



# **Beginning Band Basics with the Breathing Gym and Scale & Rhythm Chunks**

**CLINICIANS:**

**Richard Canter and Patrick Sheridan**

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**JULY 21 – 24, 2013  
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**BEGINNING BAND BASICS  
WITH  
THE BREATHING GYM  
AND  
SCALE & RHYTHM CHUNKS**

*Richard Canter  
Patrick Sheridan  
Josh Van Gorder*

## ***SCALE & RHYTHM CHUNKS*** by Richard Canter

### **FOREWARD BY TIM LAUTZENHEISER:**

"It's exactly what is wanted and needed!" That was the first thought I had after reviewing Richard Canter's wonderful contribution to the music education community, *Scale and Rhythm Chunks*. Richard's strategically sound and sequentially driven musical pathway is certain to appeal to ALL those who are seeking to become more proficient on their chosen instrument. Moreover, the outstanding "pacing" is perfect for the young artist who is eager to feel a sense of accomplishment while developing the needed skills to access the treasury of great literature that requires a solid command of sight reading.

There is clearly no shortcut to musical excellence, and all too often, our beginners (as well as others) simply give up and/or give in to the rigorous demands of disciplined practice and steadfast persistence needed to achieve the given musical goals. The following pages offer a brilliant and achievable blueprint that can be individually adapted to the progress-rate of each and every student.

The book is designed so it can be used as a workable supplement to any beginning method. It is also ideal to be integrated into any ensemble setting and/or as a support to individual practice. *Scale and Rhythm Chunks* is graphically friendly and it keeps the learner positively involved as each exercise is designed to gently stretch the performer offering a sense of fulfillment and personal accomplishment.

Everyone has musical talent, and Richard Canter has put together a remarkable archetype that removes all the mystery associated with the task of becoming a proficient sight reader.

This beautifully created book is: AN IDEA WHOSE TIME HAS COME.

## ***The Breathing Gym*** by Patrick Sheridan & Sam Pilafian

This world-renown program will guide any wind or vocal performer through exercises designed to enhance performance skills through physical conditioning that focuses on breathing. Stretches, flow studies, breathing patterns, and strength and flexibility exercises are all presented in a fun, clear format that would work equally well in a private lesson situation or group rehearsal setting. Attention to proper breathing, the source of sound for all wind instruments and singing, is simply too important to overlook. You'll find incorporating the techniques given in this book and video will not only focus your ensemble, but add an element of fun as well!

Sheridan and Pilafian have done a service to the music education community in constructing this program. Using their comprehensive method, your ensemble will greatly improve their endurance, tone quality, and basic sound production.

# BEGINNING BAND BASICS WITH ***The Breathing Gym*** AND ***SCALE & RHYTHM CHUNKS***

## BREATHING BASICS WITH ***The Breathing Gym***

- 1) Breathing = Movement
- 2) Balance is required for movement
- 3) 5 Minute Daily Workout for Beginning Band Students
- 4) Stretch, Workout & Flow

## WITHOUT CONSISTENT INDIVIDUAL ASSESSMENT

*Students can develop bad habits that WILL stick with them*

- 1) Lack of Breath Support
- 2) Improper embouchure
- 3) Lack of ability in reading notes and rhythms
- 4) Poor tone and technique
- 5) Bad habits will lead to a feeling of failure, causing students to want to quit.

*Gifted and talented students in need of a challenge may*

- 1) Become bored or frustrated
- 2) Lose motivation
- 3) Feel band is a waste of their time and want to quit

## TEACHING STUDENTS HOW TO PRACTICE

*Director approach to practicing*

- 1) Break music down into smaller sections, or “Chunks”
- 2) Focus on the harder measures first
- 3) Don’t just run through the music
- 4) Be patient

*Student approach to practicing*

- 1) Run through a whole song over and over, making the same mistakes each time
- 2) Play until you make a mistake and then give up

## MOTIVATION OF BEGINNING BAND STUDENTS

*Students are Motivated by*

- 1) Working on something THEY like to play
- 2) Formal recognition for their accomplishments
- 3) Friendly competition between classmates (some students)
- 4) Physical rewards (gifts, incentives, etc.)
- 5) Having ownership in their learning
- 6) Instant gratification

*Quick Success is the Key to Motivation*

- 1) Outsmart the students! Find out what makes them tick!
- 2) Show students you care
- 3) Call home when they accomplish something big- call while they are with you
- 4) Tell students you are proud of them... often
- 5) Find a way to help students feel success quickly so they know they CAN be successful and so they want more success.
- 6) The simplest way is usually the best way (K.I.S.S. method)

## THE IMPORTANCE OF ASSESSMENT IN OUR SCHOOLS & IN BAND

- 1) Administrative Perspective
  - Upcoming expectations in assessment
- 2) The Ensemble Perspective
  - Everyone benefits from individualized assessment!!!

## ***SCALE & RHYTHM CHUNKS***

### TEACHING TOOL FOR BEGINNING BAND

- 4 Levels of Rhythm-Based Technical Exercises
- 4 Levels of Scale-Based Technical Exercises for each instrument
  - "Chunk Challenges" (practical application)  
(familiar songs that apply concepts learned in exercises)

### 4 Levels of Snare Drum Exercises

*Each "Chunk" teaches 1 or 2 new concepts*

- 1) *makes learning each exercise easy*
- 2) *makes it easy for students to achieve success quickly*
- 3) *motivates students to move on to next exercise and experience more success*

## BEFORE USING THE BOOKS

- 1) First teach students about differentiated instruction
- 2) “Getting to the desk” demonstration
- 3) The Golden Rule of Band

## HOW TO USE THE BOOKS

- 1) Chunks must be performed in order
  - ★ each Chunk teaches a new concept, building on previously learned concepts
- 2) Rhythm Chunks are performed by clapping & counting
- 3) Scale Chunks & Snare Chunks are performed on instruments

### *Wall Charts*

- 1) Use a different color sticker for each month
- 2) Students are extremely motivated to see their progress on the wall of your band room
- 3) Gives directors documentation of student progress without having to write anything in a grade book

## ***RHYTHM CHUNKS***

*Layout: Rhythm Guide & Rhythm Chunk Exercises*

Different ways to use Rhythm Chunks:

- 1) Counting and Clapping
- 2) The “Chunk Clap”
- 3) Breathing Exercises to use with Rhythm Chunks
- 3) Playing repeated note or scale pattern

### ***QUICK ASSESSMENT!!!***

- Each student can be assessed in about \_\_\_\_ seconds!

### ***BRONZE LEVEL RHYTHM CHUNKS***

- 1) Teaches basic rhythm concepts:

### ***SILVER LEVEL RHYTHM CHUNKS***

- 1) Introduces syncopated eighth note rhythms and sixteenth note rhythms
- 2) “Four finger technique” for teaching sixteenth note subdivisionsIntroduction of sixteenth note subdivisions in 6/8, sextuplets and 32nd notes.

## GOLD LEVEL RHYTHM CHUNKS

- 1) More complex meters: cut time, 6/8, 9/8, 5/4
- 2) Quarter note and eighth note triplet subdivisions

## PLATINUM LEVEL RHYTHM CHUNKS

- 1) Very complex meters, including 3/2, 7/8, 5/8 and changing meters

## **SCALE CHUNKS & SCALE SKILLS**

*Layout: Scale Guide & Scale Chunk Exercises*

- 1) Played on instruments
- 2) Must be performed in order
- 3) Director may have students play Chunks forward or backward to ensure students are reading notes and not just learning aurally.
- 4) Designed specifically for each instrument- not all Chunks are for ensemble rehearsal
- 5) Teach students to use a fingering chart to “be an investigator”
- 6) New notes are identified by a box around that note
- 7) Teach students to use left side of book to identify new concepts
  - ★ includes dynamics, articulation

## SCALE CHUNKS ASSESSMENT

- 1) Mastery of the Chunk is the Goal
- 2) It is the director’s responsibility to assess individual tone, articulation, etc.

## INCORPORATING BREATHING INTO SCALE CHUNKS

- 1) Beginning players struggle with phrases/connecting notes

## TEACHING DYNAMICS & ARTICULATION

- 1) Dynamics and articulation incorporated into Scale Chunks- taught in Scale Guide on left page
- 2) Dynamics use scale from 1-10:

$p = \underline{\quad}/10$      $mp = \underline{\quad}/10$      $mf = \underline{\quad}/10$      $f = \underline{\quad}/10$      $ff = \underline{\quad}/10$

- 3) Monitoring with wind (self check)
- 4) Articulation taught using easy to understand language

## *PERCUSSION DYNAMICS*

- 1) Dynamics taught using inches:

$p = \_ \text{ inches}$     $mp = \_ \text{ inches}$     $mf = \_ \text{ inches}$     $f = \_ \text{ inches}$     $ff = \_ \text{ inches}$

## *BREATHING/ARTICULATION*

- 1) Breathing Exercises incorporating ARTICULATION

## *CHUNK CHALLENGES*

- 1) Familiar songs every four or five Chunks throughout the book that apply concepts learned in exercises

## *BRONZE LEVEL SCALE CHUNKS*

- 1) Begins with first five notes learned on instrument
- 2) Teaches students to play notes typically learned in first year of instruction using small scale patterns
- 3) Clarinets learn how to play over the break

## *SILVER LEVEL SCALE CHUNKS*

- 1) Teaches simple scales, expands range
- 2) Includes teaching of chromatic fingerings

## *GOLD LEVEL SCALE SKILLS*

- 1) Teaches more major scales and arpeggios
- 2) More complicated key signatures

## *PLATINUM LEVEL SCALE SKILLS*

- 1) Very complicated key signatures
- 2) Ends with scales in every key signature all in one Scale Skill



# ***SNARE CHUNKS & SNARE SKILLS***

*Layout: Snare Guide & Exercises*

- 1) Percussion substitute for Rhythm Chunks
- 2) Rhythm Chunks are also included in the back of all percussion books for ensemble use
- 3) Rhythmic concepts learned in each level of Rhythm Chunks are incorporated into Snare Chunks
- 4) Teaches rudiments throughout the book

## ***BRONZE LEVEL SNARE CHUNKS***

- 1) Same rhythms taught in Bronze Rhythm Chunks
- 2) Flams, multiple bounce strokes, basic sixteenth note rhythms

## ***SILVER LEVEL SNARE CHUNKS***

- 1) Sixteenth note subdivisions
- 2) Paradiddle, Flam Paradiddle, Diddle, 5 and 9 stroke rolls

## ***GOLD LEVEL SNARE SKILLS***

- 1) More complicated time signatures
- 2) 6 and 7 stroke rolls, drag, rolls in 6/8 and 9/8, double paradiddle

## ***PLATINUM LEVEL SNARE SKILLS***

- 1) Very complicated rudiments: triple paradiddle, paradiddle-diddle, lesson 25, single and double ratamacues, swiss army triplet

## ***CHUNKS IN ACTION***

- 1) Individual Assessment in a full ensemble setting- how does it work?

## ***GET CREATIVE***

*Set Daily/Weekly Goals!*

- 1) Do at least 5 minutes of breathing each day
- 2) Assess your students at least 15 minutes a week
- 3) Put students in groups by ability or partner students to help one another
  - Students with strengths help those struggling in those areas
  - Working together will help reinforce the **GOLDEN RULE OF BAND**
  - Will build a sense of teamwork and a better bond between your band members
  - Chunk stations or centers
  - iPad/iPod Assessment of Chunks

## BENEFITS OF PROPER BREATHING

- 1) Better fundamental tone
- 2) Better tuning, blend and balance
- 3) Better phrasing
- 4) Overall better band experience

## BENEFITS OF DIFFERENTIATED INSTRUCTION

- 5) Quicker learning of music by students
- 6) Better retention of knowledge by students
- 7) Better retention of students in your program
- 8) Students learn how to work together to help each other
- 9) Students learn notes and rhythms allowing them to achieve far beyond their normal age level
- 10) Better habits are formed from consistent assessment
- 11) Director is aware of all students' strengths and weaknesses

FOR MORE INFORMATION...

VISIT **FOCUS ON MUSIC** AT [www.focus-on-music.com](http://www.focus-on-music.com)

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