

# **PREPARING THE SMALL SCHOOL BAND FOR CONTEST**

Texas Bandmasters Association, Monday, July 26, 2004

Clinician: Dr. Charles Trayler

## **I. Uniqueness of Small School Bands**

- A. Band personnel**
- B. Staff**
- C. Time**

## **II. Goals**

- A. Good players; enjoy playing**
- B. Contests: All Region; Solo/Ensemble; Sightreading**
- C. Ratings: good bands have good players; Honor Band personnel**
- D. Pride**

## **III. Concert contest**

- A. Music selection; most important, least studied**
  - 1. Most familiar**
  - 2. "Liked" tunes**
  - 3. Student determination**
  - 4. Challenge weak section**
  - 5. Long term planning: "Incidental Suite"**
- B. March--least known literature**
  - 1. Military: American, English, Italian**
  - 2. Spanish--paso doble**
  - 3. Concert**
- C. PML selections**
  - 1. Contrasting style**
  - 2. Multimovement**
  - 3. Grade level**
- D. Sources**
  - 1. Colleagues: Orland Butler; Pat Norton**
  - 2. ATSSB--OPS**
  - 3. North Texas "Teaching Through Performance" series**
  - 4. Publishers**
  - 5. Lynn Burton, Monterey High School, Lubbock**
  - 6. PML members**
  - 7. Become familiar with PML**
    - a. Sightread**
    - b. Exchange music/ideas--area schools directors**
    - c. Amarillo ISD In-Service**
  - 8. Attend concerts, contests**

#### IV. Contest literature preparation

##### A. Score study

1. Director **PLAYS** each part; determines “problem” areas--technique, range, inappropriate markings (dynamics), misprints
2. **FULL** score: make one if needed
3. Number measures--students, too
4. Determine melodic line, countermelody, harmonic progressions
5. Rewrite
  - a. Simplify Arnold/Paynter “Prelude, Siciliano, Rondo”
  - b. Blance/small sections, weak players

##### B. Vertical alignment--metronome; right note at wrong time is wrong note

##### C. Pitch

1. Match--individual, sections, ensemble, unisons/lines--**TUNER**
2. **SING**

##### D. Technical demands

1. Rehearse slowly
2. Change rhythms
3. Write for everyone--avoid working one section too long  
“Rome wasn’t built in a day.”

##### E. Style--don’t wait

1. Discuss style, composer, period characteristics
2. Play recorded examples of style; not necessarily of specific piece

##### F.. Balance/blend

1. McBeth pyramid; use of group numberings in rehearsal
2. Melody dominant
3. Harmonic progressions, resolutions
4. Dissonances

##### G. Attacks, release

1. Initiate sound by releasing; no percussive “attacks”--Bob Parsons
2. Release: “tapered” release; “lift” release

##### H. Phrases; phrase shaping--dynamics/tempo

1. melodic: according to contour/tessitura
2. harmonic: progressions, resolutions

##### I. Teacher model: “monkey hear, monkey do”

#### V. Use of staff

##### A. Sections during full rehearsal

##### B. First chair players

##### C. Other school faculty members; colleagues (Lashaway, Walters, Pankratz)

##### D. Sectionals

1. Specific purpose--not because sectional was “scheduled”
2. When: before, after, lunch, Monday nights

VI. Clinics

- A. Why? "Ears," concepts; attitude
- B. When? Not too late
- C. Who?

VII. Time--6 weeks

- A. 6 FULL weeks (30 rehearsal days); spring sports/break, academic meets
- B. No more than 70% or daily rehearsal; don't have to touch all 3 tunes every day

VIII. Conducting facility

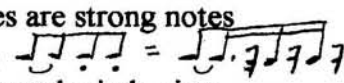
- A. NO count off
  - 1. Wastes time: "one, two, three, four" several times a rehearsal
  - 2. Attacks; attention; attitude
- B. Learn to communicate with the stick instead of the mouth
- C. Video rehearsals--conducting, personal "ticks"

IX. FUNDAMENTALS, FUNDAMENTALS, FUNDAMENTALS

X. Daily Rehearsal schedule

- A. Time--major constraint
  - 1. 5 minutes a day is 1/2 rehearsal per week, 2+ rehearsals/month
  - 2. Record--how much time is spent talking? announcements, etc.
- B. Warm-up INSTRUCTIONAL time; band "teacher"
- C. Director PLAYS; use metronome
- D. Scales: Dr. William Revelli
  - 1. C,F,bB,bE,bA,bD,bG--major/pure relative and parallel minor
  - 2. Critical note
  - 3. Chromatic beginning on different notes
  - 4. Tetrachords--2 octaves

bB,C,D,bE      F,G,A,bB  
bE,F,G,bA      C,D,E,F  
bA,bB,C,D      G,A,B,C

- 5. Half note, quarter, eighth
- 6. Tone--centered tone, centered pitch
- 7. Style
  - a. Legato: "touch" release
  - b. Separated--tapered, "lift" release
- 8. Articulation--Vandercook/Rubank Expression; Rubank Advanced Method
  - a. Long notes are strong notes
  - b. Examples 
- 9. Listening skills: match pitch; sing
- 10. Dynamics: full gamut WITH matched pitch

E. Rhythmic exercises

1. Verbal--verbal system; Eastman
2. Sources: 101 Rhythm Patterns; Claude T Smith; teacher-made; Fussell

F. Chorales: Director conducts

1. Sources: Bach Chorales; Claude T. Smith Symphonic Warmups for Band; Clifton Williams "Dedicatory Overture"
2. Rubato
3. Phrases: melodic, harmonic, rhythmic
4. Balance: melody, counter melody

G. Sightread

1. EVERY day
2. Published works--good way to learn PML, make future plans
3. "Make" music--phrase shaping, balance, rubato, dynamics, etc.
4. Develop listening skills
  - a. Melody; counter melody
  - b. Moving lines
  - c. Harmonic stress: accidentals, resolutions

H. Contest program preparation (IV-IX)