



Bandmasters Review

An Educational Publication of the Texas Bandmasters Association

December 2015 • Volume 17, Issue 2





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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: 1002 Central Parkway South, San Antonio, TX 78232 Phone: (210) 492-8878 Fax: (210) 492-8996 www.texasbandmasters.org

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

Jeff King, 2015-16 TBA President Elect

My wife Leslie and I recently moved to another house in Duncanville, a whole 2.2 miles away. Just like our previous two houses that we owned, we planted a Shumard Red Oak tree when we moved in. For us, planting a tree seemed like the right thing to do to establish a home. The Shumard Red Oak is considered one of the biggest species of oak trees. When I drive by our previous houses, I find myself staring at how big and beautiful that these trees have become. I guess I am kind of a “tree guy”.

Outside the capital building in Sacramento, CA, there is a 40-acre park filled with gardens, including 1140 trees representing over 200 types of trees. Obviously, this is a pretty cool place to visit for a “tree guy”. It was here that I saw my first Sequoia tree. What an amazing tree. The metaphors one can draw from the Sequoia are too numerous to include in this article, but I would like to touch on one that relates to our profession.

The Sequoia tree is an extremely well balanced tree that relies on a complex intertwining of roots with other trees. They can survive in less than three feet of soil by spreading their roots far from the tree, up to 300 feet. Much like our profession, I cannot imagine my past, present or future without the help and support of so many people. My personal support system has come from students, parents, educators, colleagues, family, friends, administrators, and other musicians across Texas and the U.S. Early on in my career, I learned to ask questions and seek out the best people for information and guidance. The most successful band directors that I know are always willing to share their knowledge. Their knowledge came from other great teachers and people; so our “root” system is endless.

Just like the Sequoia’s root system, our Texas Music Education System has numerous “roots” that begin with our professional organizations such as UIL, TMEA, TMAA and TBA. Having attended many state

conventions across the U.S., I can tell you that Texas is the leader in music education and this is due in large part to these professional organizations. The support system and structure of these organizations provide us the opportunity and foundation to become the best teachers that we can be.

The Merriam-Webster Dictionary defines support system as: *A network of personal or professional contacts available to a person for practical or emotional support.*

Even before I became a TBA board member, one of my favorite events to attend at TBA was the annual business luncheon. Not only did I get a free lunch, but I enjoyed listening to the Bandmaster of the Year speech. Hearing the TBA Bandmaster of the Year speak always inspired me and made me realize how many great band directors there are across the State of Texas that I did not know. In the past five years, I have also enjoyed attending the ceremony of band directors being inducted into the Phi Beta Mu Texas Bandmasters Hall of Fame. <http://www.pbmalpha.org/pbmalloffame.php> Getting to know the history of

some of the great band directors in our profession is both inspirational and essential for our continued growth. I encourage you all to attend these events and find out from these highly esteemed band directors what they know and find out more about their support system.

In addition to moving in August, I accepted a position as Director of Fine Arts & Enrichment for the Irving ISD. In this position, I am responsible for band, choir, orchestra, elementary music, mariachi, visual arts, theater arts, dance, cheerleading and physical education, grades K-12. Talk about a

big “root” system.

In the past four months, I have been involved with all of the above areas. I have had the opportunity to see



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From the Board - Jeff King

great teachers teach to their strengths. Great teaching and creativity is the same no matter what area you are teaching. I challenge you to seek out the best teachers in your school or district and find out what works for these successful teachers. There may be an English, choir, math teacher or coach who teaches near you that has an effective way to communicate and inspire students. Find out what works for them and apply it to your situation. This network of quality teaching can only make us stronger.

As I write this article with less than one week to Thanksgiving, I am thankful for all of the people in my life that have and continue to make me a better person, educator and administrator. I feel honored and thankful to be serving on the TBA Board. I hope that you take some time for yourself and your family over the holidays and remember why we do what we do and be thankful for all the people who support you. I look forward to seeing you at the next convention—The Midwest Clinic, TMEA and/or TBA.

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A Marketing Vision For Your Band Program

John Morrison, 2015-16 TBA Treasurer

Something that I have taken note of over the last several years is how band directors have continued to raise the performance achievement bar for their students, but that we haven't all necessarily been openly promoting these successes of our students, be them large or small.

Some events, like participation in the UIL State Marching Band Contest and the TMEA Honor Band process do some of the promotion for us, but it's the everyday celebrations on the local campus and program levels that I think can be enhanced. I say, "If there is something positive to report, then it is worth reporting".

I attended a session on this marketing/branding subject recently within our school district here in Cypress-Fairbanks ISD and the story of the public opinion of one of our elementary schools was the discussion. A new principal was hired to come into a lower performing elementary school and help steer the campus in the direction of improved performance. Immediately this younger campus leader challenged her staff to find all of the positive teaching moments in their classrooms and to "tweet" out these classroom successes. The winter season approached and more community members were coming into the school to see classroom programs! This campus was posting and scrolling all of their social media links and connection handles during the school special winter season class programs and music programs. Parents began subscribing and

following the school and classroom teachers right away. Sooner than likely

expected, the campus was embraced by the community as a truly positive learning environment. The challenge was simple, find something positive in your classroom daily, and share it. Your community is connected to social media in some way! If you start seeing and hearing about the positive things in your schools and programs, we start to believe it must all be true.

Have a marketing vision – What is your plan to market your band program and the success it is having within your community?



Harlingen Consolidated ISD and the Harlingen HS Band celebrate a class visit by University of Texas Director of Bands Jerry Junkin recently on social media.

A Marketing Vision For Your Band Program

Is there a staff member that exclusively looks for the “good news” and shares it out to your community? What outlet for sharing do you use? District website, social media platforms?

“The widespread use of social media across CFISD has not only improved districtwide communication; it has brought a 186-square-mile school district closer together. Through real-time updates and messages continually dispersed on their Twitter, Instagram and Facebook accounts, our music and fine arts programs have been an example of how to effectively use social media to unite an entire organization around a consistent message of positivity,” says Joel Weckerly, Assistant Director of Communications for Cypress-Fairbanks ISD.

Do what is best for your community. Don't worry about the feelings of your colleagues when sharing the successes of *your* students. If you have student or band program success moments, celebrate them! Your students and community deserve the recognition.



Left: Jonathan Rees conducts his @anthonysband on his fall concert while projecting the band social media connections during a recent fall concert.

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TBA News

Michael Brashear, TBA Executive Director



Greetings from the TBA office! Even though you will read this article in December, it is now the week before Thanksgiving and I find myself reflecting on many things I am thankful for. Along with many of you, I am most thankful for my family, friends, and the freedom we enjoy as Americans. I am thankful for my job, wonderful co-workers, dedicated TBA Board members and the opportunity we all have to serve the band directors in our state. The “band business” has been very good to me and I hope that all of you enjoy your time as a band director as much as I did. There is no greater profession than that of teaching, which provides us with the opportunity to have a positive impact on our students and affect the future of our country.

As I watched all of the bands perform at the UIL State Marching Contest, I was thankful to live in a state which produces so many outstanding bands. I am pleased to recognize all of these groups that qualified for state in this magazine and congratulate these students and directors for the standard of excellence achieved. We also have many groups traveling to Chicago to perform at The Midwest Clinic this December. Those groups are recognized on page 23.

When asked why Texas has so many great bands and why Texas is the best “band state”, I offer several reasons. Our UIL contest system encourages many groups to achieve excellence and rewards those groups by using a rating system at the region level to measure success rather than picking just one winner. In addition to assigning a rating, UIL judges offer positive critiques to help directors

improve their groups. The TMEA Honor Band system showcases the best of the best at the TMEA convention and, along with outstanding clinics provides learning opportunities for directors. TBA offers outstanding professional development clinics both at our convention and during the year through our Professional Development Outreach Program. Robert Floyd and his team do an amazing job of music advocacy and work endlessly with our legislators at the state level to protect and promote music education. Many outstanding Fine Arts Directors and Administrators work daily at the local level to ensure great arts programs in our school districts. However, the MAIN REASON that Texas has so many great bands is that we have so many GREAT BAND DIRECTORS, period. Now that’s something to be thankful for! Congratulations to all of you—keep up the great work!

In addition to publishing several informative articles in this magazine, we present a new blog from D’Addario, our TBA Professional Development Outreach Program sponsor. On the last two pages of this *Bandmasters Review*, we feature three articles focused on woodwinds, percussion, and fretted instruments. I hope you enjoy reading this blog and find all of our articles to be helpful.

Here’s wishing you a very restful and happy holiday season. I hope you enjoy some quality time off with your family and friends and come back refreshed and ready to start the spring semester.

What Would You Like to See at the 2016 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 2016 Convention/Clinic. Visit the website www.texasbandmasters.org to submit your suggestion online or contact a TBA Board member (see page 4 for the list).

Developing the Leaders of Tomorrow

Randy T. Gilmore, Owner/President, Marching Show Concepts, Inc./Center X Productions, Inc.

It is commonly believed that our students are enrolled in school to learn life skills and to build a wealth of knowledge to become productive men and women in society. Undoubtedly, math and science, history and language classes provide that knowledge and develop skills that can be applied to everything from a meal preparation, banking and purchasing, to working at any number of professions. Less often however, is a student confronted with his/her skills to be an effective leader, or trained to become an entrepreneur or CEO. Where is the student encouraged to think outside the box, taught how to delegate, or lead a group of peers?

Most of us know the answer to that question but still band is often considered dispensable to the educational system, as budget cuts and scheduling dilemmas attest. Too often those not involved in the band activity consider this elective to be simply about music and nothing more. Though awareness is growing and statistics increasingly confirm the extraordinary opportunities music education presents for students to excel in life, it is often overlooked or marginalized under the weight of more traditional subjects. However, to those familiar with the activity, band is known to be an exceptional proving ground for strong leaders of the future.

Even though relatively few high school students go on to become musicians or music educators themselves, virtually all of them become well acquainted with the

inner drive and learn how to harness its power to achieve individually and as a meaningful member of a group. Leadership opportunities in band are plentiful and provide a significant platform for personal growth and development.

Many of you have experienced great success and have obtained many awards for having exceptional programs. However, the true success is holding fast to the belief that it's all about developing students today to become highly competent and honorable citizens tomorrow. *So the question is:* What are we teaching? Success can be obtained by teaching life skills first and technical skills second. They are like the two wheels of a bicycle. Both are virtually important to the success of each individual and your program as a whole.

If you want continued success in developing these leaders you have to have a plan (or map.) Consider a scenario where two people are dropped (separately) into the wilderness and told that there is a town thirty miles west of them. Now imagine that one has a map and the other has nothing. Who do you think will reach the town first? The man with the map of course. Why is that?

The person without the map could easily determine West by the setting sun, but without landmarks to guide him he could easily miss his/her goal or he/she might struggle with self-doubt as the time passes without reference to the distance they have traveled.

If you are just plodding along (Westward bound) on a day to day

basis with your program, how can you ever expect to find your destination? Do you even have a destination?

The best way to make your map is to first locate your destination. Then it is helpful to consult a person that has already traveled your path and let them give you landmarks to achieve. This is the process by which successful band programs operate.

Below are four questions which will help you to locate your landmarks on the path to success on which you should focus your energies.

1. Goals.

What targets and incentives do you have in place to ensure that you blast through your program goals?

2. Recruiting.

What are the top three recruiting strategies that you are going to use in order to build your program?

3. Relationships.

What is your plan to identify the key characteristics of your key student leaders and then adjust your plan to be a magnet for more of them?

4. Teamwork.

What is your plan to make sure that your students are loyal and aggressive in achieving their goals?

Bravo to the band directors, musicians and advocates who have embraced the challenge to take on the daily grind of music education and translate it into something much more significant and meaningful. Giving students the opportunity to take responsibility, to lead, perform and succeed, continues to make the band activity a vital part of the educational process.



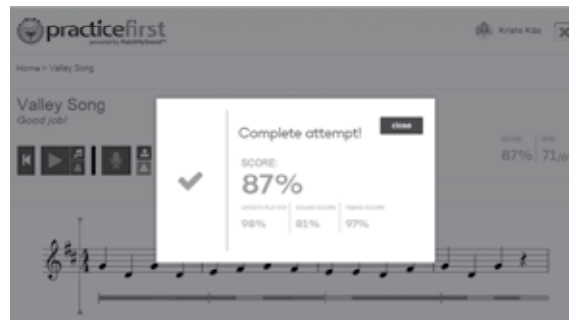
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The Keys to Program Success

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

“Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative and creation, there is one elementary truth the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one’s favor all manner of unforeseen incidents, meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way. Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power and magic in it. Begin it now.”

Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe
(1749-1832, German Poet, Dramatist, Novelist)

We all want to enjoy the benefits of professional success, and in our effort to arrive at this goal we often find ourselves constantly working to attain the level of proficiency required to be deemed successful by our colleagues, our supervisors, our students, our communities, etc. **What are the requisites for success in the field of music education? Are they:**

- Developing a balanced program in both performance, pedagogy, substantive curriculum, school pride, and community involvement?
- Receiving an invitation to perform in a national spotlight event with other stellar musical groups?
- Becoming the flagship of the community and being constantly recognized for outstanding musical achievements accompanied with public accolades?
- Having a large number of student musicians qualify for various honor groups?
- Developing many students who pursue music in their college life?

Do we really know the “blueprint of program success,” or is this all a combination of opinions generated by others in our profession? Isn’t the answer to each of the above questions, a resounding, “YES!”? While we certainly have many guidelines to ensure we are moving in a positive direction, there are many variations of the success-theme template.

Perhaps if we look at it from a different perspective, we can understand more about this perplexing question by studying other successful directors, those who have traversed the pathway-of-excellence. Herein lies an important component we often overlook as we develop our own

programs. What is it that makes this educator a resounding success? The answer, while complicated, appears to be rather simple:

- A command of the needed skills, combined with an ongoing study for self-improvement. Veteran teachers know, “The more you know, the more you don’t know.” It is imperative we continue to refine our musical talents/skills while embracing the latest in the evolving world of technology.
- A relentless work ethic unknown in common hours. There truly is no shortcut to success. The shortcut is, in fact, the ongoing personal commitment to achieving quality in each and

every aspect of our personal and professional lives.

- A genuine love for students and a passion to share music with these impressionable young minds. The teachers who have a lasting impact on their students are those who exude a love-of-music combined with a heartfelt desire to enrich the lives of their “learners” by bringing music to their lives.

The master teachers see everyone as a potential musician; their entire world is a classroom. The successful teachers have learned to make the process (the journey) as well as the product (the destination) a joyful journey. What an incredible responsibility we have; what a remarkable opportunity we have.

- A giving spirit eager to convey the immeasurable benefits of music-making to everyone; students, parents, fellow faculty members, and ALL. The *master teachers* see everyone as

The Keys to Program Success

a potential musician; their entire world is a classroom. Music education isn't something THEY DO, it is something THEY ARE.

- A sense of inclusion, group ownership, with countless ways to become involved at any level. Successful music educators have opened their perspective to see music learning goes far beyond teaching notes and rhythms; it is about “bringing people to music” in whatever way is possible.

- A thankful and appreciative attitude linked with a growing visionary plan for program growth and development. While the outstanding music teachers always recognize and acknowledge the positive achievements of their students and supporters, they are never satisfied or complacent with the status quo; the goal of *quality music education* is fluid as they “raise the bar” with each accomplishment.

It would be easy to point to this success list as platitudes; however, let me suggest they are the cornerstone values that serve as the foundation for every *master teacher*. They are available to all of us, there is no mandatory degree or recommended preparatory curriculum, and the payment plan of personal investment will last a professional lifetime.

There is a somewhat of a paradox in all of this, and it comes from the notion, “Work means struggle, discomfort, extra effort, inconvenience, etc.” EnJOYment (being in the presence of JOY) is usually the result of achieving or

accomplishing a given task. We enjoy the victory of a “job well done.” We feel a sense of group pride and personal fulfillment following a great concert. We applaud our efforts at the conclusion of the performance. In many ways, JOY is the final reward; however the successful teachers have learned to make the *process (the journey)* as well as the *product (the destination)* a joyful journey. This does not suggest everything is “all roses” along the pathway, but rather than awaiting the final step on the summit, there are many acknowledgments of small successes along the way. Let us not confuse this with false praise or undeserved compliments; it is merely the recognition of forward progress. *Encouragement* (to offer *courage* to individuals) serves as the fuel to perpetuate positive momentum. Every rehearsal, meeting, lesson, or conversation is approached with a sense of purposeful possibilities as an opportunity for betterment.

Ultimately, our life tends to mirror our individual thoughts and beliefs. We have a choice, and the outcome of our lives will be a reflection of the choices we make. As educators we know our students, likewise, reflect and replicate our actions, habits, language, and attitudes; what an incredible responsibility we have; what a remarkable opportunity we have. To this end, let us pledge ourselves to choose excellence as the standard for everything we do, and *enjoy* the journey from beginning to end.

STRIKE UP THE BAND!

Tim Lautzenheiser is a trusted friend to anyone interested in working with young people in developing a desire for excellence and a passion for high level achievement. His career involves ten years of successful college band directing at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following his tenure at the university level, he spent three years with McCormick's Enterprises working as Executive Director of Bands of America. In 1981, Tim created Attitude Concepts for Today, Inc., an organization designed to manage the many requests for workshops, seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of positive attitude and effective leadership training. Over two million students have experienced his acclaimed student leadership workshops over the last three decades. He presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. In addition, he continues his rigorous travel schedule touting the importance of arts education for every child.

His books, produced by G.I.A. Publications, Inc., continue to be bestsellers in the educational world. He is also co-author of popular band method Essential Elements and is the Senior Educational Consultant for Hal Leonard, Inc. Tim is the Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All and NAMM (The International Music Products Association).

Tim holds degrees from Ball State University and the University of Alabama. In 1995 he was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from the VanderCook College of Music. He is presently an adjunct faculty member at Ball State University (Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer), Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he serves on The Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors.

Teaching “Improvisation”

Jim Snidero

“Improvisation” may be the scariest word in music education. For the vast majority of educators, the notion of teaching improvisation, jazz or otherwise, is perceived to be so vague and susceptible to failure that most simply avoid the subject all together. The word “improvisation” is fairly misleading—as much of what an improviser uses to create a solo is actually preconceived, and therefore can be taught beforehand.

When it comes to jazz improvisation, preconceived concepts regarding form, rhythm, melody, harmony and solo construction are just some of the elements that are tirelessly practiced and perfected by great improvisers (i.e. masters). This forms the basis for what will be played. In addition, masters have preconceived concepts regarding how they will play. Tone, technique, time feel, articulation, phrasing and vibrato style are often the thing that most identifies a master, being carefully formulated and developed, then repeated over and over again.

For example, if you’ve listened much to Charlie Parker, Miles Davis or Thelonious Monk, it would probably take you just a few seconds to identify them on the radio. The same can be said about virtually any historic jazz figure. The fact is that masters have a preconceived concept of what they’re going to play and how they’re going to play it. The thing that separates a master from everyone else is:

- A.** the quality and quantity of what’s preconceived
- B.** art
- C.** taste.

The good news is that **A.** can be studied and practiced to the point that a student can gain control over a massive amount of preconceived concepts. The bad news is that not everyone can create a work of art, and not everyone has exquisite taste.

Masters strike a balance between preconceived concepts and going with the moment, letting their “spirit”, for lack of a better term, lead them to very human expression. This creates a kind of inspired flow. This sense of balance between essentially “knowing and not knowing”, to quote Chick Corea from a 1976 *Keyboard Player* magazine article, is informed by incredible taste and yes, talent. But here’s the thing: it’s very tough to create **B.** and **C.** without **A.**—and **A.** is something that most definitely can be taught.

In *The Jazz Conception Company* multimedia course “Jazz Improvisation-Part 1”, I don’t focus much on chord/scale theory. In the beginning, it’s just not that important. Three scale types and correlating chords are the only relationships I introduce over ten lessons. What I do focus on are the building blocks of melodies, timing and balance. This

gives students defined material which they can then use to develop musical instincts.

The first step is to search out a bunch of melodies and melodic fragments, which I’ll call “ideas”. The best way to find great ideas is by listening to recordings of bona fide giants of jazz and transcribing them. In fact, these recordings are the best source for all elements of improvisation and jazz style. Listening is obviously paramount, and our improvisation course includes over 130 historic audio and video performances.

However, transcribing may be a bit daunting for many students, so in the beginning it’s fine to use other sources, such as books or course material, to build a collection of ideas. An idea could be something as simple as one or two notes using a syncopated rhythm, a scale fragment or an arpeggio. It could be a blues idea or ideas utilizing timeless concepts such as enclosures of chord tones or lines guided by “goal” notes, all of which I discuss in the improvisation course. Students don’t need a ton of ideas when starting out, but they should have a variety of ideas, mostly two measures or less, at

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Teaching “Improvisation”

their disposal so that they can assemble phrases that sound both interesting and logical.

The next step is memorizing these ideas. Students often memorize material in academic courses, so memorizing a musical idea shouldn't be any different than, for example, memorizing the sound and spelling of a word. An effective way to memorize an idea is to relate it to chord tones, for example 1, 2, 3, 5. Try to hear it and visualize either sheet music with the idea or fingerings, then play it. If a student can repeat an idea flawlessly ten times, they've probably got it. Repeat this process with about 15-20 ideas, all over a similar chord (e.g. F7 and Fmi7).

Now have students play over a simple form, in this case maybe a blues or an 8-measure section on F7 or Fmi7,

inserting one idea every two measures. Some will be shorter than two measures, so they will rest. Some may be a bit longer than two measures, so after that idea, they might rest for a measure or so, or play a melodic fragment. They should limit themselves to ideas that they've memorized, and they generally shouldn't be longer than two measures. Why two measures? In the beginning, it's a very natural way to group ideas and create symmetry. It's also much easier to keep your place in the form!

Finally, have students focus on the timing of each idea and how they complement each other (balance). If one idea is active, dense with notes or rhythms, perhaps the next idea should be less active, using just a couple of notes or rhythms. If the contour of an idea ascends, perhaps the

next idea might descend, creating a peak. If an idea descends, perhaps the next idea will ascend, creating a valley. This helps students to develop a sense of balance, maybe even taste. All of this is discussed in the improvisation course.

When students can reliably execute ideas they've memorized, and have instincts that allow them to assemble ideas in a logical and musical manner, they can say something when “improvising”. The more material they have, the more they can say. Eventually, their instincts will allow them to play new things that they just hear at a certain moment, or react to what their bandmates are playing, saying things they've never said. They will then be able to balance their improvisation between “knowing and not knowing”. It's powerful stuff, not to mention a whole lot of fun!

Jim Snidero is a saxophonist, author and educator living in New York City. He is the president of The Jazz Conception Company, producing multimedia courses on jazz improvisation and performance. Go to www.jazzimprovisation.com to find out more.

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Reflections on District Honor Band

Gary Gribble

When I attend events such as honor band or all state, I always make it a practice to sit in on a rehearsal block or two to observe the clinicians in action. I'm not talking about the obligatory "walk in the room, wave at your students, shake hands with the other band directors, listen for five minutes and move on to the next room thing"... I'm talking about really sitting down and watching how the band and the clinician are working together.

I've learned a lot during these sessions. I've picked up great rehearsal techniques, wonderful analogies, and some solid ideas about pacing a rehearsal. I've watched our students react to different teaching techniques (both positive and negative) and seen how quickly they can learn or how much they struggle with certain aspects of performing. We all try to give our kids advice on how to be better players. We schedule extra rehearsal time, if possible we bring in area professionals, and sometimes have guest conductors come in to help us refine the performance material. We strive to produce fantastic performances...and we often achieve this goal.

Then there are the other things. As I watch and listen, I realize that there is more to it than just playing a particular set of music. Am I teaching my KIDS or am I teaching THE MATERIAL? What have I forgotten? What else do they need to know? How can I better prepare them to deal with the big picture of music making instead of just getting through their parts? How can they become better "music

citizens"? Here's what I observed this year and what I plan to teach my students:

1) You are a part of an honors group because you deserve to be there. You worked hard, played your instrument with enough proficiency to be selected and deemed worthy of attending the event. There is no need to try and "outplay" your neighbor. There is no need to posture and strut or to speak negatively about others in the group. It isn't important that you placed ahead

or behind them at another honors audition...also, it isn't cool to label others based on the school they attend and its perceived success or lack thereof. Boasting about all of the various groups that you are a part of doesn't elevate you...it can actually make you appear arrogant and might turn others away.

2) When you have the opportunity to meet other students who share your interest in music, take advantage of the opportunity. Try to develop new friendships beyond those who attend your school. Hang out with different students during the weekend...you will find that you have lots more in common than you initially suspected. Who knows, you might end up college roommates or performing in the same group there.

3) Meet your guest conductors/clinicians. Introduce yourself. Thank them for working with you. Music is also about networking...you might apply to their university. They might

sit on an audition or a scholarship panel and see your name. If you simply sit in the section and play, you are one of hundreds of faces they will see this year. If you go up and say hello, you stand out...in a positive way!

4) Impress those around you by being a great

ensemble member and demonstrating your desire to get the job done. While we are all impressed that you can play orchestral excerpts (or for goodness sakes, a marching band cheer) very loudly, that might not be appropriate during break times—especially if you can't play all of the parts in front of you for the imminent performance. Take care of the business at hand rather than trying to impress others. When it's so obvious that your guest conductor calls you out on it, it's really too much!

5) We need to better understand what the symbols on the page mean. Increasingly, our bands struggle while sight reading. Basic on-beat/off-beat patterns are unrecognizable...even in the most advanced groups. Once the rhythm is sung or counted for the

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Reflections on District Honor Band

group, they assimilate it quickly...but it's like learning a new language by memorizing phrases phonetically. Are we doing too much rote-teaching? Are we spending enough time on fundamentals? I owe it to my kids to teach them to read...not to memorize the story. Note to self: Fundamentals can't be minimized in order to spend more time on literature.

6) Teamwork and ensemble are more important than getting through the individual parts. Blend, intonation, balance, phrasing...these are the things that take music from being a technical study to being an artistic experience. Yes, we need to be able to play our parts...but that's step one...we then need to LISTEN and cooperate with each other as a team in order to unify our message. Again...it's not about out-playing your neighbor or being the first to master a technical figure...it's about taking music from notes on the page to expression and communication.

7) How you behave speaks MUCH louder than your words. No cell phones during rehearsals...pay attention...stop when the conductor stops...sit up...eye contact...no hats...it's all a part of being a great member.

8) Rely on a pencil rather than your memory. There is too much information being exchanged too rapidly in an honor band situation for you to remember every detail. Write things down...mark your parts! Obviously do so in a clear and concise manner...no need to draw giant dark circles around everything or write in "85 point font" so that

it obscures the notes...just some small marks to reinforce what your conductor asks for in the music. The fewer repetitions needed to solidify a concept, the more time can be spent on other aspects and refinement.

9) It's OK to ENJOY the experience! Smile! Look like you are glad to be there! Celebrate your accomplishments! You are a member of a high quality group...be PROUD!

So, now I feel like I have more to teach...and that my students will benefit from knowing that there is more to making music than playing your parts. There is more to being in an ensemble than passing the audition. There is more to being a good member than simply following instructions. What we do operates on many levels...and it can't be measured by a multiple choice quiz. It's about interaction, decision-making, and follow-up. It's about taking a set of material and working to make it more than symbols on a page. It's about helping those around you achieve through your own cooperation. It's about creating experiences that go beyond learning a few techniques. It's about communicating emotion and experiencing an art form that uses sound to tell its story. It's about learning lessons that will help you in life.

Gary D. Gribble has been Director of Bands at Alan C. Pope High School in Georgia's Cobb County School District since the school opened in 1987. Under his direction, the Pope High School Band has earned more than 400 awards of excellence and has been a Bands of America regional champion, a regional finalist 19 times, and a Grand National semifinalist twice. The Pope band received the Sudler Shield from the John Philip Sousa Foundation in 1992. The school's marching band has participated in parades across the continental U.S., in Hawaii, and in London, England, and its symphonic bands have performed in state, regional, and national concerts.

Mr. Gribble earned his bachelor's degree in music education from Georgia State University. He has served as an adjudicator, guest conductor, and clinician in Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina, Kentucky, Illinois, Tennessee, and Florida. In 1996, Mr. Gribble choreographed a portion of the opening ceremonies for the Paralympic Games in Atlanta. In 2008, he was named a Claes Nobel Educator of Distinction by the National Society of High School Scholars. Mr. Gribble was also selected for inclusion in the American School Band Directors Association and is currently on the executive board of the National Band Association.

Are You Ready for UIL Contest?

John Benzer

To read all of Mr. Benzer's handout from his recent TBA clinic, go to the TBA website or use this link:
http://apps.texasbandmasters.org/archives/pdfs/clinic/2015_benzer.pdf

After 28 years of teaching at both the public school and college level, I continue to realize how much time and organization it takes to successfully take a band to UIL Contest. Along with my University of Houston responsibilities, I am very fortunate to be working with students and directors in Texas public schools almost every single day. It is those experiences that allow me to offer some advice and suggestions as you begin preparing your ensemble for UIL Contest.

Eligibility

- Depending on your school climate and socioeconomic background, you must always be mindful of eligibility factors that could perhaps prohibit your ensemble from participating. In order to prevent last-minute eligibility issues, distribute a departmental progress report at least two weeks before the end of the 6 (or 9-week) and/or 3-week grading period. It may be necessary to give students--who are consistently ineligible--more than one progress report.....and even one for each week leading up to the end of the grading period.

- Target the students who do not turn in a progress reports AT ALL. These students are most likely failing multiple classes and do not want you or their parents to know.

- Do NOT allow students to EVER turn in progress reports that are incomplete. This usually means that

the student is failing whatever class is "missing."

- Be aware that students will sometimes get their progress report filled out.....except for the one class they are failing.....and will tell their parents there was a substitute... and will get their parents to sign the progress report anyway...and will return to school the next day to obtain the "missing" grade and signature—meaning that the parent has no idea their child is failing a class. Unfortunately, it then becomes your job to inform the parent that their child is actually failing a class.

Mentors, Clinicians and Pre-UIL Judges

- Particularly regarding MS/JH non-varsity directors: seek out advice from your co-workers, as well as your mentors/clinicians, regarding a borderline decision as to whether or not your band should go to UIL. This decision should be based on eligibility, numbers, and the probability of all remaining students having an educationally beneficial experience.

- When selecting music for UIL, reach out to your mentors/clinicians for advice regarding literature you are considering. Be prepared to offer as much information as possible regarding your ensemble's strengths and weaknesses (if they have yet to hear your ensemble), instrumentation, etc.

- Carefully go through and process the information given to you by anyone

who listens and/or works with your ensemble. Make new markings in your score (perhaps in a different color) to ensure that this "new/different" information is communicated to your students.

- Hold students absolutely accountable for any markings that you require them to add to their music. After telling students to mark something, the best use of your time is to walk around the set-up with your score and monitor that students are actually marking.....and that they are making accurate and clear markings. You must discipline yourself to make students mark something every day.... no matter if is a breath mark, an accidental sign, or something. If you do not, then students will never buy into the importance of being required to have and use a pencil.

- If, after going through either written or recorded comments from your Pre-UIL judges, you do not understand something that is communicated, do not hesitate to reach out and contact the judge.

Contest-Related Tasks

Of the many responsibilities you have in regards to things that have to be done prior to UIL, be mindful of a few very highly important things:

- Contact the director of the host school to identify which "end/lead" student will lead the group from the warm-up room to the stage...and also from the stage to the sightreading room (if different).

Are You Ready for UIL Contest?

- Contact the percussion specialist (or other director) to find out what the stage tendencies are in regards to percussion instruments and their balance to the wind instruments.

- A percussion check-list (battery as well as auxiliary instruments; beaters, mallets, etc.) must be created by your percussionists prior to not only UIL, but Pre-UIL. This must be double-checked by either you or your percussion specialist (if you have one).

- Especially when teaching MS/JH bands: it is paramount that, depending on the stage, you bring either furniture blankets/quilts, thick black mats or very thick blankets and/or carpet strips to put underneath your battery percussion instruments. Some sort of felt-covered “surface” or towels—for placement of triangles, various mallets/sticks and other small color instruments—which are to be placed on music stands/trap stands.

- For ALL students using mutes: thick, black towels should be folded in a square and placed on the floor in between students’ feet....not on the side of the chair!

The Day of UIL

- Depending on the time of your UIL performance—and administrative approval—you are encouraged to have a rehearsal before your school day begins. Is it at this rehearsal that you could perform a significant amount of daily drill exercises and appropriate “chunks” of your literature. You should definitely reserve time to sight-read one final piece. Most of us would agree that, even though it is early in the day, early morning sectionals and/or extra rehearsals can be VERY productive. Therefore, before-school rehearsals ensure that students are mentally engaged at a high level earlier in the day, and will raise the overall sense of urgency. Then—when you are actually in the UIL warm-up room, you will not run the risk of “over” warming-up your ensemble.

- Before leaving your campus, conduct a quick “inspection” of uniforms, instruments and related maintenance items, music binders/folders, mutes, etc. It is imperative that all single and double reed players have their back-up reeds with them. These reeds should be

totally broken in, as well as ones used in recent rehearsals and not simply “out of the box.”

- To calm younger students, it would be an excellent idea to have students silently study their music on the bus when you are halfway to the contest site. This would of course require them having their binders/folders with them on the bus.

Warm-up Room

- As students are getting settled in the warm-up room, give clear reminders for students to set their instrument lengths correctly...especially for brass instruments whose tuning slides have to be pushed in in order for them to fit in the moldings of the cases.

- It is a good idea to allow students to perform instrument-specific exercises (octave slurs, harmonics, lip slurs, scales, etc.) before you perform full-band exercises. If a rehearsal was done at school prior to departing your campus, you should only need to perform 1-2 basic exercises.

- As stated earlier, be cautious not to “over” warm-up your band; with that said, utilize non-playing techniques (positioning/fingering with air, saying note names, fingering without air, etc.) so that you do not have to physically play as much.

- Unless something sounds really “off,” do not spend valuable time tuning individuals.

Contest Stage

- Since the percussionists have been setting up either all or part of the time you were warming up the wind players, percussionists are allowed—and strongly encouraged—to play a few sounds on various instruments to become aware of volume, heights of instruments, etc. These students should be given strict parameters as to what they should play....and for how long...so as not to annoy/upset the judges.

- If chimes are used, they should be placed in a manner where they will be heard from the audience. If your chime players are not using your home campus chimes, they should check the position of the pedal.

Are You Ready for UIL Contest?

• It is our job as band directors to teach students how to correctly and professionally walk with their instruments. Many times, judges notice where bassoon bocals have been placed, how instrument bell and slides are protected, etc. Your entry onto the stage (as well as into the sight-reading room) should capture the judges' attention and be very organized, poised and professional.

• After being seated on stage, students are allowed to play "on their own" momentarily so they can get used to how they sound on the stage. Similar to percussionists, wind players should be given specific parameters.

• No matter whether you choose to perform a block concert F....a short articulation sequence....a chorale.... or an intervallic exercise prior to the announcement of your ensemble, be very careful not to expose things that you know do not sound good. Your warm-up creates the first impressions of the judges!

• Before your first selection (and between each of your selections), you are encouraged to conduct through the first few measures "off the podium" with your students. Their instruments can either be in an upright or lowered position. They are allowed to finger/position and even use air through their instruments, as long as the music is not being reproduced. This process is especially important with MS/JH bands, as it allows students to mentally prepare for a successful "start" to each piece. Percussionists should "air stick" and simulate their instruments with the rest of the ensemble.

• If, for example, a specific color/utility instrument is used on a specific piece, you can allow your band to again play "on their own" for 30 seconds or more before this particular piece. This allows the student to bring this newly added instrument to the correct temperature for performance.

Sight-reading Room

• It is very important that you go through the sight-reading procedures with your ensemble throughout the year—not just right before Pre-UIL and UIL Contest.

• Prior to the actual day of your contest, percussionists should be pre-assigned to specific instrument parts. Part breakdown and requirements can be found on the UIL website. "Extra" percussionists not playing parts need to be trained to "shadow" behind (if not right next to) the actual performer.

• As part of the many techniques you should teach your students, it is a very good idea for students to physically "touch" certain aspects of the piece as you are calling attention to something specific.

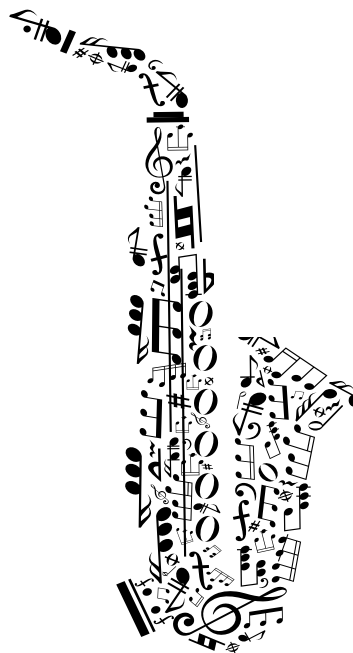
• Students at all levels should be very familiar with the "critical notes" in the various keys they will encounter:

- For concert Bb, the 7th scale degree is the critical note.
- For concert Eb, Ab and Db, the 4th scale degree is the critical note.
- For concert C and G, the 3rd and 7th scale degrees are the critical notes.

• Students should be trained to "freeze" on critical notes when you practice sight-reading; you can "show" the fingerings around the room....or they can show you (or their neighbors) the fingerings. Any or all of these techniques can be used in the actual sight-reading room.

• Judges really like it when you make references/connections to your stage music (i.e. legato style, key, unique markings, etc.).

• During both the general explanation and summary period, do not call out every measure number and beat number. There are SO MANY other things you should be reminding students about!



Are You Ready for UIL Contest?

- Be cautious—during your general explanation period—not to speak or count off in subdivision, as this is not allowed and could result in a warning from a judge.

- When 30 seconds has been called, you **MUST** review the **OPENING** key signature (and related critical notes), time signature, tempo, etc. Even if you have not gone over the very ending of the piece, it is paramount that you force yourself to return to the beginning. The **LAST** thing students should hear you say—before time is called—is information regarding the **BEGINNING** of the piece. This information needs to be very fresh in their minds....and yours!

- During these 30 seconds, double reed players should discreetly place their performance reed into their water containers. When time is called, the reeds can be removed. Double reed

players should never leave their performance reed in their water containers during the entire time they are in the sight-reading room.

- After a short and smartly planned out warm-up, allow students to blow air carefully through their instruments, empty French horn water slides, empty brass spit valves, etc. After this warm-up, there should be **NO MORE TALKING** from the director!

As you start to begin preparations for your respective UIL Contests next semester, always strive to be as organized and detailed as possible. Your students will remain successful as long as you have a structured, goal-oriented focus to every aspect of these preparations. I wish you the best of luck!

John Benzer is on the music education faculty at the University of Houston's Moores School of Music, where he teaches undergraduate instrument pedagogy classes and band director methods classes. Through the band department, Mr. Benzer assists the Wind Ensembles and assists with the administration of student teacher placements and observations. Prior to this, he taught for twelve years at Griffin Middle School in The Colony, which is part of the Lewisville Independent School District. During his ten years as Director of Bands, the Griffin Middle School Symphonic Band was twice named the Texas Class CC Middle School Honor Band, in 1993 and 1997. In 1997, the Griffin Middle School Band Program was awarded the Sudler Silver Cup, the most prestigious international award to recognize junior high and middle school band programs of outstanding musical excellence.

At the 1995 Texas Bandmasters Association Convention in San Antonio, Mr. Benzer was named the 1995 "Texas Young Bandmaster of the Year," and in 2012 was honored as the Distinguished Alumnus in Music Education through the UH Moores School of Music. He is also the co-author of Essential Musicianship-Ensemble Concepts, a published band method textbook, as well as a Hal Leonard Textbook Consultant. Mr. Benzer is an active clinician and adjudicator throughout Texas, and has presented band director in-services and workshops in several school districts, as well as various clinics at The Midwest Clinic, TBA and TMEA.

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Survival or Thrival

What are we preparing students for—band or life?

Dennis W. Fisher

There's little doubt that—good or bad—education today is not what it was. We're painfully aware that what we do with students in band is significantly affected by trends over which we have little control. Students are given data to learn and then asked through standardized testing to give all the right answers; it's called academic bulimia—the binging and purging of information without retaining its nutrients.

We invest untold time defending why band must remain a part of the curriculum. Our advocacy often falls on deaf ears because many are tired of hearing the same old arguments. However, we have the unique opportunity to help students develop skills to not merely survive but to truly thrive in band, school and beyond. We just haven't realized it.

As test scores are now used as the benchmark for success, the process of learning is increasingly compromised. Unfortunately, bands are pulled into this vortex and often suffer from the same academic (musical) bulimia as the rest of education. This is where it gets provocative.

Students are intensely rehearsed and learn individual parts with great accomplishment; but, are they learning *beyond* their individual parts? Are they really learning to think and listen critically, to make independent decisions and to adapt to their surroundings without engaging in musical bulimia? We emphatically

answer YES – but, are they *REALLY*? Unfortunately, students are often taught to *survive* performances, not *thrive* from the process and experience.

We have the opportunity to help them develop in a way not available in any other aspect of formal education as a preparation for life—and yes, a preparation for band. Playing in band can introduce and refine four essential components that make up the heart of what we can help students learn, turning survival into *thrival*!

Critical Thinking:

A favorite quote of mine from baseball legend Ted Williams is “If you don't think too good, don't think too much.” Critical thinking is defined as “the art of analyzing and evaluating with a view to improving it”. It is both objective and subjective, using intellect as a starting point. For students, it's about:

a. Curiosity

- Fitting my part with everyone else's
- Comparing to a goal, whether it's balance, articulation, style, intonation, or ...
- Understanding and interpreting written instruction such as dynamics, musical terminology, etc.
- Recognizing the consequences of acting on independent decisions. If I do this, what happens?
- Looking at issues from different perspectives
- Making decisions without someone telling me what to do

b. Establishing priorities

- Developing a process to prioritize tasks
- How to filter the immediate needs from everything yet to be accomplished

c. Consequences of thinking

- Determining what to do with what I've learned and applying it myself
- Developing, elevating and refining standards
- Putting everything in perspective

So, in short, critical thinking is the act of not only developing and encouraging a sense of curiosity, but developing a process of doing something about it. Whether it's notes, rhythms, dynamics, musical expressions, terminology or other clearly written directions, it all has to be seen, understood and decisions made about it.

Critical Listening:

Early in my career I heard the expression of the need to develop the ability to “listen with my eyes and see with my ears”. It took awhile for that to sink in, but when it did, I realized that nothing could be more valuable. Plainly and simply - AWARENESS of surroundings and how to fit in.

In band, the lowest threshold of this is listening to what we play. We want students to listen to what's going on around them for the obvious reasons of intonation, balance, articulation, style, etc. Although all this is essential, it really is the low-hanging fruit of critical listening. With students, we

Survival or Thrival

What are we preparing students for—band or life?

want them to hear what *we* see, but often we settle for them hearing only what *they* do. In a perfect world, we must strive to help them “see” the full score we have in front of us with their ears.

In full context, we are trying to help them be aware of their surroundings and how they relate or fit in. This is the radar that should be spinning all the time, inside band and to the outside world. So, critical listening involves the following:

a. Awareness of surroundings

- Developing a power of observation and how to improve it
- Awareness of how it affects you
- Awareness of how you affect it

b. Comparative listening

- Comparing against an expected standard
- Knowing what to listen for or be aware of
- Sorting through different strata of information (musical or otherwise) all happening simultaneously
- Developing the art of filtering the most relevant information

Independent Action:

Yogi Berra, one of our most profound modern day philosophers (and legendary catcher for the New York Yankees) is credited for saying, “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” Quite simply, this means making a decision and acting on it. This is crucial in helping students grow if they are truly going to thrive. Too often, we make decisions for them: “raise your pitch, play a note this long, play louder/softer, stay with the metronome”. I could go on and on. We’re not teaching them to be leaders, we’re teaching them to be followers. We reinforce academic bulimia by making sure they do exactly as we’ve told them, when we’ve told them. Knowledge of data without transforming it into wise application is useless.

This is an easy trap to fall into because we want them to experience the highest levels of success. We don’t want them (us) to fail; but, in doing so, we aren’t teaching them *how* to fail. Yes, *I said how to fail*. I agree with John Maxwell when in his book *Talent is Never Enough* he says,

“Success is never final and failure doesn’t have to be fatal”. When students are put in a position to make independent decisions, they will sometimes make the wrong ones and momentarily fail. It’s OK. If we don’t allow students that chance, we can’t help them figure out how to make better ones and grow to succeed.

How students learn to act on critical thinking and critical listening must be to develop independence. To merely follow directions doesn’t do it. It’s not what they know, it’s *can they use it*. So, elements of independent action are:

a. Drawing on knowledge to act

- Helping students learn to access what they already know without us
- Requiring students make a decision and act on it
- Helping students consider the results of independent action, gauge its success and then adapt

b. Developing independence to act

- Helping students gain confidence to act independently
- Helping them develop that skill
- Helping them build a level of trust in their actions

As teachers, we can’t and shouldn’t make all the decisions for them. We have to develop the wisdom to know what to teach them and when, but also to have the patience, persistence and the courage to move them closer to independence. As we do, they will learn how to learn—and that’s what it’s all about.

Extemporaneous Compromise:

This is the art of developing flexibility, awareness and adapting to constantly changing circumstances. There are never any two seemingly identical rehearsals or performances that are the same. Helping students develop the awareness and flexibility to adapt instantly is multi-tasking at it’s finest. A few hints...

a. Leading and following

- Discovering who is leading
- Recognizing when to follow
- Acknowledging when change has to occur, and how to adapt

Survival or Thrival What are we preparing students for—band or life?

b. Planned improvisation

- Preparing in a way that allows for “going off script”
- Trying to determine consequences of inflexibility
- Self-determining when adapting to something is necessary
- Recognizing that all people are sometimes wrong even though they think they’re right
- Nothing is absolute

Is there anything more essential to success in both band and more importantly in life than this? Clearly, most of your students will never study music (band) formally beyond high school and whether we like it or not, that’s OK. So, what they get from band has to be something they can use.

There is no other place in school where they can learn and develop these life skills in the same place. They get portions of it in some classes, but not everything all in the same package. If we have a place in the curriculum that’s irreplaceable, it’s this. If we want to capitalize on advocacy for what we do and offer, it’s this. In essence, if we do it right, we teach them to become their own teachers. Does it get any better than that?

So, is this it? Absolutely not. This isn’t an article about HOW to do it – but about WHY. Anyone can tell you how *they* do it, but ultimately, it’s up to you. As Tom Magliozzi so eloquently put it, “Education is a preparation for life, not a preparation for school”.

Dennis Fisher is the Conductor of the Symphonic Band, Associate Director of Wind Studies at the University of North Texas, and Professor of Music. Fisher has served throughout the United States along with international appearances in Thailand, Japan, Great Britain, Europe, Scandinavia, Canada, Greece, Brazil and Russia. Fisher currently serves as principal guest conductor of the Volga Band, Professional Wind Band in Saratov, Russia. Fisher has recorded extensively on the Mark, Klavier, G.I.A. and Eurosound labels. He is co-author of Teaching Music Through Performance in Beginning Band, Volume 2. He serves as recording and editing producer of the Teaching Music through Performance in Band series compact disc recordings, and producer of Volumes 1, 2 and 3 of the Master Conductor DVD series.

Fisher holds professional memberships in TMEA, TBA, CBDNA, and Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia. He has been honored by being elected to membership in the prestigious American Bandmasters Association and with invited membership in Phi Beta Mu. He is a member of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences and is Past-President of the Southwest Division of the College Band Directors National Association. Fisher was awarded the Gagarin Medal of Honor from the Society of Cosmonauts of the Russian Federal Space Agency. He has also been honored by being awarded the Meritorious Achievement Award from the Texas Bandmasters Association. Other honors include twice being named “Top Prof” by the Mortarboard Society at U.N.T., a recipient of the University of North Texas Community Award, and named to Who’s Who in America in 2010.

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Denton, TX

Flower Mound High School
Wind Symphony
Brent Biskup and Jana Harvey
Flower Mound, TX

Southwest High School
Wind Symphony
Stacey Dunn
Fort Worth, TX

Four Points Middle School
Wind Ensemble
Christopher Yee
Austin, TX

Stiles Middle School
Honors Band
Darcy Potter Williams
Leander, TX

CHAMBER ENSEMBLES

Hendrickson High School
Saxophone Ensemble
Edward R. Lopez
Pflugerville, TX

Ronald Reagan High School
Saxophone Quartet
Greg White
San Antonio, TX

JAZZ ENSEMBLES

Harlingen High School
Jazz Ensemble
Ronnie Rios
Harlingen, TX

Lamar Middle School & Fine Arts
Academy Jazz Factory
James Hairston
Austin, TX

PERCUSSION ENSEMBLES

Manvel High School
Percussion Ensemble
Louis Boldrighini
Manvel, TX

Westfield High School
Percussion Ensemble
Gregg Rinehart
Houston, TX

ORCHESTRAS

Cypress Ridge High School
Symphony Orchestra
Christopher R. Mustell
Houston, TX

Liberty High School
Symphony Orchestra
Julie Blackstock & Jamie Weaver
Frisco, TX

Beckendorff Junior High School
Honor Orchestra
Karel Butz
Katy, TX

NAMMB Contest Awards



Congratulations to these bands and directors who had outstanding performances at the 2015 National Association of Military Marching Band Contest:

CLASS 2A

1st Place Timpson High School
2nd Place .. Beckville High School
3rd Place ... West Sabine High School

CLASS 3A

1st Place New Diana High School
2nd Place .. New Boston High School
3rd Place ... West Rusk High School

CLASS 4A

1st Place Henderson High School
2nd Place .. Cleveland High School
3rd Place ... Carthage High School

CLASS 5A

1st Place Lufkin High School
2nd Place .. Lindale High School



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| America Forever March (Ab) (Grade 4) Jim Colonna | Heroes and Warriors March (Grade 2 ½) Joel Leach |
| America Forever March (F) (Grade 3) Jim Colonna | March For Today (Grade 3) Dave Dunbar |
| Celebration March (Grade 2) Phil Stonebarger | March Grandioso (Grade 3) Arr. Charles Booker |
| Eagle Ford March (Grade 2 ½) Charlie Hill | Orion March (Grade 2) Richard Kane |
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2015 U.I.L. Marching Contest State Champs

Congratulations to all these 1A Bands and Directors who competed in the state competition:



Winner: Ropes HS • Director: Donovan Ashcraft
Assistants: Katie Turnipseed, Jay Sedberry, Jerry Stallsmith, Joseph Flores
Drum Majors: Skyler Richardson, Scott Cavit
Program Title: One for All, All for One

Crosbyton HS.....Robert Rumbelow
 Knox City HS.....Mark Tucker
 Leakey HS.....Richard Austin
 Munday HS.....Trey Singleton
 Nueces Canyon HS ..Freddy Falcon
 Rising Star HSFredy Gonzalez
 Ropes HSDonovan Ashcraft
 Rotan HS.....Josh Bailey
 Throckmorton HSBrendon Muller
 Water Valley HSJudy Owen
 White Deer HS.....Jeff Witcher
 Whiteface HSDarwin McCasland
 Wink HSBrad Roberts

Congratulations to all these 2A Bands and Directors who competed in the state competition:

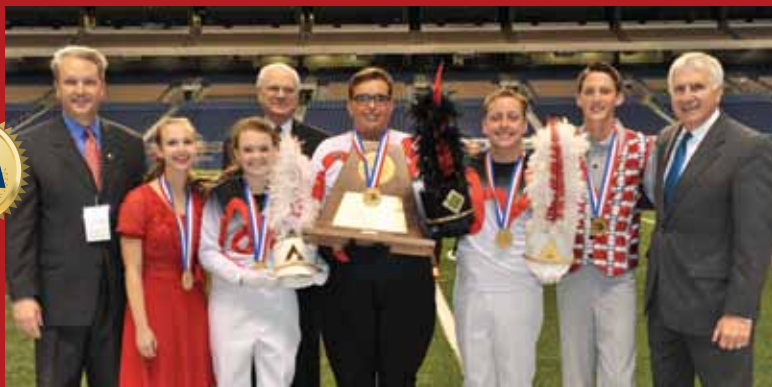


Winner: New Deal HS • Director: James Nance
Assistants: Kay Nance
Drum Major: Jacob Nance
Program Title: 'Neath An Irish Sky

Anson HS.....Rob Hartman
 Carlisle HS.....Chris Clifton
 Clarksville HSRoderick Boyce
 Forsan HSJim Rhodes
 Ganado HSJoe Barrow
 Harper HS.....Charles Sander
 Honey Grove HSDennis Syring
 Kerens HSBrian Smetzer
 New Deal HS.....James Nance
 Panhandle HS.....Kyle McDonald
 Sabinal HS.....Zachary Sims
 San Saba HS.....Joseph Allen
 Seymour HS.....Scooter Miller
 Shelbyville HSShaka Hawkins
 Somerville HSCarl Idlebird
 Sundown HS.....Mike Glaze
 Tolar HSBobby Yerigan

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

- C. H. Yoe HS.....Craig George
- Clifton HS..... Keith Zuehlke
- Crane HS.....Daniel Todd
- Denver City HS.....Jerry Rodriquez
- Eastland HS.....Stephen Cox
- Farmersville HS.....Scott Cross
- Holliday HS.....Melanie Hadderton
- Industrial HS.....Houston Cummings
- Littlefield HS.....Bonnie Anderson
- Luling HS.....Coral Rios
- Lyford HS.....Victoria Vasquez-Gonzalez
- McGregor HS.....Tim Grace
- Mineola HS.....Chris Brannan
- Prairiland HS.....Shannon Sandage
- Queen City HS.....Billy Vess
- Santa Rosa HS.....Dale de la Fuente
- Teague HS.....Cari Martin
- Van Alstyne HS.....Tim Fulton
- White Oak HS.....Jason Steele
- Whitesboro HS.....Jim Cude



Winner: Whitesboro HS • Director: Jim Cude
Assistants: Alan Gray, Bryan May, Linda Cude, Patrick Cox, Alex Webb
Drum Majors: Abby Lloyd, Joe Mason
Program Title: The Tie That Binds

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

- Aledo HS.....Joey Paul
- Barbers Hill HS.....Kevin Stone
- Birdville HS.....Mike Cheripka
- Canyon HS.....Mike Sheffield
- Chisholm Trail HS.....John Canfield
- Crosby HS.....Kevin Knight
- Donna HS.....Raul Ramirez
- Donna North HS.....Adrian Robledo
- Dripping Springs HS.....Keith Lancaster
- Edinburg Vela HS.....Carlos Garcia
- Forney HS.....Mark Poole
- Fort Worth Southwest HS...Stacey Dunn
- Frisco Centennial HS.....Andy Rein
- Frisco Wakeland HS.....Gerry Miller
- Leander Cedar Park HS....Steve Wessels
- Leander HS.....Robert Selaiden
- Leander Vandegrift HS.....Mike Howard
- Leander Vista Ridge HS....Bryan Christian
- McKinney HS.....Ken Ringel
- McKinney North HS.....Alan Harkey
- Mesquite Poteet HS.....Cody Newman
- Plainview HS.....Anthony Gonzales
- Ridge Point HS.....Michael Barnes



Winner: Cedar Park HS • Director: Steve Wessels
Assistants: Evan VanDoren, Jason Robb, Roland Chavez, Justin Sullivan
Drum Majors: Jackie Farias, Hana Kim, Travis Schwartz, Lily Velleca
Program Title: What's Opera, Doc?

- Rio Grande City HS.....Rodolfo Barrera
- Roma HS.....Dena Laurel
- Sharyland Pioneer HS.....Arnold Salinas
- Tomball HS.....Steve Fry
- Tomball Memorial HS.....Andy Easton
- Tompkins HS.....Stephen Bond
- Waxahachie HS.....Richard Armstrong
- Ysleta Bel Air HS.....Manny Talamantes

WOODWINDS - RICHIE HAWLEY

You are only as good as your reeds...

I always tell my students this key phrase so that they know how important it is to practice and perform on a reed that has the proper resistance. For me, a "good reed" is one that has the correct resistance for the individual player. Having the appropriate resistance in a reed promotes great air support, which is the key to having a wonderful sound, easy articulation and large dynamic range. But often times teachers demand that their students develop terrific air support without having first examined if their student's reed is too hard or too soft. Air support and tone improvements are dependent on having the correct strength of reed for the individual player. When a reed is too hard/resistant, the student will force their air production in an unnatural and uncomfortable manner. Instead of just using the diaphragm muscles, the added resistance will cause many other systems of the body to strain to produce airflow which will result in producing tension in the shoulders, upper torso, and throat. This extra strain and tension transfers into the mouth where the embouchure bites down on the mouthpiece and reed- making the airflow into the clarinet even more restricted. It's a vicious circle that then makes the player force even more! On the opposite end of the spectrum, a very light/soft reed will enable the student to produce a sound easily, yet improperly by puffing the cheeks instead of engaging the diaphragm muscles. The sound will be thin and shrill. The light reed will also allow the player to have a very weak and poorly shaped embouchure that lacks the strength to focus the air into a beautiful and rich sound. The perfect strength reed is one that allows the student to blow with slight resistance and zero strain. This perfect combination of resistance and response allows proper development of embouchure and diaphragm muscles. As these muscles develop, a harder reed may be necessary. It is important for a teacher to help the student find the right strength reed for their level of playing. This will really allow rapid improvements and a rewarding experience of playing the clarinet.

Appointed principal clarinet of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra in 1994, Richie Hawley left that position in 2011 to become the Professor of Clarinet at Rice University's Shepherd School of Music. Mr. Hawley appears regularly as a chamber musician and recitalist, including performances with his new group, the Rogue Ensemble. He made his debut at the Marlboro Music Festival in 1999 and toured with the legendary Musicians from Marlboro for the 50th anniversary performance at Carnegie Hall. During the summer season, he serves as the teaching and performing clarinet artist at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara.

PERCUSSION - RAY ULIBARRI

Eliminating the Electronics Headache
in Marching Band

Let's face it, electronics are becoming a larger part of the Marching Band idiom every year, and they are not going away. We have all witnessed and experienced the devastating effect that electronic failure can cause. In this article, I would like to share some tried and true tips to minimize problems that arise from adding electronics to your marching band.

The standard instruments that are currently shaping outdoor pageantry are synthesizers and samplers. These instruments can be both hardware based, i.e. keyboards, and software based, i.e. Garage Band. Both can be very effective and relatively stable in an outdoor environment and both need additional hardware to function properly. For software based synths, the midi or audio interface allows your software devices to communicate with controllers and output devices. Keyboard synthesizers, however, should be connected to the mixing board with a DI box to prevent signal loss and allow for longer cable connections.

Speakers - Always set your speakers up in front of your microphones. Sending your speaker signal back through the microphones causes feedback. Most groups I see that have feedback have their speakers too close or angled toward their microphones.

Cables - Owning and maintaining the proper chords and cables is a crucial and often overlooked component when adding electronics to your band. I always use the shortest XLR cables possible and wire each instrument separately to keep extra cable from getting tangled or pinched. Each marimba or vibe has a cable only long enough to connect to another instrument or to a snake. By attaching the XLR cable with zip ties to the frame of the Marimba or Vibe, I eliminate any extra cable from dragging or tangling during transport and setup. A good trick for long speaker cables or extension chords is to drill a small hole in the bottom of a 5 gallon bucket. Feed the end of the chord that connects to the speaker or power through the hole at the bottom. Use a small traffic cone inside the bucket to coil the excessive cable around the cone to keep it from tangling. Most importantly, educate the students and staff about the importance of minimizing wear and tear that can occur by stepping on or pulling cables. Last but not least, have a spare of everything. I keep an assortment of cables, power adapters, flash drives, and chord testers on hand for emergencies.

Ray Ulibarri is currently in his sixth year as Percussion Director at Ronald Reagan High School in San Antonio. Mr. Ulibarri is the former Percussion Arranger for the Crossmen Drum and Bugle Corps and the former caption Head of the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps. He is also the former front ensemble arranger and caption head of the Blue Knights World Percussion Ensemble. In addition, Mr. Ulibarri serves as an active adjudicator for WGI and clinician for Yamaha. Ray also endorses Evans Drumheads, Zildjian Cymbals, Innovative Percussion sticks and Mallets and Planet Waves Cables.

FRETTED – MATT SMITH

The What and How of Effective Practice for Guitar

Let's first look at what to practice. The 8 most important skills needed to be a great musician are, in no particular order: Ear training, scale and chord knowledge, composition, reading and writing chord charts and notation, repertoire, technique, music theory and improvisation. In this column let's explore the first three!

1) Ear training – the skill of understanding what you're hearing, and how to play it on your instrument. This skill is probably the most important skill you'll need as you develop your abilities on your instrument. Start very simply with easy songs you've heard many times. Slowly build in complexity as you develop. A big hint: sing everything you play. Making the connection between your speech center and your instrument will help you immeasurably in this endeavor.

2) Learn new scales and chord forms – these are the fundamental building blocks of your foundation as a player. Study chord forms by grouping them into categories. For example, learn as many positions as you can of the four triads, major, minor, diminished and augmented. Then move onto the 7th chord family: maj7, minor7, dominant7 and minor7b5, (sometimes called half diminished). Learn these forms with roots on the 6th, 5th and 4th strings, as these are the most common forms. There are a lot of scale forms to learn also: major and minor pentatonic scales, modes of the major scale, as well as modes of the melodic minor scale and altered scales. A well rounded musician has a grasp of the forms and usage of these scales and various positions of each. A good place to start is to root each scale again on the 6th, 5th and 4th strings.

3) Composition - any artist is represented by his or her body of work. Composing is a skill that musicians should place great importance in. It's what represents and immortalizes us. As a teacher, I've always stressed the importance of using newly learned skills as a springboard for writing. It gives focus to the practice routine, and makes learning new ideas fun. Everything you've learned or are learning should be brought into play when writing. Try and compose at least a song a week. Before you know it, you'll have enough songs to record an album!

Matt Smith is a New York-raised, Austin-based musician who has over 30 years of experience performing, producing, instructing, writing, and leading clinics. Matt is a lifelong musical performer. He's performed with, opened for, or recorded with B.B. King, Sheryl Crow, Trey Anastasio, Al DiMeola, Greg Allman, Los Lobos, Johnny Winter, Buddy Guy, Adrian Legg, Ed Gerhard, Portishead and many others. A born troubadour, Matt has performed at numerous international guitar festivals including the Bath International Guitar Festival and the Montreal Guitar Festival. His family history of bands includes The Matt Smith Band, The Monstas, Matt Smith's World, Chop Shop, and The Hot Nut Riveters. Matt is excited to be working on a new album of his own.

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