Quartet No. 17 in B-flat major, K. 458, I. Allegro vivace assai, measures 24-25

This edition of Quartet K. 458 has all the eighth notes rearticulated under a tie. Stylistically, an ensemble could choose to either do what is printed in this edition or do the notes separately. The urtext edition does have the same rearticulating eighth notes written under the tie. The ensemble would need to communicate with each other how they wish to articulate the eighth notes, and if they wish to add or change any of the bowings as indicated in the parts.

The first step is to determine the articulation of the eighth notes. This can be determined by stacking the chord in measure 24 from the bass up, which in this case starts with the cello. Because the cello note is the bass of the chord, the ensemble should try to match the articulation in the cello first before making any definitive decisions on the final articulation. Starting from the bass also gives a point for the ensemble to begin communicating, and matching the cello is easier than matching any other voice because of the larger instrument’s response time. Because of the use of matching bow placement, breathing out loud, matching articulation, and talking through how the

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34 Matching bow placement implies that each member of the ensemble is in the same part of the bow. At its simplest level, bow placement can be at one of three primary points of the bow: tip, middle, or frog.
ensemble wishes to stack from the bass up, Example 5.9 showcases communicating aurally, visually, and verbally.

Matching articulation can be a daunting task for any ensemble, and the ensemble’s ability to communicate the articulation and also when to release notes, even in the simplest instances, can be one of the most exhausting forms of communication. For instance, in Example 5.10 the first violin must aurally communicate the eighth notes’ articulation while the ensemble must visually communicate with each other the length of the quarter notes. The ensemble should collectively determine what length of quarter note would be appropriate for the accompaniment, assigning somebody as the cuer and everybody else as followers. To match the articulation, the appropriate amount of bow is determined along with the appropriate amount or type of vibrato used on each note. The length of these notes, if sounded even slightly off, makes the ensemble sound like they are not communicating effectively with each other.

Example 5.10, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, III. Minuet and Trio, measures 13-16
One of the largest difficulties in communicating within an ensemble, especially in an inexperienced ensemble, is how to tactfully communicate verbally without offending each other. These are not just efficient rehearsal techniques, but ways of framing the human interactions to avoid any harsh feelings one person has towards another, when left unchecked, can lead to a hostile working environment for the ensemble. Chamber music is not and should not be a one-sided activity, and the more effectively and openly an ensemble can communicate with one another, the higher the chances of efficiently learning and successfully rehearsing the music, achieving a satisfactory musical result.

The visual, aural, or verbal forms of communication are equal in importance. All three of these forms of communication are beneficial to each other, and can be used by an ensemble simultaneous with the listening skill. As stated earlier, many of these foundational skills can overlap with each other to help each member of an ensemble think independently, but work together as a unit.
CHAPTER SIX
SYNCHRONIZING

The synchronizing skill is defined as having the ensemble make simultaneous actions conceptually and make physical body movement. Physical synchrony is similar to visual communication, but the physical motions involved with synchronizing pertain to the group as a whole, whereas visual communication deals with particularly roles in the ensemble, such as cuers and followers. The simplest example of conceptual synchrony is having the ensemble say a tempo out loud so that they are all together on what tempo to take. This does not have to be every time, but only if the tempo is off and a member of the ensemble is out of sync with the others. Using a metronome will help with conceptual synchrony, especially if the tempo fluctuates when it should not. A young ensemble might fall into a trap of over relying on a metronome, but part of developing conceptual synchrony is that the ensemble must be able to adjust tempo together. The use of a metronome is helpful only when the tempo is too far off a desired tempo.

There are two categories that help an ensemble with synchrony. The first category of synchronizing is conceptual or mental synchrony, which can be anything from counting out loud as an ensemble for tempo purposes to knowing each part and the score. If the ensemble decides to make a crescendo or diminuendo at a given section where it may not be printed in the part, the ensemble should synchronize these dynamics together. For example, if the violist does a crescendo while the other members do not, the
ensemble is no longer in sync and the ensemble must proceed to listening and communicating together.

The second category of synchronizing is physical synchrony, which is just as important as conceptual synchrony. Physical synchrony pertains to physical body movement and how unified the ensemble works together physically. Physical synchrony includes a range of things such as matching articulations in the bow with similar lengths and placement, matching vibrato, and synchronizing breathing together as an ensemble.

An example of physical synchrony is the use of vibrato or non-vibrato. In measure 250 of the first movement of Quartet K. 464, the ensemble can decide at this point to play non vibrato to bring out the sudden change of character in the music (see Example 6.1).

Example 6.1, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, I. Allegro, measures 250-253
To add to the skill of communication, matching vibrato can also be a tool for both physical and conceptual synchrony. If a member of the ensemble decides that he or she wants to vibrate or accidentally vibrates when the rest of the ensemble has decided not to vibrate, the ensemble must rehearse that passage to reinforce the synchrony.

The same concept of synchronizing applies to dynamics, for example how the ensemble wants to synchronize its dynamics. The ensemble needs to be conceptually synchronized with each other on when to change dynamics. If the ensemble is not mentally aware of the dynamic changes, the synchrony of the ensemble can fall apart. See Example 6.2.

Example 6.2, Quartet No. 19 in C major, K. 465, IV. Allegro, measures 402-407

In measure 402, the piano dynamic must be synchronized with the ensemble to contrast first the forte in the preceding measure, but also to make the crescendo a measure later in 403. This example shows many different layers of synchrony that can benefit any ensemble. For instance, the ensemble can explore different concepts of balance in these measures by defining exactly what piano means for the ensemble. The ensemble must decide if the piano is for an individual to decide (such as a leader or cuer), or if the ensemble as a whole should synchronize the dynamic together. Because the ensemble is
rhythmically in unison, the ensemble can rehearse how to balance the crescendo to prevent any voices being heard over another. A rehearsal technique to synchronize the ensemble is to isolate the ensemble into pairs of twos. A starting point would be for the cello and viola to balance their dynamics along with the crescendo. The cello and viola’s notes move downward (pitch C to B in the cello and pitch E to D in the viola). Another member of the ensemble can count a measure out loud to help the cello and viola synchronize the dynamic and balance. Counting out loud not only relays conceptual synchrony, but also combines an aspect of aural communication. The members of the ensemble will hear the tempo being counted out loud and can synchronize to the tempo, while determining appropriate dynamic and balance levels for the rest of the ensemble. After these measures are played with the cello and viola, the viola and second violin can do the same, followed by the second violin and first violin. Afterwards, the ensemble can add three voices instead of two, later including all four voices. This will help the ensemble focus in on balance, texture, and physical and conceptual synchrony.

The fourth movement of Quartet K. 465 is in sonata form, and the above example is from the coda of the movement. While there are multiple tonal shifts in this movement, many of the motives and themes are reiterated throughout the movement, leaving a large part of the interpretation up to the ensemble. This leaves much of the discussion to the ensemble and the chamber music coach, combining the skills of listening, communicating, and synchronizing together.

A part of synchronizing in ensemble playing is the ensemble’s ability to match articulation. Four individuals in a string quartet will form four individual ideas of articulations, even if the notes all look the same. See Example 6.3.
All the eighth notes in the second violin and viola have the same articulated dot on each note, but each stroke length must be discussed in order to synchronize the ensemble.

A way to begin the synchronization process is to have each individual play how he or she feels the note lengths should be, and then have the other members of the ensemble express their opinion on the length presented. Physically, to synchronize the notes, they should match in length, and the ensemble should mentally synchronize these lengths when approaching eighth notes similar to these in other passages in the movement by transferring the same concept. A technique to synchronize this passage as an ensemble is for the second violin and the viola to pizzicato these notes while the first violin and cello play their lines with their bows. One of the voices, either the second violin or viola, can play their line while the other plays the line pizzicato. As an ensemble, they must verbally communicate how they wish to synchronize these eighth notes. Compromise within an ensemble is an essential element to synchronizing, and instances such as the length of the eighth notes in Example 6.3 can debate. Even if the
ensemble members feel that they cannot come to an agreement, they should take this to a chamber music coach, an outside listener, or record themselves and listen together, in order to gain a different perspective.

As stated earlier, the slow movements of these “Haydn” quartets truly test the ensemble’s ability to compromise and work together. Going back to Quartet K. 464, the third movement *Andante* contains many examples of the importance of synchronizing. This movement is structured in a theme and variations form, and the ensemble should approach the movement by individual variations and should sectionalize portions of each variation before trying to put the variation together. Each variation has its own challenges pertaining to synchrony, and approaching the movement as a whole at first can be overwhelming to an inexperienced chamber music ensemble.

Shown in Example 6.4, Variation 4 starts with two eighth notes that introduce the variation. The articulation of these pick-up eighth notes must be physically and conceptually synchronized together in the first violin, second violin, and viola. Sometimes, if a voice has an independent entrance of eighth notes, the articulations can be different from each other because nobody in the ensemble is necessarily relying on somebody to match his or her articulation. In this particular instance, because there are three rhythmically unified voices, they must all match and be synchronized with each other.
The opening measures of the third movement *Adagio* in Quartet K. 458 shows a combination of conceptual and physical problems of synchrony. For conceptual synchrony, the ensemble must match the lengths of the notes and the grace notes at the same time. Physically, the ensemble must attempt to make the *sforzando* sound the same, which could mean using equal amounts of bow and similar bow speed. Although this movement is a slow *Adagio*, the ensemble must be prepared and anticipate each of these details in order to maintain any form of synchrony.

The musical complexity of a slow movement might not be completely comprehended by an ensemble of inexperienced students (who may think music is difficult only in faster music). As shown in Example 6.5, the first dynamic that the ensemble has is a *piano* followed directly by a *sforzando*. The first violin, second violin, and cello all have a thirty-second pick-up note following the *sforzando*, with eighth notes following a grace note near to end the gesture. Just in the first three beats of the first measure, many attributes of synchrony must be addressed and achieved.
To effectively synchronize these three beats of the first measure, an ensemble must utilize an enormous amount of concentration. First, to begin synchronizing, the bow placement must be physically synchronized with each member of the ensemble to match ensemble. Next, the bow speed must also physically synchronize with each member of the ensemble to sustain through the *sforzando* in the second beat. These two parts of physical synchrony are in hopes to achieve a matching sound. If the viola must use less bow but more weight to effectively make the *sforzando* sound like the violins, and the *sforzando* aurally matches, the ensemble has still achieved synchrony. The ensemble should also be well aware of the length of the eighth note in the second beat and all members must synchronize the release of the eighth note. The first violin, second violin, and cello must begin the pick-up to the third beat at the same part of the bow, whether they wish to hook the notes together or

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35 Hooking implies starting a new note under the same bow direction, rearticulating the note, all while not moving or lifting the bow’s placement from the first note.
to do a retake, the bow placement must be unified. For the third beat, the ensemble
should take the time to verbally communicate with each other at what point of the beat
they would like the grace note to fall, either before or on the third beat. Of course, this
must all be done within a *piano* dynamic while the ensemble synchronizes the length of
the eighth notes in the third beat.

Another aspect of synchrony that must be addressed in ensemble playing is the
length of phrases and musical lines. For an inexperienced group, the ensemble can get
direction from its chamber music coach. The simplest way for a group to conceptually
synchronize musicality is vocalize and or conduct a musical line. As embarrassing as it
may be for anybody to sing out loud, the ensemble should remember that they are
learning together, and in order to synchronize as an ensemble, they must work as an
ensemble. Singing and conducting phrases can help an ensemble get a feel for the
music’s direction and synchrony.

Example 6.6, Quartet No. 18 in A major, K. 464, II. Minuet and Trio,
measures 63-69
The Trio in Quartet K. 464, shown in Example 6.6, is highly symmetrical, which can allow an ensemble to plan out each phrase and line for every clear cadential moment. The entire ensemble can sing the first violin part before trying to add the parts together. Once the members of the ensemble have an idea of how to phrase and shape the line (while also using horizontal listening), they can sing or play each individual part to compliment the phrase that was sung previously. Synchronizing in this situation should be not only conceptual, but also physical. The ensemble should be able to physically move with the music, especially listening to and knowing the first violin’s line. Conducting the tempo or even stomping or tapping feet to the tempo while playing the phrases can be a part of the practice of physical synchrony.

Many of the examples used in the listening and communication skills can be transferred to the synchronizing skill, and many of these skills should overlap with each other when learning new works as an ensemble (especially for the first time). Synchrony addresses many of the finer details in ensemble playing, such as when to use vibrato, how to match articulations, and how to feel and hear a musical line.

If an ensemble is using the listening and communicating skills effectively with each other, the synchronizing skill allows work on more specific details that expand and work cohesively by listening and communicating. Sometimes when an ensemble works hard to achieve synchrony, going back to the basics of ensemble playing can be socially and musically beneficial.
CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

In 1785, Mozart completed composing twenty-three string quartets, with a set of six that are dedicated to Franz Joseph Haydn, Quartets K. 387 in G major, K. 421 in D minor, K. 428 E-flat major, K. 458 in B-flat major, K. 464 in A major, and K. 465 in C major. After hearing these quartets, Haydn wrote to Mozart’s father, Leopold, saying, “Your son is the greatest composer known to me.”

In the same letter, Haydn expresses to Leopold Mozart how difficult writing such “excellent” quartets must be, but to master the quartets to the level at which Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart had done was equally as impressive. Many scholars believe that Mozart used Haydn’s set of Op. 33 quartets as inspiration to write his own “Haydn” quartets. Haydn acknowledged the importance of each voice, especially in string quartet compositions, but unlike any quartets Haydn had seen or written at that time, he felt that Mozart’s “Haydn” quartets gave equal participation to every voice. Because of the uniqueness combined with the musical attractiveness of each voice having equal importance, these quartets are ideal for groups with a wide range of abilities wishing to experience chamber music.

Learning chamber music is an experiential part of a student’s musical development. For many inexperienced chamber musicians, learning Mozart quartets is a great starting point for beginning many different aspects of ensemble playing. To give an

37 Ibid.
38 Burk, 353.
inexperienced ensemble a contemporary twentieth or twenty-first century composition may not be the best repertoire choice for various reasons. Many times, an inexperienced ensemble may not know how to appropriately rehearse, work together as an ensemble, know how to read a full score, or know how to do basic score analyzing. Each ensemble will have differing levels of experience, therefore using Mozart quartets will be an adequate introduction to ensemble playing that will be mutually beneficial to individuals with varied levels of abilities on his or her instrument.

The foundational skills necessary for an inexperienced college student chamber ensemble start with intensive listening. Having an ensemble learn how to listen should be a top priority for any chamber music coach. Sometimes, members of the ensemble may have never worked in a chamber music setting, which means one or more of the students has never been alone on a part. The thought of being completely exposed can intimidate even the most confident of players, but it is the responsibility of the chamber music coach to help guide the ensemble from the very beginning, and not to dictate the ensemble’s every move. To begin the process, the ensemble should learn how always to listen to each other. When listening to a work while looking at a score, there are two different types of listening that will help an ensemble begin intensive listening. The first part of intensive listening is horizontal listening, which can be heard as similar motives or moving lines that are passed between voices. The second form of listening is vertical listening, which includes basic score analysis, voicing, balancing certain parts of the score, and other elements that have a vertical or moment-in-time focus. Again, with differing levels of experience in an ensemble, it is the responsibility of the chamber music coach to
encourage these aspects of listening to help build these foundational skills of ensemble playing.

The next necessary skill to help build the foundational skills of ensemble playing is communicating. Just as in the listening skill, there are multiple types of communication used in an ensemble. Aural, visual, and verbal forms of communication will make the ensemble focus on each member of the ensemble’s part, not just his or her own. Aural communication goes along with the listening skill, but deals particularly with specific motives or gestures in the music that the ensemble wishes to match. These include verbally communicating how a member wishes to do a trill or a grace note, with the ensemble imitating, but using good aural communication to determine the length and duration of the trill and grace note. Visual communication deals with how the ensemble makes eye contact and how they visually know what is in the score without necessarily looking only at their own part. A part of visual communication is each member knowing the various roles in the ensemble for particular parts in the score. There should always be at least one person that cues, while the others are followers. Verbal communication deals with rehearsal techniques and how to communicate effectively. These include ways of communicating without offending other members of the ensemble, and also how to communicate verbally without wasting any of the rehearsal time. The last skill necessary for building foundational techniques for ensemble playing is synchrony.

Synchrony can be broken into two different categories, conceptual (or mental) synchrony and physical synchrony. Conceptual synchrony deals with anything from knowing the score, knowing how to match articulations, to syncing bow directions within the ensemble, doing appropriate dynamics, and phrasing as an ensemble. Much of
conceptual synchrony must be done with good communication skills, with adequate rehearsal techniques, and good listening skills. Physical synchrony deals with when, or when not, to vibrate, matching bow lengths and placement, breathing as a unit, and bodily conducting of the music when beneficial.

The culmination of these skills will build the foundational techniques necessary for ensemble playing. The hope of this treatise is to help any musician wishing either to play in an ensemble or coach an ensemble. Many members in an ensemble have varying levels of experience, and because learning music is so experiential, isolating the techniques and skills required for ensemble playing should help all varying levels come together and at least have a starting point. To use Mozart’s “Haydn” quartets is a vehicle for an ensemble or ensemble coach to get started, especially when dealing with an inexperienced chamber ensemble. Music should be an enjoyable and encouraging experience for all involved. Learning chamber music is no exception, as it should be an enjoyable experience for each individual member, for the chamber music coach, and for the audience listening to the final product.
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BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Laurel Yu, violist, finished his Doctor of Music degree from the Florida State University College of Music. Laurel has served as a graduate teaching assistant for Dr. Pamela Ryan and assistant chamber music coordinator for Corinne Stillwell at FSU. Currently, Laurel works for The Character Center, where in 2009 he started an educational afterschool violin program for K-8 students in Tallahassee, Florida.

A graduate of Boston University and the Interlochen Arts Academy, his former teachers and mentors include Ed Gazouleas, Michelle LaCourse, Dr. Marilyn Seelman, David Holland, and Beth Newdome. As the first violist to win the Florida State University Young Artist Competition, Laurel appeared as duo soloist with the University Philharmonia Orchestra in 2010. As a chamber musician, Laurel has studied with the Muir String Quartet, Raphael Hillyer, George Neikrug, Eliot Chapo, and Corinne Stillwell. Summers have been spent at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Indiana University String Academy, and the Brevard Music Center, where he worked as a viola teaching assistant. Laurel has had the privilege of working with conductors such as Alex Jiménez, Robert Spano, Donald Runnicles, Matthias Bamert, Keith Lockhart, Andrew Litton, Scott Speck, and Bernard Haitink. Laurel is currently a member of the Mobile, Tallahassee, Pensacola, and Valdosta Symphony Orchestras, and is Associate Principal Violist and Personnel Manager of Sinfonia Gulf Coast based in Destin, Florida.