

# Bandmasters Review



An Educational Publication of the Texas Bandmasters Association



December 2012 • Volume 14, Issue 2



# Professional Development Outreach Program

Presented by Texas Bandmasters Association for directors. CPE Credit offered.  
Register on site on the day of the clinic. Check the TBA website for updates.

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## Vertical Alignment in the Band Hall: Methods, Strategies, and Curriculum to Energize Your Band

• David Brandon •

January 26, 2013 • Lindale High School

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## Preparing for Success at UIL Contest

• Michael Brashear, Brian Merrill •

February 25, 2013 • United ISD, Laredo

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# The Midwest Clinic Performances

*Congratulations to these Texas schools on their performance at The Midwest Clinic in Chicago this month!*

## Bands

Cinco Ranch Junior High Honors Band  
Rory Davis, director  
Katy, TX

Faubion Middle School  
Symphonic I Band  
Brian Beck and Brittney Williams,  
directors  
McKinney, TX

Lone Star Wind Orchestra  
Eugene Migliaro Corporon,  
music director and conductor  
Dallas, TX

Marcus High School Wind Symphony  
Amanda Drinkwater, director  
Flower Mound, TX

Shadow Ridge Middle School  
Honor Winds  
Chris Meredith, director  
Flower Mound, TX

The Woodlands High School  
Wind Ensemble  
Joni Perez, director  
The Woodlands, TX

University of Houston Moores School  
Wind Ensemble  
David Bertman, director  
Houston, TX

## Chamber Ensembles

Haltom High School Percussion Ensemble  
Rene Rosas, director  
Haltom City, TX

Henry Middle School Trombone Ensemble  
Robert T. Herrings III, conductor  
Ryan M. Staten and Rachel A. Lynn,  
assistant conductors  
Cedar Park, TX

Keller High School Chamber Winds  
Darla McBryde, director  
Keller, TX

McCallum Knights of Steel  
Matt Ehlers, director  
Austin, TX

Westwood Percussion Ensemble  
Sarah Santa Cruz, director  
Austin, TX

# Bandmasters Review

An Educational Publication of the Texas Bandmasters Association

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TBA publishes these educational articles for your use in the classroom and rehearsal hall and to share with your students as you wish. The opinions and teaching methods are those of the authors and not necessarily shared by all members of the TBA staff and Board of Directors.

**BANDMASTERS REVIEW** is an educational publication of the Texas Bandmasters Association. The magazine's purpose is to assist TBA members in achieving the highest standards of instrumental music education. **BANDMASTERS REVIEW** is a quarterly publication and is mailed to current Active/Retired and Business Members of TBA. If your address has changed, please contact the Texas Bandmasters Association office:

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# From the Board

## Richard Herrera, 2012-13 TBA President Elect

Each year I have served on the TBA Board of Directors has been a memorable experience. Being Vice President last year was the most rewarding. It was my privilege to chair the Malcolm Helm Memorial Scholarship. The scholarship is funded by contributions from TBA members. Through the generosity of our donors, the scholarship doubled in value from \$2000 to \$4000.

Twenty-eight outstanding men and women applied for this scholarship. Each one had a wonderful story to share about why they chose to study music and become educators. Each candidate wrote of their love of music, but more importantly, about the teachers that encouraged and motivated them to pursue a career in music education.

Their personal essays caused me to reflect on how we, as teachers, have the potential to empower and inspire young adults. The amount of time spent with our students has an immeasurable impact. It's imperative to be positive role models to our students.

Students find inspiration and acceptance in our "band family". As the director you are the head of the family. Each band member needs to "buy in" to the program. Allow students to be an active part of the evaluation process. One

of the best ways to facilitate this is by having each band member evaluate the program after every concert, contest, or grading period. Evaluation can be done in several different ways including a questionnaire, online survey, and group discussion. These techniques create student ownership of the program and encourage them to be involved in the assessment process. Try calling a "family meeting" and ask for student feedback and suggestions. For example, I'm asking students to evaluate our marching season. One of the most important questions I ask is, "What could the band directors have done differently in order for the band to achieve our goals? "Will you get some flippant wisecracking answers? Sure, that's part of the process, but for the most part, you will receive valuable feedback. In a beginner band setting, you might ask, "What do you feel was the most important fundamental we were trying to achieve the first six weeks and did we achieve it?" You will be surprised at some of the answers. Either way, you will get incredible responses and perhaps realize that you may need to change your teaching method or approach. Whether you take the students advice or not, this will help them feel like they have a voice in helping the band's successes.



# Mission Statement

The purpose of the Texas Bandmasters Association, Inc. is to:

Continually assist its membership in achieving the highest standards of instrumental music education.



Promote the place and value of music education in our society and the important role instrumental music plays in our cultural, intellectual, and social lives.



Foster goodwill, fellowship and a collegial, fraternal spirit among its members.



Provide its membership with an annual Convention/Clinic which introduces new music, tried and proven teaching methods and materials as well as instruments and equipment.



Provide Educational Publications of instructional methods and materials for TBA members and aid them with their personal development and leadership.



Provide information for the university music student preparing to become a band director.

## From the Board - Richard Herrera

Due to time restraints, this process does not have to include the entire band, but perhaps only the leadership team. The more your students are involved in decision making, the more successful they are in every rehearsal and performance venue. Successful directors evaluate their program on a daily basis. The students should evaluate themselves daily as well with director guidance. This is a recipe for success.

I hope you have had a successful first few weeks of school and have impacted the lives of many students. TBA President Fred Vélez wrote the following which

exemplifies what we all should strive for. He wrote, "The musical and educational process we provide our students, along with who we are as a person, is by far more impactful than the end musical product." Fred hit the nail on the head with that statement and a sentiment we should all live by as educators! Continue to remain a positive role model, a consummate professional, and most importantly, an inspiration to your students. You never know who will one day write about you as their inspiration of a positive educator. I wish you continued success throughout the year.



**2013 TBA Convention/Clinic  
Sunday through Wednesday, July 21-24.  
Online Membership, Registration, and  
Housing opens February 11, 2013.**

# From the Board

**Steven Moore, 2012-13 TBA Treasurer**

---

Greetings to all from the TBA Board. Happy Holidays!

By the time you read this article, my high school colleagues will have made the transition from marching band to concert band with many of you having enjoyed the “Second Season”—playoff games.

To all, I hope you had a rewarding marching season and that you were able to meet the goals you set for your program and your students at the beginning of the year. Remember that the process and progress are just as important as ratings and awards.

I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all the bands that performed at both the NAMMB Marching Contest on November 3<sup>rd</sup> and the UIL State Marching Contest. What a fine display of everything that is right about education in Texas. The level at which these bands performed displayed the exemplary talent and dedication of both students and directors all across the state as well as showcasing the diversity of style that exists not only between corps style and military style marching but the diversity that is evident among the corps style itself. Again, congratulations to all. (See page 10 for a list of NAMMB Marching Contest winners and page 32 for the school bands who participated in the 2012 UIL State Marching Band Contest.)

Now we enter that time of year of Christmas Concerts, All Region Tryouts, All Region Concerts, Area Tryouts, and Solo and Ensemble competition. It is easy to go into “hibernation” in the band hall working with students on all these activities. Let me



encourage you to be visible in your community during this time. Not only with your annual Christmas or Winter Concert but by going out into your community and performing at the mall, elementary schools, community events or nursing homes. During marching season the band is out in the public eye every week for

ten weeks or more. Let’s work to keep the band visible to our community and to our administrators. Some examples of things we do in Lindale are concerts at the elementary schools, playing at the local Christmas tree lighting, creating our own “Tuba Christmas” group and performing both locally and in Dallas. During February, we have a Solo and Ensemble Concert to display the work

our students do during the first part of the second semester. Many times we will couple that event with a dinner or something as simple as coffee and dessert. There are so many ways to give back to the community and promote your kids and programs. Remember that out of sight is out of mind.

The TBA Board has been working hard to put together a great summer convention for you in 2013. Let me remind everyone of the new dates for TBA. The new dates are July 21-24, 2013. Let me encourage you to go ahead and put this on your calendar and make plans to attend. We have events for directors, spouses, and the whole family. Also don’t forget about our Student Day, TBA Academy, and Booster Workshops. TBA has something for everyone.

In closing, let me wish everyone a wonderful holiday season and a productive spring semester. See you at the TBA Convention/Clinic in July!

# Proud Of Texas Bands!

**Michael Brashear, TBA Executive Director**

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Greetings from your TBA office! I hope that your fall semester has been very productive and that your groups have achieved and even surpassed the goals you set back in August. Whether your main focus is running a marching band, teaching university, high school, or middle school bands, or teaching beginning students, we all share the incredible joy of music making with our students. Never underestimate the influence you have on each and every one of your students.

Congratulations to all the outstanding bands that were selected to perform at the 2012 UIL State Marching Contest! We are pleased to recognize these groups on page 32. Each year it seems as if the bands continue to get better and better. Congratulations also to the many other outstanding bands that performed at the Area and Region UIL Contests. Your hard work is definitely reflected in these performances.

Recently, Robert Floyd and I were invited to visit the Conn-Selmer plant in Elkhart, Indiana. We were guests of John Stoner, CEO and President and Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser, Vice President-Division of Education. In addition to touring their woodwind and brass factories, we had the opportunity to spend time visiting with their staff. My takeaway from this visit is that Conn-Selmer is very committed to serving and supporting music education. Obviously, the market for selling their fine instruments increases as the number of outstanding band programs in the world grows. Therefore, Conn-Selmer's investment of time and money into music education support is a win-win for them and us. They were very interested in hearing about current challenges and trends in Texas band programs. Over and over they made it clear that Texas is where it is happening for band. As a lifelong Texas band director and cheerleader for Texas bands, this message is one I was glad to hear.

One of the questions asked by the Conn-Selmer staff was: "Why are there so many great band programs in Texas? How do you do it? Other states have outstanding bands, but no other state has so many fine programs." I was happy to share some of my thoughts

and have spent more time since then reflecting on why I believe Texas band programs have experienced great growth and success. I hope my thoughts will cause you to consider how much we have to be thankful for and will challenge all of us to be diligent to protect our programs and to continue the success story.

- School band programs started developing in communities across Texas after World War II primarily to provide entertainment at football games. A community's pride in "their" band was very important and bands developed in small farming communities and towns as well as in larger cities. (Music advocacy at the local level is still extremely important. Strong community support is a major reason Texas bands have survived huge cuts. Take care of your football crowd, school board, and community!)

- During the past 50 years, education and training for band directors has greatly improved. Universities across the state developed music education programs and graduated more and better trained band directors. Dedicated college band directors and music education faculty, past and present, have had a major impact on the quality of band directors and Texas band programs. Universities have also offered summer band camps for years with thousands of high school and middle school students attending and learning from some of the most outstanding band directors of the time.

- During the 50's and 60's, band programs began to flourish even with meager staffing. Many programs had "a" director and were fortunate if there was also a junior high director. Beginners were all taught in one class. A high school band of 100+ members was large. These great pioneers of our profession laid a solid foundation for the future growth of Texas bands. Fast forward to today's staffing standards where many programs have like-instrument classes for beginners, at least two directors at middle schools, and a high school staff of several directors with percussion and guard specialists available to many larger programs. Outstanding private lessons are available for many students and several programs take advantage of





## Proud Of Texas Bands!

clinicians and consultants. A direct result of better and more teachers is the unprecedented growth in quality and size of Texas band programs. Great band instruction equals great bands!

- Music instrument manufacturers and retail companies have improved the quality and availability of instruments, especially student line horns. Instrument rental programs, improved products and support from local music retailers and their road men have all contributed in a great way to the development of Texas bands.

- The quantity and quality of band music by outstanding composers has impacted the quality of bands. Availability of educational materials continues to grow and improve.

- Technology including tuners and metronomes, sophisticated recording equipment, online educational materials (and now apps) continues to contribute to the development of bands and challenges the 21<sup>st</sup> century band student to reach even higher performance levels.

- Bands have more choices than ever for performances at various music festivals, marching contests, and a variety of travel opportunities. Many and varied fundraising opportunities now exist for bands. Quality travel/festival companies and fundraising companies have contributed to the success of Texas bands.

- Band parents are organized into booster clubs that many times operate like small non-profit businesses. This parental support is a key to further growth of band programs.

- TMEA has contributed in many ways to the growth of bands. The Honor Band process was developed to showcase outstanding bands and has defined the standard of excellence for many years. The All State audition process has provided a vehicle for developing musicianship by providing audition etudes and fostering audition skills for thousands of students. There is no way to overstate the importance of music advocacy provided by TMEA leadership, especially Executive Director Robert Floyd. During challenging economic and political environments, this advocacy has protected and enhanced band programs. The TMEA Convention is the world's largest and offers directors outstanding concerts, clinics, and an exhibit hall second to none.

- The UIL Music program has had a major impact on the development of Texas bands. By using the rating system at region level competitions where bands are evaluated against a standard, rather than declaring one winner, UIL created an environment which encouraged directors to help each other by sharing best practices. Under the outstanding leadership of Richard Floyd, the UIL has provided competitions for thousands of band students throughout the years, setting a high standard of excellence which is the envy of the nation. Training and education of UIL judges through the Texas Music Adjudicators Association continues to refine and improve band contests. The UIL Prescribed Music List is widely respected and used by many other states as their approved list. Using input from various committees and working closely with school superintendents, Mr. Floyd has overseen the development of a band contest system that has consistently produced more great bands than any other state in the nation.

- TBA assists band directors by providing the largest summer band convention in the country offering outstanding clinics, concerts, exhibit hall, leadership training for students and booster clubs, and the TBA Academy for young teachers. TBA also offers additional professional development outreach clinics throughout the school year, the *Bandmasters Review*, and a wealth of instructional materials on our website.

As Texas band directors, we have much to be thankful for and much to be proud of. By reflecting on our history, one thing becomes very obvious to me. The unparalleled growth and development of Texas bands is a result of great teaching and learning as well as partnerships and relationships developed over a period of years between many individuals and organizations. As directors today, we stand on the shoulders of those giants who came before us and hold the awesome responsibility to make our contribution to further the success of Texas bands. Based on my observations the past few years, we have a bright future indeed! Have a Happy Holiday, get lots of rest, and KEEP UP THE GREAT WORK!

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# Developing Positive Practice Habits

## *...The Pathway to Quality Music Making...*

**Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser**

---

Remember the first time you tried to ice skate, or water ski, or roller blade, or PLAY A CLARINET? Can you recall how awkward it felt, how awkward YOU felt? We all know mastering any skill requires time-on-task. (Aside from those choice few individuals who we have labeled “naturals.”) Can you remember your college curriculum requiring “the learning of other instruments” and the struggle you experienced trying to become proficient at performing a long stroke roll or developing an acceptable sound on the bassoon?

What is it that puts some people ahead of others? Certainly “talent” plays into it. Some people have an innate ability to throw a football and/or play a piccolo, but—for the most part—it is a matter of embracing the fundamentals of practicing. Doing the same thing over-and-over to map the mind so the given process begins to feel “natural.” To date we have found no substitute for repetition, so the key to developing greater expertise lies in the willingness to invest personal time-and-energy with a disciplined desire to accomplish a higher degree of competence.

Having enjoyed the opportunity to observe some of the finest professional musicians in action, it

is always interesting to learn about their off-stage habits. What do they do that others do not do? All of these wonderful players are firmly entrenched in a rigorous practice schedule; nothing deters them from this important aspect of their daily activities. And what are they practicing? They are playing those same exercises we all learned in our various methods classes in college. Their execution is nearly flawless, but they do not deter from the ongoing repletion of those tried-and-true basics that have served many artists throughout history.

You probably recollect the popular old anecdote about the young trombonist who visited New York City to hear his favorite musical hero in concert. As he made his way through the streets of NYC he got lost, so he walked up to an elderly gentleman sitting on a park bench and inquired, “How do I get to Carnegie Hall?” The old

fellow looked up and responded, “Practice, man, PRACTICE!” There is more truth than humor in the shared answer.

There is no shortcut to playing a trumpet; it is a matter of putting the instrument to the lips and beginning the endless journey-of-exercises. Once the mind accepts this reality, it is a matter of DEVELOPING POSITIVE PRACTICE HABITS and being true to the on task time commitment. Thirty to forty-five minutes

each day can (and will) produce a measurable difference within a month; within six months it is dramatic, and after a year it can be astounding. Buying a new trumpet won't do it; buying a new technique book won't do it; talking about playing the trumpet better won't do it. There simply is not any instant success back doors to better trumpet playing.

**While every student would love to open-the-case and have the wherewithal to play whatever music is put on the stand, it simply doesn't work that way. ...as teachers, [we] can bring to their lives the understanding of the priceless value of DEVELOPING POSITIVE PRACTICE HABITS; it is a GIFT that will serve them throughout their lives.**

## Developing Positive Practice Habits

What's the point? We live in a fast-paced society and often our eagerness to get-to-the-destination blurs the requisites of-the-journey. While every student would love to open-the-case and have the wherewithal to play whatever music is put on the stand, it simply doesn't work that way. The very best understanding we, as teachers, can bring to their lives is the understanding of the priceless value of DEVELOPING POSITIVE PRACTICE HABITS; it is a GIFT that will serve them throughout their lives.

**....Strike up the band....**

*Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser is a well-known name in the music education world as a teacher, clinician, author, composer, consultant, adjudicator, and above all, a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence. His own career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following three years in the music industry, he created Attitude Concepts for Today, an organization that manages workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the pathway-to-excellence. Tim presently holds the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer position at Ball State University. Tim is the Executive Director of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc., and he serves as the national spokesperson for MENC's "Make a Difference with Music" program. His books The Art of Successful Teaching, The Joy of Inspired Teaching, Music Advocacy and Student Leadership, and Everyday Wisdom for Inspired Teaching are best sellers. He is co-author of Hal Leonard's popular band method Essential Elements - 2000.*

# 2012 National Association of Military Marching Band Contest

**The Colonel Joe Tom Haney Outstanding Performance winners are:**

CLASS A	1 <sup>st</sup> Place San Augustine
CLASS AA	1 <sup>st</sup> Place New Boston
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place - New Diana
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place - Hemphill
CLASS AAA	1 <sup>st</sup> Place - Henderson
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place - Cleveland
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place - Carthage
CLASS 4A	1 <sup>st</sup> Place - Lindale
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place - Vidor
CLASS 5A	1 <sup>st</sup> Place - Atascocita
	2 <sup>nd</sup> Place - Kingwood
	3 <sup>rd</sup> Place - Lufkin

# Life Is Short. Do What Matters.

*Six words. A Lifetime of wisdom.*



**Randy T. Gilmore, Owner/President, Marching Show Concepts, Inc.**

Six words: Life is short. Do what matters—A lifetime of wisdom.

After the unexpected death of my vibrant sister and then my other sibling's serious battle with cancer—all within the last two years—I'm starting to think differently about life...and death. I don't mean to be morbid here, but, as they say, one out of every one person dies and no one can predict when our day will come. Reason enough to validate the statement *Life is short.*

Tragedy has a way of slicing away the frivolous and mindless routines of life and throwing questions in our face like, "What does this matter?" Leaning back into a striped lounge chair with a cold drink in my hand and the vast expanse of ocean stretching out before me usually evokes a "Life is good" comment, but lately it's tag-teamed with, "What does it matter?"

Of course, idea-makers like myself, band directors and the like, are eternal optimists and tend toward feeling virtually invincible. After all, we create winning performances, transforming average students into admirable young people with strong character and more, year after year. Doing the impossible with limited time, budgets and personnel; it's not long

before we take on the personae of a super hero.

Super heroes fearlessly face insurmountable challenges, which we all do. Unfortunately, that is as close to assimilating the superhero identity most of us will come. More likely, we will take on more than we can handle, get lost in the urgency of the present and become bogged down in the practical necessities—all the while losing sight of those things that really matter.

But what really matters? Do you remember why you pursued a career in teaching? Remember that desire to cultivate music to make a meaningful contribution in the lives of others? Or to help others find meaning and purpose through music performance like you did?

How do we stop muddling through and start doing what matters? How can we be sure our efforts will make a difference in the long run? Here are a few standards to hold up to our daily schedule.

**1. Determine what really matters today.** Make your expectations known. Don't clean out the uniform closet if you expect to hand out new music tomorrow and you haven't had a look at it yet.

**2. Be intentional.** Make deliberate and inspired choices about your work. Look at your schedule and intentionally filter out those things that are not relevant and focus on what is. Keep it simple, direct and to the point—don't overload.

**3. Be positive.** Be good at finding the good in others. Find ways to reinforce positive behavior. Honor commitment and validate strong character.

**4. Learn to say "no."** Sometimes we have to say "no" even to good opportunities and suggestions to stay focused on what is required at the moment to create the greatest impact in our current strategy or program. You may disappoint someone, but honesty and not overloading yourself and

**Do you remember why you pursued a career in teaching? Remember that desire to cultivate music to make a meaningful contribution in the lives of others? How do we stop muddling through and start doing what matters?**

## Life is short. Do what matters.

others is the key to increased productivity and satisfaction. Be courageous! Let go of what others think.

### 5. *Make connections.*


Don't confuse communication with connection. You have made a connection when others feel they have been seen, heard, and valued. Your students (and others) are wired for connection. This is what they remember. This is what changes them forever.

Remember you're leaving a legacy for these impressionable students. What do you want them to remember from your class or the marching band experience? Consider these questions and five points and you'll be well on your way to doing what matters. After all, there's no time to waste. Life is short. Focus on the big picture and impact your world with intentionality and significance. Do what matters!

*Randy served ten years as a nationally recognized high school band director and assistant marching band director at West Chester University. For over 20 years Randy has developed Marching Show Concepts as a nationally known company for quality marching band products and exceptional one-to-one services. Randy exemplifies an expertise and standard of excellence that is well known and respected throughout the music industry. He is an accomplished clinician, adjudicator and drill designer who continues to display his talents in the MSC collection of products and services.*

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# Teaching Musicianship in Band: *Finding Music Among the Notes*

**Fred J. Allen**

Many of the objectives in a band rehearsal are concerned with the “craft” of music: playing the correct note in the correct place at the correct volume with the correct articulation. But isn’t this just musically painting by number? It is possible to integrate musicianship into every level of instrumental music education, from beginning band to university ensembles. Playing in an artistic manner is possible at every level, and we teachers should commit to doing so.

What is musicianship? It is easy to think good musicianship means playing all the right notes with correct rhythm at the right dynamic level. To make something

artistic happen, individual players and ensembles must go beyond merely reproducing the symbols on the page: a true musician brings something more to the performance. I propose that “being musical” means creating something artistically surprising when playing a piece.

Both individual and ensemble musicianship can be taught! Individual musicianship is demonstrated in solo performance, in the standard solo repertoire or etudes or even within ensemble literature. Ensemble skills require sections and groups to unify elements to demonstrate good musicianship.

One of the most basic forms in music and architecture of Western Civilization is the arch, and one of the most basic ways to show musicianship is to apply this to a phrase: a crescendo followed by a diminuendo. This is a fundamental way to show tension and release in music, and can even be taught in beginning band exercises. Why not add some dynamics to lines in the beginner book? It would be more interesting for the players and certainly more interesting for the teacher!

Beginner books are full of lines like the one below. Either version is more musically interesting than the line is as printed. Why not add shaping to teach musicianship?

## Beginner Book Line

FJA

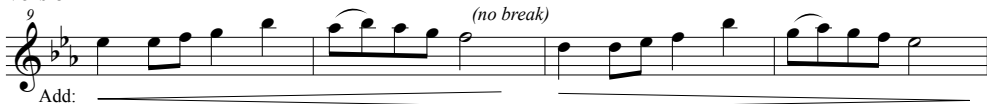
As printed in book



Version 1



Version 2



## Teaching Musicianship in Band: *Finding Music Among the Notes*

One may vary the amount of crescendo and diminuendo. Many players follow the outline of the range of a melody, rising and falling in dynamic with the line. In tonal music, most phrases group easily into 4-bar or 8-bar units, and longer phrases may rise and fall twice in shape.

Chord progressions in tonal music often provide opportunities to emphasize tension and release. When playing a piece with easily identifiable chords, look for chord progressions that can help you provide shaping.

Choose a score to a piece you want to play that has a standard 4-bar or 8-bar melody. Often a phrase like this has no dynamic contour indicated, perhaps just a beginning dynamic. This is a perfect place to teach musicianship in your band! Add shaping to the line and it will be more musically satisfying and interesting to hear. Students can appreciate the role of good musicianship more when they experience it, and it will demonstrate an important principal: it is ALWAYS permissible to add musicianship to pieces.

Composers and publishers EXPECT musical teachers to exercise some judgment: they do not want to legislate every nuance for you. Apply the idea of “shaping” a line to strains in a traditional march for a more musical interpretation.

These items are often emphasized in tonal music for a more expressive performance:

- Moving lines and figures
- Lines with chromatic movement
- Countermelodies
- Sequences usually crescendo, especially if they rise in pitch

Of course, the melody itself must be predominant. As Aaron Copland said, “The melody is generally what the piece is about.”

It is best if these items are not allowed to dominate:

- Accompanimental parts
- Repeated figures

How can you teach musicianship in an instrumental music ensemble? *Unify*. Ensemble is French for “together.” Together, we unify time (tempo, pulse), style, volume and volume contour, phrasing, and every other element encountered in the work. Let’s examine a few of these more closely:

Articulation must be unified. There are four main ways to begin a note: legato, staccato, ^ accents and > accents. Personal note: I once heard a clinician at a TBA convention say “never use the word ‘attack’—do you really want your students to ‘attack’ a note?” Sorry, I don’t remember who changed my life with that statement! I broke a 20-year habit of using a word that did not describe how I want

sound to begin. Avoid using the word “attack!”

This guide works for most music:

**Legato:** full dynamic, full value. Delicate but defined start to note, note has equal sound through its duration.

**Staccato:** ½ dynamic and ½ value. Delicate but defined start to note, detached but resonant, “lifted,” usually lighter in character.

**^ Accents:** 2X dynamic and ½ value. Full energy at front of note, quick decay (lift).

**> Accents:** 2X dynamic at front of note, longer decay to be determined by conductor/performer. This one can vary a lot, based on usage in the piece.

**Choose a score. . . that has a standard 4-bar or 8-bar melody. This is a perfect place to teach musicianship in your band! Add shaping to the line and it will be more musically satisfying and interesting to hear. Composers and publishers EXPECT musical teachers to exercise some judgment: they do not want to legislate every nuance for you.**



## Teaching Musicianship in Band: *Finding Music Among the Notes*

It is necessary to go deeper than this simple guide in more complex cases. Most good composers only use staccati in softer dynamics, as there is an implied “lightness” to these notes. Ensembles that play staccati quieter, not just shorter, will hear a really musical difference. I would like to offer a personal observation about staccato markings. If the tempo is at 120 or faster (and sometimes just a little under that) any staccato marks on a quadruple subdivision are beyond the point: those notes are already short! These passages will sound better if the “light” aspect of staccato is used here, and tongue as legato as possible. Try it—you’ll like it!

Transcriptions of certain orchestral pieces show that older composers, editors and publishers seemed to treat the ^ accent as to be played with more force than the > accent, but the majority of modern works are trending as in the guide above.

The standard “sideways” accent looks like a little diminuendo. In marches and fanfares, the overall style dictates that notes with that marking have separation, but in overture-style pieces, it is more musical to expect more length, and therefore the musician should define a specific shape and length of taper.

For instance, in a given case the most musical performance of notes marked this way may be to play them 80% length, with moderate taper (or lift). On a longer note with a sideways, I often ask for the ensemble to have the note taper but touch the next note. For example, in the last movement of Moussorgsky’s *Pictures at an Exhibition*, the magnificent *Great Gate of Kiev*, no one would want to hear those big chords with big gaps between them. Not musical.

There are two main ways to end notes, a dramatic release (last note of *1812 Overture* by Tchaikovsky) or tapered (last note of *Irish Tune from the County Derry* by Percy Grainger). In a dramatic (square, block) ending, the sound is equal in energy to the very end. All players release together and remain still for a bit to allow the note to resonate before faces or instruments move. In a tapered, quiet release, energized air is required to keep good sound during the taper. Many fine ensembles use the “low leaves last” concept for added resonance in tonal music. To do this, the higher instruments release a millisecond before and the lowest instruments leave a millisecond after the middle of the sound. This is a high-level concept but a beautiful one to perform, as it allows the fundamental of a chord to have presence during the release.

Of course, all of these ideas are futile if a band performs without unifying intonation, rhythm and balance. The

following statements are simple, but important:

- Good intonation is a matter of getting rid of the waves between two or more people.
- Rhythm is about math.
- Balance is hearing the proper amount of each part.

It is enough to say that these aspects must be present in order to display good musicianship.

Here are some miscellaneous tips I have learned from watching outstanding teachers.

- Lead across the bar. Learning to play across bar lines can make passages more musical, and this can apply to notes other than anacrusis.
- The intake of breath should be like the music that follows, especially in regard to tempo.



## Teaching Musicianship in Band: *Finding Music Among the Notes*

- In lyrical music with slurred running notes, good musicians often hold the first note imperceptibly longer. (Individual musicianship skill.)

- The lower note of an upward leap should be energized so the higher pitch can naturally float out of it. ...*and a related idea*...

- Higher notes in a passage can leap out of the texture: control the volume of these.

- Descending passages can get lost in the texture of the music: crescendo to define and project these lines.

- Grace notes are ornaments and should be noticed, even though the weight must be felt on the principal note. Tongue the start of a grace note, even when edited under a slur.

- Vibrato waves should be faster when the music is either higher (in range) or louder and softer when the

music is lower (in range) or softer. Try 5 per second in mid-range, mezzo forte.

- Wind instruments should not use much (or any) vibrato when playing in ensemble passages (tutti and unison). Double reeds may use a bit, and flutes, even less than that. No one else use it in ensemble unless you have a solo. The finest musicians in the world, members of major symphony orchestras do this.

- Short notes surrounded by longer notes need more air to define and project them.

Hopefully these tips will aid you and your students in creating a more musical performance out of the “blueprint” of notes you see before you. No one will ever accuse you of being “too musical!”

*Fred J. Allen is Director of Bands and Professor of Music at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. In addition to his conducting the Wind Ensemble, he teaches graduate conducting, orchestration and music education classes. He oversees 300 band students involved in the band program, in four concert groups, the athletic bands and several chamber ensembles. He is a past recipient of the College of Fine Arts Teaching Excellence Award and has been a finalist for the SFASU Achievement in Teaching Award.*

*Fred J. Allen is a product of music education in Texas, playing in the bands of Verna Covington and David Pennington in Austin, and under Don Turner, Paul Stroud and Jimmy Yancey in Longview before becoming a member of the Longview High School Band, under John C. “Pete” Kunkel. His undergraduate studies were at Abilene Christian University under Dr. Charles Trayler, who remains his primary mentor. After receiving a Master of Music Education at Texas A&M at Commerce, he undertook doctoral work at Texas Tech. Though his doctorate was never completed, he feels fortunate to have studied conducting and arranging under James Sudduth.*

*Allen is proud of his years teaching public school, beginning in Dimmitt, TX, working with Ralph Smith, and continuing with eight years at North Richland Junior High in the Birdville School District.*

*Under his direction, the Wind Ensemble at SFA has performed at conventions of the Texas Music Educators Association, the College Band Directors National Association, the National Association of Composers/USA, Texas Chapter and the South Central Regional Music Conference in Monroe, LA. Under his leadership the SFA Wind Ensemble continues its long tradition of commissioning new works from composers. Recent commissions have produced works from James Syler, David Maslanka, Samuel Zyman, Frank Ticheli, Jack Stamp, Mike Mower, Dan Welcher and Jonathan Newman.*

*Allen has conducted All-Region and All-State Bands throughout Texas and the United States, where he is also an active concert clinician and adjudicator. He has often served as guest conductor for bands playing at the Midwest Clinic and the Texas Music Educators Association Convention, and has also conducted in Korea, Taiwan and Australia.*

*He has published several pieces for band, orchestra and flute choir that draw upon his experience in teaching in the public schools in Texas. These works have been performed frequently at conventions and festivals across the United States and internationally. He has several commissioned works in progress.*

*He was recently elected to membership in the American Bandmasters Association. He is also a member of Phi Beta Mu International Bandmasters Fraternity, College Band Directors National Association, ASCAP and Texas Bandmasters Association.*

# Clinicians: What Are They Good For?

**Merlin “Pat” Patterson, Randy Vaughn**

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From the authors' presentation at the 2012 TBA Convention/Clinic. To view and print the handout from this and other TBA Clinics, visit: [www.texasbandmasters.org](http://www.texasbandmasters.org). Select Publication Archives located under RESOURCES in the menu bar. Then select Convention Handouts from the upper left corner.

## **Clinicians: Why?**

- Improvement of an individual piece or entire contest program.
- Improvement of fundamental skills.
- Advice on programming and score preparation.
- Advice on setting and reaching long-term and short-term goals.
- Learn new techniques for solving old problems.
- Assess strengths and weaknesses in the program and help formulate a plan for improvement.
- Help inexperienced teachers identify their strengths and weaknesses.
- Improvement of individual and ensemble teaching skills.
- A fresh set of ears.
- Taking your program to the next level.
  - ◆ Less than satisfactory UIL ratings to consistent first divisions
  - ◆ Consistent UIL first divisions to honor band competitiveness

## **How to pick a clinician and factors that may influence that decision:**

- Word of mouth.
- Recommendations from the other directors in the field.
- Your own research.
- Where you live and cost may be a factor.
- Personalities and priorities that fit your own.
- Do you want to use more than one clinician?
- Budget. How much do you want to spend? Cost ranges from \$50.00 per hour to \$125.00 per hour.
- Use of more than one clinician; make sure you don't get conflicting information (see below).

## **Use of Clinician Services:**

- Varsity band only.
- All competing bands.
- Total program - vertical team.
- Beginners.

## **Two Schools of Thought**

### Old School

A clinician is used one or two times in the spring to help put the finishing touches on the band's UIL program.

## **Clinicians: What Are They Good For?**

### New School

A clinician or even multiple clinicians are used throughout the school year, not only to aid in contest preparation, but also to help guide the director/band on fundamentals, development of technique, programming, etc.

### **Conducting vs. Not Conducting**

The decision on whether the clinician will actually conduct the band during the clinic will vary with each situation and each clinician. Some clinicians insist on conducting; others don't want to. The following are things that should be considered.

### Clinician Conducts

- What is the preference of the clinician?
- Allows director to step back and really listen to the band.
- Is the clinician a good conductor?
- Conducting may take away from the clinician's assessment/diagnostic abilities.
- Has the band been trained to follow a conductor, not just YOUR conducting?
- More of an "Old School" thing.

### Director Conducts

- Allows clinician to use all of their energy on listening, assessment and improvement.
- Students will be more comfortable with their own conductor.
- Ensemble problems will not be created by unfamiliarity with the conductor.

A mix of the two can be very beneficial, IF the clinician is a good conductor and IF your students have been taught to follow conducting. Regardless of which way you go, make sure both the director and the clinician know exactly what is going to happen before the clinic.

### **Expectations for the Host Director**

#### Communicate

- Schedule clinics early to get the times and dates you want.
- Discuss fees with your clinician and how and when the clinician will be paid.
- Let clinician know your expectations - or if have no idea, consult with clinician regarding goals and needs; long term and/or short term.
- A consultation with the clinician, prior to the school year, at which goals and expectations are discussed, is advised.
- Communicate with the clinician regarding all financial matters (see below).

## **Clinicians: What Are They Good For?**

### Clinic environment

- Students need to be prepped on the purpose of the clinic and on how to behave.
- Director may want to give a brief biography of the clinician prior to the clinic. This helps the clinician form relationships with students and director.
- Have room set up, organized and ready to go.
- Students and director should be on best behavior.
- Students need to have instrument, mutes, Daily Drill, music, pencils, chorale, and all other needed material and equipment.
- Student nametags are strongly recommended. Calling a student by name creates a better rapport and a more positive, productive working environment.
- Director should not be a "translator." Many directors feel the need to repeat/rephrase the information the clinician gives. This just slows down the rehearsal and wastes time.
- Don't make excuses.
- Whenever possible, let the clinician determine the pace of the rehearsal.

### Student Behavior

- Eye contact with clinician when he or she is talking.
- When asked questions, students should respond. The director may have to teach this skill.
- Start and stop on time or keep instrument in playing position.
- Mark music. Students and directors need to take notes and/or record clinic.
- No talking.
- Students should put forth a positive effort to do what the clinician asks, even if it is contrary to what they have been previously taught. They should be told that the clinician may ask them to do things differently. That's one of the reason you have a clinician - new ideas.
- Special needs students. PLEASE make the clinician aware of these students. Doing so will eliminate many embarrassing and awkward moments.

Suggestions to help clinician have an enjoyable and productive time at your school.

- Scores and any other music or Daily Drill on stand set up when the clinician walks into the room.
- A chair or stool if it is a long day.
- Water
- Lunch and/or dinner if the clinician is there during those times.
- After-clinic discussion. Ask/answer questions. Set goals for next clinic.

## **Clinicians: What Are They Good For?**

### **Expectations for the Clinician:**

- Be reliable and be on time.
- Proper attire
- Positive attitude
- Enthusiasm/energy
- Ability to communicate
- High level of musical skills and knowledge
- A wide variety of strategies
- High expectations
- Caring attitude
- Knowledge of literature
- Absolute honesty
- Professional conduct ALWAYS

**“Always try to  
associate yourself  
with and learn as  
much as you can from  
those who know more  
than you do, who do  
better than you,  
who see more clearly  
than you.”**

President Dwight D.  
Eisenhower

### **Using Multiple Clinicians**

Using more than one clinician can be a very beneficial thing. The obvious benefit is the access to more ideas, techniques, and points of view. Here are some guidelines.

- Decide if you want to use one clinician or multiple clinicians.
- Decide if you want to go "Old School" or "New School" or a combination of the two; depends on your goals and needs.
- In general, it is best to have someone who shares your basic concepts of tone production, band sound, balance, articulation, etc. If you use more than one clinician, make sure their information does not conflict.
- There are many different "paths to the mountain top," and a variety of views and techniques can be very beneficial, but "too much of a good thing" - i.e. too much conflicting information - can create confusion and loss of confidence.
- Make sure all of the clinicians are aware of each other. This alone can avoid confusion and conflicting information and may even lead to a cooperative working "team effort" between the clinicians.

### **The Business Side**

- Communicate - before and after the clinic
- Arrange all financial matters - i.e. clinician fees, expenses, payment schedule, etc. - prior to the (first) clinic. Make sure both the director and the clinician know exactly what to expect.
- Pay the clinician in a timely manner, usually within two weeks of the clinic unless other arrangements have been made.

## **Clinicians: What Are They Good For?**

### **Final Thoughts**

#### **Clinician Anxiety**

There are directors who want help and know they need help, but are apprehensive about enlisting the services of a clinician. Some directors develop a great deal of anxiety over the very thought of having a clinician. Many directors do not use a clinician because they are intimidated by the clinician, lack confidence in their own work, or they are afraid that the clinician will talk about them and/or their band. Don't be worried about what a clinician may think about you and your band. A clinician is there to help you, not to make judgments. He/she is on your side. You may have to step outside your comfort zone at first, but in the long run you and your students will benefit.

#### **Don't Be Afraid to Pick and Choose**

Use the clinician's suggestions as you see fit. Changes or suggestions made by the clinician are not set in stone. If you do not like the clinician's suggestions, don't use them or modify them to something that will work for you. Remember, YOU are the director.

*Acclaimed as "one of the finest transcribers of all time" (James Keene, University of Illinois-retired) and "without peer as a band arranger" (Eddie Green, University of Houston-retired), the wind transcriptions of Merlin Patterson have set new standards in attaining "the highest possible current degree of attention to color and imagination" (Jerry Junkin, University of Texas and Dallas Wind Symphony). Merlin Patterson received his formal musical training at Sam Houston State University. Mr. Patterson has specialized in the works of Aaron Copland. His works have been performed by leading professional organizations, including the United States Marine Band, the United States Air Force Band, and the Dallas Wind Symphony, as well as by major university ensembles. Recordings of his transcriptions are available on the Mark, DBP Audio, Albany, and GIA record labels. His works are published by TRN, Manhattan Beach Music, and Boosey & Hawkes. Most of Mr. Patterson's transcriptions are available through his website [www.merlinpatterson.com](http://www.merlinpatterson.com). Now retired, Mr. Patterson ended his 28-year teaching career as Band Director at Bleyl Middle School in the Cypress-Fairbanks school district. Mr. Patterson had previously taught in the Spring Branch and Klein school districts. His bands have received numerous awards, including 22 UIL Sweepstakes, first division ratings at the Buccaneer Music Festival, and on six separate occasions been named "Outstanding Band" or "Runner Up" at the prestigious South Coast Music Festival. In April 1998, the Klein Symphonic Band under his baton was honored to perform at the National Wind Band Festival in New York's Carnegie Hall and his band at Bleyl Middle School twice placed in the top ten in TMEA State Honor Band competition. He continues to remain active in the band world as clinician, adjudicator, and of course, arranger.*

*Randy Vaughn began his music career with the Gattis Junior High Band under the direction of Harold VanWinkle in Clovis, New Mexico. At Clovis High School, his band director was Norvil Howell. During this time he studied private flute with Ted Raven. Mr. Vaughn is a 1968 graduate of West Texas State University with a Bachelor of Music Education. While at WTSU, his band director and private flute instructor was Dr. Gary Garner. Later in his career, he also received instruction from Mr. Eddie Green at the University of Houston. He has received wonderful support from Cindy, his wife of thirty-five years. Mr. Vaughn retired in 2001 after thirty-four years in the Texas public schools. Previous experiences include positions at Klein High School and Strack Intermediate School (Klein ISD), Hereford High School and Stanton Junior High School (Hereford ISD) and Claude High School (Claude ISD). Mr. Vaughn's bands have been recognized statewide and nationally for their musical excellence. They have earned 32 UIL sweepstakes awards as well as other top honors at prestigious festivals. Some of these include the Bands of America Grand Nationals in Indianapolis, the Texas AAAAA State Marching Band Competition and the Texas AAAAA Honor Band competition, the Bands of America National Concert Band Festival in Chicago, performances at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., and Carnegie Hall in New York City. In 2002, Mr. Vaughn was awarded the Lifetime Meritorious Achievement Award by the Texas Bandmasters Association, and in 2010 was inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Hall of Fame. Mr. Vaughn's professional affiliations include TMEA, Phi Beta Mu, TMAA and is a past president of the Texas Bandmasters Association. He maintains a busy schedule as clinician, guest conductor and adjudicator across the United States.*

**To view the handout from this and other TBA Clinics, go to: [www.texasbandmasters.org](http://www.texasbandmasters.org).  
Select Publications Archives located under RESOURCES in the menu bar.**

# What Would You Like To See At The 2013 Convention/Clinic?

Do have an idea for a clinic you would like to see at the convention this summer? Have you recently heard an excellent speaker?

The Texas Bandmasters Association is now accepting clinic proposals for the 2013 Convention/Clinic. Visit the website [www.texasbandmasters.org](http://www.texasbandmasters.org) to submit your suggestion online or contact a TBA Board member (see page 3 for information) or your Region Representative as listed below.

## 2012-13 Region Representatives

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# Getting “That Sound”

David Brandon

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It was the week after my very first concert as a band director when my quest for “that sound” began. My middle school second band had performed a piece called “Christmas Collage”. It was a typical one where many of the more famous holiday tunes are wrapped into one enjoyable package. Not too long for the dads, yet just long and varied enough for the distracted siblings to look up from their doodling on the program (Facebook and smartphones were not around at that time.) to crack a smile of recognition before returning to coloring in all of the “Os” in the program and giving the Santa Claus picture on the front a new and improved beard.

But none of this happened at my concert.

It started off fine since the first eight measures or so were what we had played the most in rehearsals. You always start at the beginning, right? As we continued to play, the polite audience began to shift in their seats as they sensed they were about to witness one of those uncomfortable events from which there is no escape. It happened so fast there was no time to excuse themselves from the audience to visit the restroom or step out to get some fresh air. No, what occurred on stage was wrapped up in a single phrase a fellow colleague later provided. A “Christmas Collision”

had taken place on stage. And I was responsible. I went into mourning for having made the very, very bad choice of becoming a band director as well as having wrecked Christmas.

The following week was when the quest started. That was the week our sister school performed their December concert. I sat in the audience trying to make myself as small as possible because I thought everyone knew I was the destroyer of Christmas. As the concert progressed I could not believe what I was hearing. The second and third bands from across the same district were playing the most unbelievable concert I had ever heard! They not only knew their notes and rhythms (I guess they started some rehearsals working on the middle and ends of their music) but the sounds the bands made were unbelievable to me! I had no idea young bands were capable of sounding so great! I decided then and there that I had to figure this thing out...or go sell insurance.

Twenty-four years later, and although I’m still trying to figure it out, I think I’ve been able to

consolidate the things I’ve learned from all the people who have helped me into a package my students and I can quickly understand and guide us in everything we do

in our rehearsals to develop the sounds we want from our band.

**Have sound concepts clear in your own head and the vocabulary to communicate them to your students.**

Can you put your finger on what makes one

person sound better than another? Most of us have a pretty clear idea what constitutes a good tone for each of the instruments, but what are the elements that make one individual or ensemble sound better than another and how can those elements be described so students can easily understand them and know when they are achieving them?

I apply five basic hierarchical concepts, or rules, to everything. The first rule must be achieved before the second, the second before the third, etc. This provides a fundamental and easily understood structure to evaluate our playing. The first three “rules” are the

**What are the elements that make one individual or ensemble sound better than another and how can those elements be described so students can easily understand them and know when they are achieving them?**

## Getting “That Sound”

individual player’s responsibility, although we must first teach the concepts and continue to reinforce them every day. These, when achieved, create the basic “palette” of section sounds. The fourth and fifth rules are more our responsibility. How we “mix” the colors of the sections establishes our own unique ensemble sound.

• **RULE ONE: make one note sound the same from beginning to end with a mature tone.**

This sounds elemental but if you think about the things that must happen just to get a clear note start on each of the instruments you soon realize it’s no easy task! Then you must figure out how to describe it in the simplest way so your students can achieve it. This is a lifelong quest in itself!

• **RULE TWO: make two or more notes sound the same to produce a mature individual sound.**

Now we’re deep into it. I like to think what Judy Garland would have sounded like singing the octave leap at the beginning of “Somewhere Over The Rainbow” if she had the vocal technique of Roseanne Barr. As directors, we must first learn for ourselves what needs to happen to make higher and lower notes sound the same on each of the instruments and then effectively communicate this to our students. What vowel sound/shape needs to be created in the mouth when you change from one note to another note? What changes happen in air speed/shape from high to low? It’s not as simple as pressing down the octave key! This is another lifelong quest!

• **RULE THREE: match tone, pitch and energy with others in your section to produce a mature section sound.**

I must admit that as a player I didn’t really start to understand this until my senior year in college and then only with the other person playing the same horn part as me. I’m sure I was made aware of this by my teachers but until then it didn’t click. We must keep

reminding our students to be aware of the people in their section and to actively listen side-to-side at all times. This one concept, if properly understood and achieved clears up “noisy” sounding bands almost immediately.

• **RULE FOUR: match section to section to produce a mature ensemble sound.**

Again, a simple sounding concept but what does it sound like when trumpets are really in balance with trombones? Oboes with saxophones? Lower octaves with upper octaves? How we as directors respond to these balance questions determines our band’s ensemble sound. Some directors like a darker, more unified

sound while others may prefer to hear each individual section equally. This can and should change depending on the pieces being played. Finding the right mix for each piece can be yet another quest that can last a lifetime!

• **RULE FIVE: Balance to the most important part.**

Other than Rule Three, this is the most neglected one of all. Who has the melody and can you hear it? When you hear a band that is “noisy” or sounds like a free-for-all is going on onstage, it’s probably because the players have no understanding of their listening and balance responsibilities. Once they are made aware of their role in the music the ensemble sound calms down and becomes clearer to the listener.

**I encourage you to listen to as many different bands as you can, especially bands of the same level as yours, and especially if you are a young director. Find the groups that get “that sound” for you and ask the directors if you can come watch a rehearsal to see the process they use to teach their students.**

## Getting “That Sound”

### **Have an established daily drill that allows your students to learn the rules and put them into practice.**

The Daily Drill is not “warm-up” and should never be thought of as such. It is the portion of the rehearsal designed to teach and apply the Rules of Sound to exercises that address the fundamentals of playing the individual instruments as well as playing as an ensemble. The overall goal is to make the tonal concepts second nature while at the same time addressing the physical skills necessary for their achievement.

Below is an outline of the important aspects of a Daily Drill that should be covered everyday... that is the “daily” in Daily Drill! Choose an exercise for each of the main areas to work every day: Long Tone, Flexibility, Articulation/Style and Interval Tuning (including unison). The Chorale at the end is used to apply the Rules of Sound skills to a simple harmonized band arrangement. You can find specific exercises that address your band’s level in many places although I’ve used “Foundations for Superior Performance” by Jeff King and Richard Williams for over sixteen years.

### **Daily drill structure:**

- Long Tones
  - o Single Note Exercises
  - o Multiple Note Exercises: Chromatic, Diatonic and Expanding Intervals
- Flexibility
  - o Brass Lip Slurs
  - o Woodwind Octaves, Harmonics and Register Key Exercises
- Articulation and Style
- Interval Tuning
- Chorale

Every exercise you choose must have an understood purpose and goal. As directors we must first understand what those are and how to achieve them then be able to communicate them to our students. We must keep them engaged at all times through asking questions as simple as: “What are we trying to achieve on this exercise?” “Was that better or worse than yesterday?” “Who knows how to make this better?” Keep them engaged by applying more advanced concepts to an exercise. For example, a simple 8 count note becomes more interesting if you apply Rule 3: Listen to your section. Then apply Rule 4: Balance to another section. Then experiment with Rule 5 by listening for different sections or individuals with the full ensemble playing. It becomes easier to “sell” this process as they begin to hear and recognize differences and improvement in their playing.

It is not necessary to spend 45 minutes on your Daily Drill every day! Find the one exercise that addresses the level of long tone your band should be working on based on their level of understanding of the Rules of Sound as well as their physical skills readiness. Make a little improvement on it from the previous rehearsal then move on to the next fundamental skill or concept. When they are ready for a more advanced long tone add a new one and either keep the previous one or drop it from your regular routine. (Be realistic in your exercise choices. It makes no sense to work on a fast moving lip slur if simpler ones cannot be played with the correct fundamentals.)

Keep the developmental nature of this process in mind. A little improvement each day adds up to quite a bit by the end of the year. If we want real learning, understanding and achievement from our students we must take the time and effort to design appropriate exercises, engage them mentally and give them opportunities to be participants in the rehearsal over the course of the entire year.

## Getting “That Sound”

Continue to apply the concepts when developing your band’s technical and rhythmic abilities. The overall goal must be to make these listening skills a natural part of playing the instrument at all times. It is much more fun and rewarding to work on music when all the necessary skills are already in place. This opens the door to developing true musicianship in our students—yet another journey for a lifetime.

Finally, I encourage you to listen to as many different bands as you can, especially bands of the same level as yours, and especially if you are a young director. Find the groups that get “that sound” for you and ask the directors if you can come watch a rehearsal to see the process they use to teach their students, keeping in mind that it’s a one day “snapshot” of a multiple year process.

Make the most out of the lifelong learning opportunities afforded you through the TBA and TMEA conventions.

As mentioned many times already, this is a profession of which any one miniscule aspect could occupy a lifetime to master. I think that’s way more fun than selling insurance.



*David Brandon is currently an assistant director at Duncanville High School where he is responsible for the Honors Band and the DHS Marching Band. Mr. Brandon first taught for seven years as an assistant director at Bammel Middle School in the Spring ISD before moving to Byrd Middle School and subsequently Duncanville High School in the Duncanville ISD. Bands under his direction have been*

*consistently recognized for their achievements, including continuous UIL Sweepstakes Awards, Best In Class and Outstanding Band awards at various festivals as well as advancing to the state levels in the TMEA Honor Band competition and UIL Marching Contest. The 2004 Byrd Band was named the Texas CCC Honor Band and the DHS Marching Band earned Bronze Medals at the State Marching Band Contest in 2006 and 2010. Mr. Brandon received his Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from Stephen F. Austin State in 1987 and his Master of Music Education degree from The University of Southern Mississippi in 1989. Since beginning his teaching career he has benefited greatly from the teaching and guidance of Eddie Green. Mr. Brandon has served as the Region XX Junior High Chairperson and is an active clinician and adjudicator in Texas. He has presented several clinics for the Texas Bandmasters Association and has been on the faculty for*

*the Music For All Summer Symposium held annually at Illinois University in Normal, Il. Mr. Brandon is a member of the Texas Bandmasters Association, the Texas Music Educators Association and Phi Beta Mu Bandmaster Fraternity.*

# Trumpet Fundamentals:

## *A Comprehensive Guide to Starting Them Right and Keeping Them Right*

**Will Strieder**

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The challenge of teaching beginners and developing students is that our bodies have instincts that are counterintuitive for efficient performance practice. Playing the trumpet should be as easy as forming an embouchure and blowing air. However, with many students there are roadblocks that prolong a student from becoming successful.

The difficulties students face in their playing are caused by stressors. Stressors are situations that are experienced as a perceived threat to one's well-being or position in life, when the challenge of dealing with which, exceeds the person's perceived available resources. When one encounters stressors, the body's stress response is triggered, and a series of physiological changes takes place to allow the person to fight or run. In etymology, the word stress is from *estrecier*, to tighten.

Common trumpet stressors include: range, dynamics, endurance, articulation, technique, rehearsals, and auditions. Basically, we stress our bodies by trying to play higher, faster, louder, and longer. Teaching students to overcome these stressors is a challenge because every student is unique. Each student will respond

differently to different stressors. His/her body will respond differently at different times. The body WILL become complacent.

One major argument among students and teachers is the topic of whether or not certain exercises are the same as playing the trumpet. Most of the exercises are similar, but not exactly the same, to actually playing the instrument.

They are designed to help your body trigger the correct, healthy response to the stressor. They create muscle confusion. They make you stronger. You don't see football players arguing about the benefits of lifting weights or doing exercises off the field. Many popular workout systems discuss muscle confusion as the key to continuing improvement.

When working with students, I break down the physical side of trumpet playing into:

- The correct usage of air
- The center of pitch
- The suppleness of lips

Concerning the correct usage of air, we are trying to counteract the body's natural response to exerting force, the grunt. You hear a lot of grunts in the weight room. That red face might not get in the way of your bench press, but it will definitely stop a student from playing a high C! Known as the valsalva reflex, this is triggered every time we try to give

our air that extra push. The key to good air is a very fine line between releasing the air and blowing the air. The closer we can come to releasing the air rather than blowing the air, the more efficiently we can play. The yawn is the ideal breath. The inhalation is easy, deep and without restriction. The release is just as perfect. Most of us do an excellent job of teaching a great inhalation. However, it's the exhalation that gets the student in the most trouble.

The problem with the trumpet is the back pressure. The body tends to match the air to the resistance of the embouchure and of the

**As teachers,  
our job is  
to solve problems  
and find ways to  
help the student  
overcome their  
limitations.  
Choosing the right  
trigger for the  
student can make  
all the difference  
in the world.**

## Trumpet Fundamentals

instrument. As teachers, we usually answer this by using the trigger of telling the student to use more air. Initially this can have great results. However, it can also set a student up for future struggles. The body tries to stay in balance. We use the amount of air to balance against the amount of tension it takes to play a certain note. If we increase the amount of air, we overcome the tension and the note gets better. It's just a matter of time, however, before the tension gets stronger. We then continue the cycle by continuing to increase the air. Unfortunately, there is an inevitable point where the student can no longer overcome the tension and they just lock down. That is why we need to teach our students to trigger the correct response against the resistance.

I use blowing exercises to teach the body to not fight itself when working against the resistance. Exercises like blowing a dollar bill against the wall, blowing up balloons, blowing out candles, or blowing pinwheels or baby mobiles, work well to help the body feel the correct response for releasing the air. The key to these exercises is not how much force you can use, but how easily you can use the air to get the job done.

I also use a straw and pinwheel attached to the instrument while playing. The straw fits through the embouchure into the oral cavity. It samples the air as we are playing. The leaking air disrupts the balance between the air and embouchure. Usually, we can barely play. It helps us to learn to use more air without extra tension. As a result of playing with the straw, when we remove the straw we have extra air. We can also see how the body is using the air. For example, the pinwheel should accelerate going into the upper



*Straw and pinwheel*

register. The pinwheel should keep spinning when we articulate. The pinwheel gives both a visual and an aural trigger to achieve the correct response as we play.

The other element of the equation is the resistance. The embouchure should be the only thing creating the resistance. The resistance increases as we ascend into the upper register and decreases as we descend into the lower register. The air has to be buoyant against this changing resistance and needs to be able to respond to the different registers of a piece of music. This is why we often have problems with flexibility. I am a big believer in free buzzing. Most teachers are very opinionated as to the validity of free buzzing. Free buzzing will strengthen the embouchure muscles. It is NOT the same as playing the trumpet. And that is OK! It is harder than playing the trumpet (lifting weights). It will increase endurance. If you do too much at first, it will make you stiff (lifting weights). You should start with only a minute a day and gradually build up over a period of months. We are basically small muscle athletes. All of the same rules apply to the embouchure muscles as you would apply to any workout routine.

There are two basic types of embouchures: embouchures formed by the muscles (free buzz) and embouchures formed by the mouthpiece (pressure). When teaching beginners, the easiest way to start a student is by having him/her say the letters "M&M", as in the candy. The student then says "M&M" with a coffee stir straw between the lips. This helps set up the correct aperture and embouchure. The student then should hold the "M" and blow. As he/she does this, I slide the mouthpiece through the straw to the lips. Next, as the student continues to blow, I gently pull the straw from the mouthpiece. Most students are successful with just a little coaching. If you do this approach concurrently with free buzzing, you will maximize the student's chances for success. (See photos on the next page.)

## Trumpet Fundamentals



*Straw*



*Mouthpiece through the straw*

Buzzing should be part of every brass player's diet for success. Every exercise should be sung and then buzzed first before playing it on the instrument. This is necessary to develop the center of pitch.

The key is to use a program such as Smart Music to assess the student's progress at each stage of singing, buzzing, and playing. Smart Music is a great program. You can introduce the coolness factor of playing the song with the accompaniment, but the essential work begins when practicing with just the solo line and metronome click. It is important to have the student matching the unison every time. You can then turn off the solo line and have the program assess the student's progress with just the metronome click. For a special challenge, have the student assess themselves without the click and without looking at the screen. This will also assess how well he/she can keep a steady pulse.

For some reason, some teachers refuse to use this method because they think that it doesn't teach the student to read music or that it is too much rote learning. But isn't this exactly how kids learn in band rehearsal? This approach helps a student change their practice approach from time based practice to result based practice. Students enjoy seeing green notes versus red notes and get a lot of satisfaction from getting a 100% on an exercise. Granted, Smart Music can't teach a student to play with a great sound or to be musical. However, lessons are so much more productive when a student is already playing the correct notes

and rhythms. The instructor can then focus on their student's musicality and production of sound.

The last thing I would like to address is mouthpiece pressure. As students, we learn early that a little bit of mouthpiece pressure helps get the next harmonic to come out. For example, we may press a little to go from low C to middle G. We use a little more pressure to get the next C out. We use even more pressure to get E. The next thing you know, we don't need braces anymore! The embouchure works in balance with the air. As the air blows, our lip muscles grip the air and we get the air oscillating to create the sound. As the lip muscles tire, the air blows them out and apart. We use the mouthpiece to help hold the aperture together by using mouth-piece pressure. The best approach is to teach students to use quality air while encouraging them to free buzz the full range of the instrument. The free buzz helps strengthen the embouchure muscles to withstand the air pressure blowing against them.

A great tool to help encourage the student to use less pressure is the "Pressure Reducer". It is available various places online including Ebay. You can also purchase one at Osmun.com. Search for "pressure adaptor, trumpet". The device is spring loaded and helps the student realize when and where they start to use pressure. With a little practice, the student can start feeling the spring. Without the pressure reducer, we should still be able to feel the spring being replaced by the suppleness of the muscles in the embouchure. The idea is not that we don't use pressure, but in knowing which note the pressure kicks in.



*Mouthpiece placement*

## Trumpet Fundamentals

I have found that we can play about a fourth higher at that point where the pressure reducer kicks in. If we press at middle G, for example, we can't seem to play any higher than the C above. If we can delay pressing to the G on top of the staff, we are limited to the high C. The problem is that if we start pressing on the G, every note above it is basically being played with a tourniquet. The blood supply to the embouchure is greatly reduced and it is as if the muscles are being killed. Another benefit of the pressure reducer is that if we do press as we go up from F to G, it encourages us to release the pressure when we descend. We often continue to press. This is why most trumpet players have a permanent ring on their embouchures.

I teach students that there are four basic questions they need to ask themselves if they want to improve. 1. Do they practice every day? 2. How much do they practice? 3. What do they practice? 4. How do they practice? The most important question is always the first that they can't answer correctly. Hopefully, with some encouragement, we can get students to focus on the quality of their practice.

There are many other triggers too numerous to discuss in this short article. As teachers, our job is to solve problems and find ways to help the student overcome their limitations. How we effectively teach students to train for a measured and accurate response as opposed to a primal reaction is the key to success. Choosing the right trigger for the student can make all the difference in the world.

*Special thanks to Mr. Strieder's sons Sean and Noah for demonstrating their dad's teaching techniques in the photos with this article.*

*Will Strieder is Professor of Music at Texas Tech University. He studied at Northwestern University, where he received the Masters of Music degree in Trumpet Performance and was winner of the Northwestern Concerto Competition. He also studied at the University of Houston, where he received the Bachelor of Music in Music Education. He is principal trumpet of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra as well as second trumpet of the Houston Ballet Orchestra. Mr. Strieder performs at Texas Tech with the Faculty Brass Quintet and also conducts the Trumpet Choir. He is active as a soloist and chamber musician throughout the United States, Mexico, Europe and China. He has performed with groups such as the Houston Symphony, Houston Grand Opera, Santa Fe Pro Musica, Clear Lake Symphony, Texas Opera Theater, Society for the Performing Arts in Houston, and the Millar Brass Ensemble. He has recorded Incantations for Trumpet and Piano, Rhapsody for solo trumpet and harp, and Trio Italiano by Mary Jeanne van Appledorn with the Opus One recording label. Also, Mr. Strieder recorded Fisher Tull's Concerto for Trumpet with the Nurnberg Symphony Orchestra in Nurnberg, Germany on Albany Records. Mr. Strieder has recently appeared twice as a soloist with UADY Chamber Orchestra of Merida, Mexico. His students have had success in the education and performance fields. The trumpet studio at Texas Tech has attracted talented students from throughout the United States. These students have been accepted into prestigious music festivals and graduate programs nationwide. In addition, many of his former students are successful teachers and performers.*





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# Congratulations to the U.I.L. Marching Contest State Champs

Congratulations to all who qualified to participate in the 2012 U.I.L. State Marching Band Contest. All of the bands who performed at State deserve special recognition. These bands have been practicing since last summer, working hard on their marching program. All have made their schools and community proud!

The U.I.L. marching competition started in October with hundreds of bands competing at the Region level. The top bands were then chosen to compete at the Area level. Finally, the top 3A and 5A bands were chosen to compete for the coveted state title in November. Congratulations to these students and directors for their commitment to excellence.



## Congratulations to all the 3A Bands and Directors who competed in the state competition:

Argyle HS.....Kathy Johnson	Grulla HS.....Oscar Gonzalez	Rio Hondo HS.....John Garza
Atlanta HS.....Keith L. Sanders	Henderson HS.....Tommy Moore	Spring Hill HS.....Randall R. Kiser
Burnet HS.....Kevin Heckaman	Hidalgo HS.....Jorge Lozano	Springtown HS.....Chris J. McLellan
Canton HS.....Rob Toups	Kennedale HS.....Erol K. Oktay	Wills Point HS.....John S. Young
Castleberry HS.....Dave Daniel	Monahans HS.....Gerardo Loya	Wylie HS.....Michael Lunney
China Spring HS.....Pam L. Hyatt	North Lamar HS.....Randy Jones	
Cooper HS.....John G. Mayo	Port Isabel HS.....Scott Hartsfield	
Fredericksburg HS.....John Rauschuber	Princeton HS.....Brandon D. Brewer	



## Congratulations to all the 5A Bands and Directors who competed in the state competition:

Bell HS.....Van Mathews	Duncanville HS.....David Brandon	O'Connor HS.....Roland Sandoval
Berkner HS.....Frank Troyka	Fossil Ridge HS.....Brad Allen	Pearland HS.....Tom Beil
Bowie HS.....Kimberly L. Shuttlesworth	Hanna HS.....Dennis Ewing	Plano East Sr. HS.....Evelio C. Villarreal
Brazoswood HS.....Brian Casey	Harlingen HS.....Ronnie Rios	Reagan HS.....Levi Chavis
Central HS.....Kevin L. McNulty	Harlingen South HS.....Shane E. Shinsato	Richland HS.....Jason Bird
Clear Brook HS.....Michael D. Ary	Hebron HS.....Andy Sealy	Rowlett HS.....Phillip Alvarado
Clear Lake HS.....Joe Munoz	Hendrickson HS.....Garth Gundersen	San Benito HS.....Wilberto Perez
Clements HS.....Daniel Galioway	Johnson HS.....Jarrett E. Lipman	Seven Lakes HS.....Damon Archer
Coppell HS.....Scott Mason	Keller HS.....Mark McGahey	Spring HS.....Terri Risinger
Coronado HS.....Mark Saenz	Lake Travis HS.....Kenneth D. Vise	The Woodlands HS.....Joni Perez
Cy-Fair HS.....Mark Veenstra	Langham Creek HS.....Gloria Ramirez	United HS.....John J. Mallon
Dickinson HS.....Trevor Braselton	Lopez HS.....George A. Trevino	Westlake HS.....Kerry Taylor
Donna HS.....Armando Robledo	Marcus HS.....Amanda Drinkwater	

## Congratulations to the 3A Band State Champion: Argyle High School



Director: Kathy Johnson  
Assistants: Michael Lemish, Lucy Pascasio,  
Evan Fletcher, James McNair, Sarah Ross, Tim Biles,  
Kaylee Hardiman and Steven Olmstead  
Drum Majors: Lindsey Johnson, Randi Martin and  
Cameron Schafer  
Selections: *Moving Parts: Moving Parts, Shifting,  
'N' Motion, Transient and Kinetikos*

## Congratulations to the 5A Band State Champion: Marcus High School



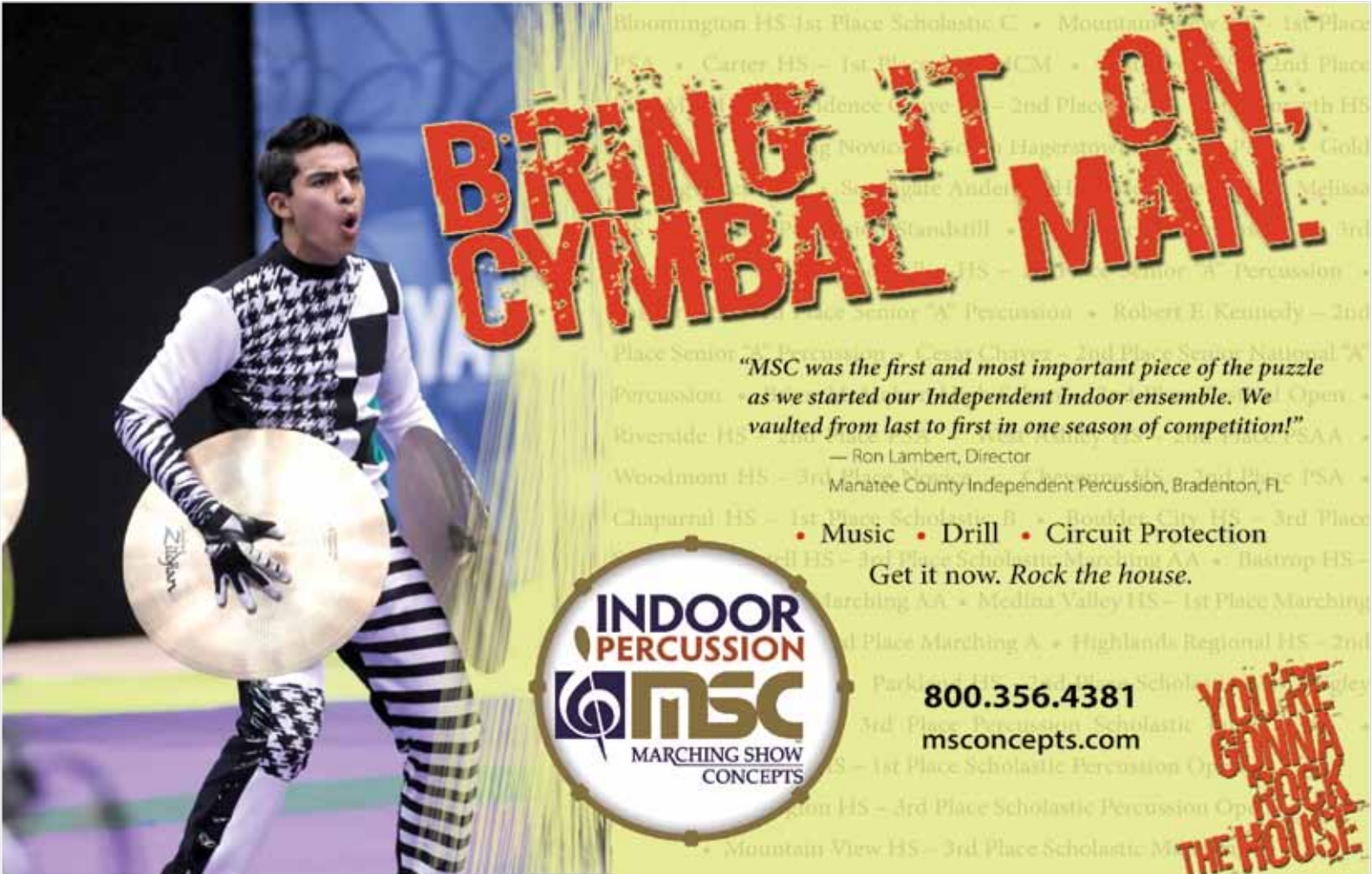
Director: Amanda Drinkwater  
Assistants: Kennan Wylie, Dominic Talanca, David Simon and  
John Leonard  
Drum Majors: Scott Van Gundy, Sarah Jones, Abigail Gregory,  
Daegi Lee and Amanda Wang  
Music selections: *Gilded Melodies - BWV 2012*

# Bandmasters Review

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