Winter instrumental paper.

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This instrumental started like the last. Looking at the schedule I see that it is half in half with the symphonic band performing first then the jazz ensemble. The introduction is the same one that was in the last performance. I must say that I still am amazed to see the word ‘system of a down’ on this introduction.

The first to enter were the flutes, then the baritones. Next coming in were in the following order: oboes, clarinets, trumpets, French horns, saxophones, ending with trombones. Percussion were already on the stage prior to my arrival. Shortly after tuning began, then first chair came on stage, things quieted while she played a single note for further tuning, then sat down. Next the conductor came on the stage, and with a bow went directly to her position and gave the ready signal and with her preparatory gesture the symphony began to play. Looking at the song schedule I see that I am listening too, Toccata for Band, by Frank Erickson. This Toccata turns out to be my favorite of the night. Sometimes when I here the little things my soul is moved, I must admit this is one of the main reasons that I am perusing music. In this song for a second at the rise of the symphony I was moved some. The things that stood out in conducting for me was the fermata’s. Somehow last time I didn’t notice Profession Aldridge’s proficiency of all the fermata techniques. I was enamored by the amount of fermata’s she used in this piece as well as the variety. The song began in 2/4 time and then went into 4/4 time and I was even able to tell it by the conductors pattern. Many cues in this song as well including bass cues, I was amazed a the lack of one cue for the cymbals, but am now confident that she must have had reason, as almost everything is cued on way or another, I especially like the little cure were she holds up here hand like an ok sign and then opens her two fingers to cue the bells or whatever else is at that point. The tempo changes were also readily read by the conductor and expected. After the song ended the conductor made all the introduction and informed us of the nights agenda.

The Second piece was Dublin Dances, by Jan Van der Roost. An Irish Folk tune. The Maestro readied with a two hand prep, and the song began with snare only. Next the first flute played in tandem. I noticed that she had changed her instrument to a much smaller flute. Oboe began to play to make a trio then clarinets, each section being cued separately by the conductor in turn. A soloist in this song was also cued. The brass had there mufflers in when they began a brass part, and even a baritone solo was performed. The dynamics began to change in the song which was easily noticed by the size of pattern in the conducting. Next a beautiful solo in French horn ‘Katherine’ performed very well. I noticed a fermata without a stop expertly done by the conductor. Then a change in style to staccato, the pattern that Mrs. Aldridge was using began to be a noticeable staccato movement. Then a two handed prep with left hand open and up in an inviting manner and fingers wiggling to cue. A highlight was the cueing of the symphonic ‘hits’, and the dead baton for the rests in-between.

Song number three was Savannah River Rhapsody by Robert Sheldon. The conductor explained we should be able to feel the winding of the river and the calmness of the waters in certain parts of the performance. Beginning with a two handed prep we were off. I noticed right away the legato style in the conductors pattern. Next a section cue, then a fermata w/o stop. I noticed that the pattern that I had deemed the ‘fly S’ from my last paper seemed to be only showing on occasion, however, It could be that since I am now watching the tip of the baton more, in conjunction with some basic knowledge of conducting that I am able to interpret what I am seeing much better. I loved the trill that was cued with the opening of the two fingers from the ok sign, from now on I will call it the ‘ok cue’. I this song I also noticed a fermata stop with the baton while holding a sustain with the left for the French Horn section, nicely done. The conductor cued the trumpet section then hushed them with her hand to get the level she was wanting. On another note, I said how sometimes songs move me, I really felt at one part of this song my heart leap. I am loving what I am hearing for the most part.

Two save some space I will condense the rest and just tell of the performance. Attached is the schedule please refer to it for song titles etc. I witnessed several of everything that we learning in conducting, much of what I am learning in Music History as far as structure and style, and am listening to harmonies as I am learning in Harmony Class. Fermata with stop prep, w/o stop, and all other things present. Conducting is excellent the fact that Mrs Aldridge has a Masters in conducting is readily shown she is masterful at it, I could go to these just to watch her conduct. However, many of my peer, and friends as also performing and it is enjoyable to see them do so well. We did have the one trumpet solo that seemed out of tempo. I asked he blamed it on the conductor, but as far as I could see she had good control, I think that the performer, I believe it was trombone but not entirely sure, performing directly before the trumpet solo done something that sent the next solo out of tempo. I also noticed that one of the lower range brass seemed to be out of tune, causing dissonance throughout the performance.

Just a little on the Jazz ensemble. The first think I noticed was that the dissonance in the lower range brass was gone. The tone of the lower range brass was much purer and in tune. The drummer seemed to be struggling a little, but it must be hard to play a whole kit off of music. No baton for conducting Jazz as it was last time. I noticed the great solos in the Jazz ensemble and was happy to see one of my peer playing piano as well, quite well I might add. The songs were well chosen and the performance good. I would like to say something about Mrs Aldridge’s conducting here. While I was skeptical in my first paper a little, that is no longer the case. Her proficiency and talent is amazing. When I began taking conducting I thought it to be nothing more than standing infront of the band and keeping the beat, following the music. I never really understood that a conductor leads the music. I also never realized how hard it is and how much there is too it, and im just talking about the act of conducting here that is only the 10th part of what a conductor does it seems. After four months I still can barely conduct, the things to remember on each song make it near impossible for me. To just learn a piece of music to the point that I know what to do when conduction takes forever, and then to master to techniques required to conduct it multiplies this difficulty tenfold. On this night alone Maestro Aldridge has successfully conducted 12 songs with extreme proficiency and mastery. Pulling the symphonic band as well as the Jazz Ensemble out of horrible holes they dug. At one point in the Jazz performance the who essemble got lost she had to quietly tell them what measure they were on and cue them all without allowing the audience to see, and with a quiet, “measure 94” and an “ok ready” they picked it back up. I’m sure that some may have noticed a stumble, but only those in the ensamble and others critiquing the performance caught the severity of the position in which she alone rescued them. My hats off to her, well done.