

# Band Directors: Difference-Makers At the Highest Level

Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser

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After presenting countless professional development programs for ALL educators, I'm firmly convinced there is no individual in the school setting who has the wherewithal to impact the lives of his/her students more than a music teacher. Band directors spend countless hours with their students and, by design, the band director becomes far more than "the person on the podium." Arguably, the band director could well be the most influential educator for the students who choose to be a part of the program.

While I may not see the day when music is a requisite subject of the academic/mandated curriculum, it is ever-apparent there will come a time when the undeniable evidence of THE VALUE OF MUSIC dictates this important reality. In the meantime we have to embrace the responsibility of sharing the good news with all the decision-makers who are part of every child's educational journey. Ultimately: MUSIC IS A PLACE FOR EVERYONE!

Eric Jensen, research author on brain-based learning, writes, "Music is part of our biological heritage and is hard-wired into our genes as a survival strategy." (Jensen, E. 2001, *Arts with the Brain in Mind*, p.15.)

Recruitment and retention are the key components to the positive growth of every band programs. As a dear friend said, "I can't teach them music if they aren't in my music classes."

Our educational system is heavily focused on assessment/testing. We measure the success and/or failure of the learning process through a series of evaluations. We must ask, "Can the 'quantitative results' be integrated into the students' lives to promote better living, learning, and being?" This very inquiry is all the more reason to bring MUSIC to every child, for we know the priceless value of the musical journey.

Music, by nature, triggers both the cognitive and affective mind. Not only does the young artist experience the input of facts and figures, but he/she simultaneously develops an appreciation for art. We don't make music to get to the end of the musical composition; **we make music to make music**. The reward is NOT the final evaluation (as

in a quantity-driven curriculum), but rather the intrinsic satisfaction generated as a result of MUSIC-MAKING. Music teaches an appreciation for QUALITY as well as an understanding of QUANTITY.

## WHY MUSIC? WHY BAND?

- Music lifts our spirits.
- Music helps us share our inner thoughts and feelings with a vocabulary beyond the common word.
- Music avails us to emotions we otherwise will suppress or ignore.
- Music is a universal language.
- Music makes life worth living by bringing joy to our soul.

These are all well and good and a resounding "AMEN!" is extended by this author, however it is often difficult to express the importance of music-making to someone who has never made music. The only way one can truly explain and understand music is *with* music; *it is a language unto itself*.

If we are to convince non-music makers about the importance of music-learning, we may have to put the recruitment spotlight on essential human wants and needs:

- Music has a direct impact on academic achievement.
- Music creates a forum for healthy human exchange.
- Music enhances perceptual motor skills.
- Music supports the qualities needed to survive and thrive in the modern day society.

Music is NOT a frill subject or a fringe activity, but music-study is a microcosm of society bringing the vital disciplines of high level achievement to the ensemble experience. In other words: music learning for the sake of music; and music learning for the sake of life. What better way to prepare for a successful future?

Do parents, administrators, community leaders, and teachers of other disciplines understand - even know - this information? Are we as music educators sharing this extraordinary news with our educational partners?

Perhaps instead of being overly cautious about emphasizing the extrinsic benefits of music education,

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we might consider SHOUTING this news to every caring-sharing parent, to every administrator who seeks a better school environment, and to every student who wants to enjoy a life of happiness and success. We want to reach ALL students so they can become the benefactors of the LANGUAGE OF MUSIC. We know we have the most convincing recruitment information available to bring EVERYONE to our rehearsal rooms: The “learned outcome” of music study is a certain success blueprint. What parent

would or could say NO once he/she understands the immeasurable value of music-learning and music-making?

### **MUSIC CREATES SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE.**

It is evident the *art of music* and *the music of art* can and should be experienced by every student. The time has come, the time is now.

STRIKE UP THE BAND!

*Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser began his teaching career at Northern Michigan University. He then moved to the University of Missouri, and from there to New Mexico State University. During that time, Tim developed highly acclaimed groups in both instrumental and vocal music. Following his tenure in the college band directing world, 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 teacher inservice workshops, student leadership seminars, and convention speaking engagements focusing on the area of effective leadership training. After thirty-plus years of clinic presentations, some three million students have experienced one of his popular sessions. Tim presently serves as Vice President of Education for Conn-Selmer, Inc. He is a nationally recognized voice 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 community. He is also co-author of popular band method, Essential Elements, as well as the Senior Educational Consultant for Hal Leonard, Inc. Tim is also the Senior Educational Advisor for Music for All, and NAMM (The National Association of Music Merchants). He 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 continues to teach as an adjunct faculty member at Ball State University, Indiana-Purdue/Ft. Wayne University, and Butler University. In addition, he is a member of the Midwest Clinic Board of Directors and the Western International Band Clinic/American Band College Board of Directors. He is presently the Chair of the National Association for Music Education Music Honor Society (Tri-M).*