



The Art of Selecting a Successful Contest Program

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SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

The Art of Selecting a Successful Contest Program

Presented by Cindy Lansford, Susan Scarborough and Greg Countryman

The panel will discuss a variety of aspects that need to be taken into consideration when selecting music for contest, as well as provide specific procedures for choosing appropriate music for your ensemble. An overview of Grade 1 & 2 pieces, including strengths and challenges, will be presented and hopefully provide directors with a valuable resource to use during their music selection process.

Selecting music for contest or any performance is an ART and not a SCIENCE. Experience and knowledge make the process more accurate, but it always involves a certain amount of guesswork.

General Considerations

- Timeline
 - Contest date
 - Look at your school calendar – holidays, TAKS, other performances, etc.
- Rehearsal Schedule
 - Daily rehearsal schedule
 - Length of class period
 - Sectional rehearsal schedule
- Strengths & Weaknesses of your Ensemble
 - Grade level of students
 - Playing level of students
 - Returning members
 - Complete and balanced instrumentation
 - Student solo capabilities
 - Student technical development
 - Student tonal development
- Director's Experience and Knowledge

This is probably the most important aspect in the process of selecting music. It is important to assess the student's current skills, but your success in the music selection process will largely be determined by your experience at guessing/predicting what the individual students, sections and entire ensemble will be able to do in several months.

 - First year teachers or first-time head directors
 - Ask for guidance and help from more experienced, successful directors
 - Don't try to "set the world on fire". Select music that you know will be successful at first and then build upon that success year after year.
 - Experienced teachers are often more accurate at predicting what the students will be able to do because they have learned from their previous mistakes and successes.
 - Use all the resources available to you in order to familiarize yourself with the pieces on the PML
 - Go to the music store or conventions to study scores and listen to recordings
 - Use the Internet to find recordings.
 - JW Pepper (www.jwpepper.com) has many recording available on their website.
 - On www.uilforms.com you can find links directly to recordings on the publisher's website and this availability will continue to be expanded. The current direct link is <http://www.uilforms.com/pmlb.asp>.

- Go to contests and listen to other groups to familiarize yourself with the literature, and what works for bands within your category. Attending contests, as well as being familiar with the Concert & Sight Reading Rubrics (<http://www.uil.utexas.edu/music/ConcertSRRubrics.html>) will help you develop an awareness of the performance standards expected for superior, excellent, good, fair and poor ratings.
- Look up UIL Contest programs on the Region Websites (<http://uilforms.com/links.html> or at www.tmea.org) to see what groups in your classification have played. Look for any correlation between pieces performed and ratings received.
- Use the TMEA/MERN Mentoring Network – More information at www.tmea.org

Specific Considerations

- Evaluate each section in your ensemble; determine what they are capable of handling pertaining to the following skills.
 - Range
 - Endurance
 - Rhythmic Understanding
 - Articulation Demands
 - Technical Demands
 - Solo Potential
 - Musical Maturity
- Look at the scoring to determine possible challenging or problematic sections.
 - Scoring that features ensemble strengths
 - Scoring that exposes ensemble weaknesses
 - Evaluate rhythmic complexity (which could create precision problems)
 - Look for thinly scored sections - these can be a major obstacle for inexperienced players
 - Use caution when selecting music with lengthy slow sections for less experienced groups

Programming

- Characteristics of a piece
 - Slow/lyrical
 - Fast/energetic
 - Multi-movement
 - Age appropriate style
 - Musical variety
- March selection
 - Key consideration
 - Length/Endurance
 - Rhythmic Challenges
 - Age appropriate
- Performance Order
 - Program march first or last
 - Consider endurance, tuning, concentration skills/focus
 - First and last impressions

Guideline for Contest Music Selection

- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Marches

Grade 1**Legend: A – Non Varsity, B – Varsity with limited instrumentation, C – Non Varsity with limited instrumentation**

<u>Title</u>	<u>Composer</u>	<u>Arranger</u>	<u>Publisher</u>	<u>Not suggested for</u>	<u>Description</u>
A New World Adventure	Court		CUR		Very active percussion. Great style opportunities. Good block scoring.
All the Pretty Little Horses	McGinty		QUE	A/C	Very challenging and beautiful woodwind parts. Requires very mature woodwinds - almost a "woodwind feature." Limited percussion. Unison low brass/low woodwind parts.
Atlantis	McGinty		HLM		Neat tonalities. Challenging snare part. Exposed flute. Unison syncopation patterns.
Cahokia	Spears		GWP		Active percussion. Nice block scoring. Opportunities for good dynamic contrast.
Canadian Sketches	Curnow		CUR	A/C	Nice collection of folk songs. Soli and sometimes sophisticated scoring and pretty melodies. More advanced rhythms than most.
Cascadia Celebration	Hodges		ALF	C	Introduces 5/4 time. Great scoring. Flute/1st clarinet technique. All sections have the melody. All parts move.
Chippewa Lullaby	Anon.	McGinty	QUE		Good scoring - nice melody. Exposed woodwind choir. All have active parts.
Courtlandt County Festival	Owens		TRN		Great block scoring - perfect for younger groups or those with limited instrumentation. Just enough lyrical!
Crusade	Gassi		ALF		Style, neat tonality, active percussion, great scoring - this piece has it all.
Dance Celebration	Smith		BEL		No split parts. Exposed clarinet. All parts move. Could be done with limited instrumentation.
Danse Antiqua	Sharp		FJH	C	Most playable piece in Renaissance style on Grade 1. Great scoring. Good percussion parts.
Distant Horizons	Sweeney		HLM		Great (but tricky) opening. Neat tonalities and percussion effects. Good contrasting style opportunities.
Fanfare for a New Age	Story		BEL	C	Active percussion. Upper woodwind technique. Good scoring. Nice tonalities. Style opportunities.
Fantasy on An Irish Air	Saucedo		HLM	C	Beautiful setting of "Danny Boy". Exposed horn/sax melody. Nice "variations" with fresh scoring. Flute soli at end.
Fire Dance	Akey		HLM		All parts get to move. Nice percussion parts. Style and balance can be tricky.
Folk Trilogy	Bartok	McGinty	QUE		Great scoring. Great melodies. All parts are active. Nice transition and contrasting style opportunities.
Gathering in the Glen	Sweeney		HLM		No split parts. Several transitions. Scored really well. Challenging lyrical section.

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Japanese Festival	Hilliard		CFI	C	Nice percussion effects. Exposed flute/clarinet/horn. Neat syncopated fugue in fast section. Good low voice parts. Trumpet part is not as involved.
Jeanette, Isabella	Ryden		MBM		Beautiful WW choir at start. Tasty/numerous percussion parts. Great scoring throughout - many musical moments. All get the melody.
Korean Folk Rhapsody	Curnow		HLM		Opportunity to show off horn and saxes. Nice percussion parts. Great scoring.
Korean Hill Song	Williams		ALF		Alto sax and flute solos. Pretty colors/scoring. Low WW exposed. Good percussion. Low brass parts not active.
La Volta	Byrd	Fenske	DAE	C	Great scoring. Some technique in treble instruments. Nice percussion parts. Difficult style. Really needs low reeds to achieve proper textures.
Little Brazil Suite	Balent		GWP		Great for limited instrumentation. Limited percussion. Style opportunities.
Medieval Legend	Story		BEL	A/C	Challenging rhythms & style. Independent parts. Exposed flute/clarinet. Long. One of most challenging on Grade 1.
Ming Court	Pitter		KJO		Great scoring. Everyone gets the melody! Lots of percussion. Good style opportunities.
Modal Song and Dance	Del Borgo		WAM		Good contrasting style opportunities. Exposed woodwinds in opening section. Percussion parts are easier.
Nottingham Castle	Daehn		DAE		Good block scoring and movement. Low brass parts can be unison. Style and balance can be tricky. Works well for groups with limited instrumentation.
Pevensey Castle	Sheldon		BIM		Challenging snare part. Independent parts, but goes together easily.
Phantom Ship	Del Borgo		FJH		Good scoring. Nice tonalities. Active percussion. Just enough technique!
Pinnacle	Grice		GMM		Good scoring. Active percussion. Style opportunities.
Pioneer Songs	Daehn		DAE		Great collection of traditional songs. All get to move. Style opportunities.
Russian Folk Dance	Lucas		BEL		Independent parts. Style opportunities. All get to move. Very catchy tune.
Russian Sailor's Dance	Gilere	Williams	ALF		All get the melody. Many tempo changes. Varying style opportunities. Block syncopated rhythms. Fun for all.
Sakura	Story		BEL		No split parts. Exposed clarinet and flute. Active and tasteful percussion.
Scarborough Fair	Moss		HLM		No split parts. Everyone gets the melody! Good tonal low brass parts.

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Sea Song Trilogy	McGinty		QUE		Good scoring. Contrasting styles with just enough lyrical. Very playable transitions. Alto sax solo.
Serengeti Dreams	Smith		BEL		No split parts. Great scoring. Active and many percussion parts. Exposed flute and clarinet.
Skye Boat Song	Anon.	O'Reilly	ALF		Very playable lyrical piece. All get to move. Limited percussion.
Song of Hope	Swearingen		CLB		Melodies trade off between treble instruments. Low voices are not very active. Good scoring.
Spring Song	Nowak		B&H		Beautiful when played by mature players! Great scoring. Nice melodic and musical opportunities.
Stratosphere	Beckham		GMM		Active and challenging percussion parts. Exposed unison trumpet. Some independent movement.
The Band in The Square on the Fourth of July	La Plante		DAE		Very catchy melody. Can be used for a march. Active percussion. Good style opportunities.
Tunbridge Meadows	Williams		ALF		Exposed woodwind (especially clarinet). Nice contrasting style opportunities. All have active parts.
Two English Dances	Anon.	O'Reilly	ALF		No split parts. Limited percussion. Perfect for groups with strong treble instruments. Unison low brass/low woodwind.
Uskudar	Anon.	Smith/Story	BEL		No split parts. Clarinet/bass clarinet exposed as well as WW choir. Active percussion. Very catchy melody. Trumpet parts are less active.
Voodoo Dance	Del Borgo		BEL		Good block scoring with just enough independent parts. Great percussion parts. Introduction can be tricky.
Wildwind Overture	Kinyon		ALF		All parts move. Active snare part. Lyrical part has exposed sections. Good style contrast.
Wolseys Wilde	Byrd	Sweeney	QUE	C	Good block scoring. Active flute/clarinet/trumpet parts. Some rhythmically tricky melodic lines.

Grade 2**Legend: A – Non Varsity, B – Varsity with limited instrumentation, C – Non Varsity with limited instrumentation**

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A Childhood Hymn	Holsinger		W/J	A/C	Intense sustained passages. Rubato and wide range of dynamics. No snare part.
American Sailing Songs	Milford		LUD	A/C	Rhapsody of sailing songs. Many solo opportunities. Active percussion.
An Irish Interlude	Barker		ALF	A/C	Beautiful phrase lines. Andante tempo. Melody/accompaniment opportunities.
An Irish Lullaby	Bulla		CUR	A/B/C	Rhapsodic treatment that takes fragments of folk song and develops them into a symphonic work.
Ancient Dialogue	Burns		DAE	A/B/C	French folk song. Great Renaissance style opportunities. Lively percussion
Appalachian Morning	Sheldon		ALF	A/B/C	Several solo opportunities. Allows for reflection and lyrical expression. Beautifully written.
A Sailor's Odyssey	Borowitz		GMM		A set of variations based on "The Drunken Sailor". Every section enjoys some technical passages.
Barbarossa	Himes		KJO		Lush harmonies in legato section. Energized melodies and creative counterpoint.
Blue Ridge Saga	Swearingen		CLB	B/C	Varying styles, time signatures, and key signatures. Technical demands. Endurance issues.
Campbell River Sketches	Williams		ALF	C	Two contrasting themes. Ballad and 6/8 time. Syncopated rhythmic motif that reoccurs.
Canterbury Walk	Strommen		ALF	C	Opens and closes with a light march-like melody in WW. Contrasting middle section is lyrical and features brass. Light percussion
Capriol Suite	Warlock	Longfield	HLM	A/C	Three movements. Second movement is lyrical and stylistically challenging. Great scoring.
Comets in Winter Sky	McCarthy		CAL	A/B/C	Extensive use of ALL percussion. Contemporary harmonies. Extreme dynamic contrasts.
Catch The Wind	Hannickel		CUR		Rhythmic and melodic counterpoint. Interplay of syncopated rhythms juxtaposed w/non-syncopated rhythms.
Contempo	Story		BEL		Up beat piece. Introduction of hemiola. Active percussion.
Crest of Nobility	Sheldon		CLB	B/C	Overture w/ fanfare leads to contrasting lyrical section. Bold transition leads to rousing conclusion.
Cumberland Cross	Strommen		ALF	C	Beautiful, lyrical opening section. Technically difficult in all sections.
Dances from Terpsichore	Praetorius	Fenske	DAE	B/C	Two-movement Renaissance piece. Not technically difficult. Some thin scoring. Mature style requirements.

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Dolce and Dance	Fagan		ALF		Contrasting styles. Lyrical/syncopated rhythms. Nice harmonies. Melody passed around sections.
Down by the Salley Gardens	Anon. or Trad.	Sweeny	HLM	A/C	Very playable Irish folk ballad. Smooth lyrical, unhurried style.
Fa Una Canzona	Vecchi	Daehn	DAE	C	Harmonies and voice leading of Vecchi preserved. Not technically difficult, but requires maturity to play correctly.
Flight of Eagles	Del Borgo		HLM		A bold, sonorous overture. Strong intervals in the melodic writing, interesting percussion and good pacing for woodwinds.
Greenbrier Legacy	Oare		KJO	C	Multiple percussion parts. Stylistic contrasts as well as rhythmic excitement.
Greenwillow Portrait	Williams		ALF	A/C	Lyrical work in British folk song style. Melody/accompaniment balance.
Heaven's Light	Reineke		CLB	A/B/C	Masterful scoring and beautiful melodies. Solo opportunities. Extensive mallet percussion.
Highland Legend	Moss		HLM	C	Dramatic trumpet introduction. Contrasting style opportunities. Middle is light dance, followed by a chorale. Ends with 6/8 time. Delightful piece!
In a French Garden	Meyer		ALF		Rich palette of colors, full legato passages and contemporary harmonies. Impressionistic piece.
Joy	Ticheli		MBM		Upbeat concert band overture. Sudden and dramatic stylistic contrasts. Climactic moments.
Kenya Contrasts	Himes		CUR		African folk melodies with contrasting dynamics/styles. Light/understated versus aggressive/accented.
La Rejouissance	Handel	Williams	ALF	A/B/C	Originally written for Baroque Wind band. Joyful, skillful arrangement.
Legend of Knife River	Bulla		CUR		Majestic style and dynamic contrast. Mood changes from slow procession to lively gallop. Flute solo.
Linden Lea	Vaughn Williams	Stout	B&H	A/C	Lyrical style. Varied instrumental color and slight tempo change heightens emotional appeal.
Mosaic	Paulus		HLM	A/B/C	Integrates layers of sound w/ varying meters (including 7/8) that feature every section, especially low brass. Active percussion with lots of keyboard.
Moscow 1941	Balmages		FJH		Not technically difficult. Offers opportunities for exploring various tonal colors and harmonies.
Our Kingsland Spring	Hazo		HAL		Interesting use of color and harmony, alle breve section with emotional tutti. Introduces hemiola.

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Pavane	Ravel	Smith	BEL	A/C	Begins "a la music box". Dynamic shaping. Rubato. Mature stylistically.
Portsmouth Reflections	Oare		KJO	A/C	Maestoso/allegro 6/8 time. Simple melody runs through band. Several countermelodies. Great percussion.
Prairie Schooner	Preuninger		ALF	C	Contrasting style opportunities. Melody/accompaniment balance. Great teaching tool.
Quintology	Meyer		ALF	C	Based entirely on the number "5". Five-part rondo. Varying styles. Several solos.
River of Dreams	Lopez		BEL	A/C	Flute/trumpet solos joined by woodwinds and full ensemble. Energetic section builds to the end.
Song Of The Whalemens	Del Borgo		HLM	C	Contrasting styles. Time signature changes. Dotted rhythms. Flute/snare drum duet.
Sparks	Balmages		FJH	A/C	Tapestry of sound is woven in woodwind/percussion. Brass enters with fanfare. Lyrical middle. Exciting end.
The Battle Pavane	Susato	Margolis	MBM	C	Beautiful and stately dance. Quiet and spacious sonorities. Phrasing opportunities. Exciting percussion.
The Red Balloon	McGinty		QUE		Ethereal quality. Phrasing across bar lines. Lyrical. Very exposed flute.
The Steppes of Russia	Del Borgo		SHA	A/C	Slow opening is tricky to balance. Exposed flute/clarinet. Articulation accuracy critical. Challenging technique in all sections.
The Wexford Carol	McGinty		KJO	A/C	Complex woodwind lines that weave around each other. Very complex rhythms for Grade 2. Independent parts. Meter changes. Lots of "echo" scoring and WW choir. Bells and light percussion.
Three Renaissance Dances	Anon. or Trad.	Moss	HLM	C	Three movements of contrasting styles. Modal harmonic progressions of these pieces. Very involved percussion. Play movement. 2 plus one other.
Two British Folk songs	Anon. or Trad.	Del Borgo	HLM		Contrasting styles. Short lyrical section/syncopated section. Many style opportunities
Under An Irish Sky	Neeck		CLB	C	Two contrasting traditional Irish melodies. Slow legato hymn-like melody and lively 6/8 folk dance.
West Highland Sojourn	Sheldon		CLB	C	Three movements: fast, slow, fast. 1st - light 2/4 march, 2nd - slow 3/4 ballad, 3rd - 6/8 dance. Some solo opportunities. Play two movements.

Legend of Publishers

Alfred Music Co. - ALF
Belwin, Inc. - BEL
Birch Island Music Press - BIM
Boosey & Hawkes – B&H
C. Alan/McClaren Productions - CAL
C. L. Barnhouse Company - CLB
Carl Fischer, Inc. – CFI
Curnow Music - CUR
Daehn Publications - DAE
FJH Music Company - FJH
Grand Mesa Music Publishers - GMM
Great Works Publishing - GWP
Hal Leonard Music – HLM

Kendor Music - KEN
Ludwig Music Publishing - LUD
Manhattan Beach Music – MBM
Neil A. Kjos Music Co. - KJO
Queenwood Publications - QUE
RBC Publications - RBC
Shawnee Press - SHA
TRN Music Publisher - TRN
William Allen Music, Inc. - WAM
William Allen Music – WAM
Wingert/Jones – W/J
Wynn Music Publishers - WMP

Short List of Marches

Brainstormer March – Len Orcino
March Zuma – John O'Reilly
Captain Dane – William Owens
Big Circus – Bob Foster
Home of the Brave – David Shaffer
Lexington March – Edmondson
Kentucky Pride – Edmondson
Command March – Edmondson
Calgary March – Feldstein/O'Reilly

Normandy Beach – Edmondson
Monterrey March – LaPlante
Domingo Ortega – Ledesma & Oropesa/Wiley
Invercargill – Lithgow/Custer
The Tahoka Galop – William Owens
March to Castle Rock – Steven Hodges
Honor Roll March – Mark Williams
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang/O'Loughlin