



# **Tuning Your Band in Short Rehearsals**

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# **Tuning Your Band In Short Rehearsals**

**Presented by Charlotte Royall**

**Presented at TBA Convention, 2010**

**The sequencing and integration of tuning exercises can be geared to the shorter rehearsal time. Setting up listening and matching drills for individuals, small sectionals, and full rehearsals when time and attention spans are abbreviated is vital.**

**The greatest destruction to a performance can many times be contributed to the ensemble pitch and can have a confidence-killing effect on the individual performer.**

**Working daily on three levels of awareness can quickly improve the individual and overall intonation of the ensemble. These must be introduced at the beginning of the school year and not in the spring. In the fall, extended amounts of time can be spent on tuning drills, but as the year progresses, no more than ¼ of the rehearsal should be spent on the exercises. It is obvious that more time can be spent on these drills with more mature ensembles, but should definitely not be limited to the top performing ensemble.**

**Disclaimer: There is no “Quick-Fix”**

### **Level I The Individual Performer**

**-Establishing an energized, focused, characteristic tone is vital. You can't consistently tune a “bad” tone**

**-Singing, vocalizing, voicing (ah, eeh), mouthpiece drill**

**-Performers (especially woodwinds) must be introduced to extreme ranges early. They should learn about embouchure, aperture changes and reed strengths.**

**-Although tuning a Concert pitch in class is important, knowing the best tuning note for each individual instrument is also important. Some suggestions:  
Flute-F, A, Bb Oboe-F, A Bassoon-F,G,A,Bb Bb Clarinet-G,A,B,C-F,E,D,C  
Sax-G,F# Trumpet-G,A,B,C F Horn-C,E,G,C (tune both sides of double) Low  
Brass-F,Bb**

**Bb Clarinets should learn throat tone fingerings and trumpets should learn to use tuning slides from the very beginning**

**Flutes should never roll in or out to adjust pitch. Change air direction with embouchure, also do not initially tune with vibrato**

**-Tendency Charts-should be set up for every instrument, individual charts are also important. Use a fingering chart or create your own**

**-Find a publication that includes tendency and alternate fingering charts**

**I also encourage individual tuners on the stand or instrument during rehearsal. (The ear should be used first.)**

### **Level II-Like-Instruments**

**Tuning within the section-like instruments-this is when the most time can be spent with the greatest results.**

**-What is “in tune”? Matching frequency, energy and air speed. Explain the physics of the instrument, and how and why adjustments are made.**

**-Learn what it sounds like and feels like to play out of tune, demonstrate.**

**-Start section rehearsals with pitch matching exercises, individual and over lapping, don't make quick fixes, analyze, evaluate.**

**-Tune extreme ranges in sectionals even when not found in ensemble repertoire.**

**-Perform and improve interval, chords, listen for overtones (Remington, flow, long tone studies, duets, etc.)**

**-Involve all performers in the process**

**-Evaluate pitch in dynamic contrasts and <, >'s**

### **Level III**

**Tuning within the ensemble-Use the following exercises throughout the week. Variety keeps the ensemble interested and involved.**

**-Do not tune every member, every day.**

**-F around the room-establish a basic, comfortable concert pitch to perform everyday. This will serve as a reference for the ensemble.**

**Match energy, air speed and volume from one section to the next. Starting with low and moving to high is a good sequence, but doesn't have to be the same everyday**

**-Long tones-don't allow pitch to change. Breathe before discomfort, re-enter without bumping or changing the air speed-Descending F, Scales, etc**

**-Interval exercises-performers will begin to hear and produce more accurate intervals if they are performed and analyzed in daily drill (Remington)**

**-Chords-learn the actual pitch tendencies in a major chord (5<sup>th</sup> is #, 3<sup>rd</sup> is b) Build-tonic, 5<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>. Concert F chord is good and will establish a great reference**

**-Always tune from back to front-it is also important for WW's to know pitch tendencies of brass when in unison or octaves.**

**-Constant evaluation is important, no matter what or when you are rehearsing**

## **Group Matching Drill-(Can be used for Quick tuning)**

**-Start with an electronically produced pitch, have members hum or sing using LA**  
**Add Group One-(Small group within the ensemble, usually first chairs, (WW's)**  
**Add Group Two-Add the remaining WW's**  
**Add Group Three-Tubas**  
**Add group Four-Brass on MP or full instrument**

## **Integrating Daily Tuning Drills into a short rehearsal when preparing contest or concert music-**

**Perform Daily drills in the key of the music you are preparing**

**Chorale preparation and variations**

**Notes:**