



## **Developing Skills for Your Marching Band**

### **CLINICIANS:**

**Jarrett Lipman, Aaron Barnes, Bernard Rosenberg,  
Alan Sharps**

### **DEMONSTRATION GROUP:**

**Claudia Taylor Johnson High School Marching Band**

### **SPONSOR:**

**Marching Show Concepts**

# **Texas Bandmasters Association 2014 Convention/Clinic**



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**JULY 27-30, 2014  
HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

*Claudia Taylor Johnson High School Band*  
Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic  
July 28th, 2014

Band Directors:	Jarrett Lipman, Alan Sharps, Jordan Stern
Percussion Director:	Kris Hartman
Colorguard Director:	Darryl Pemberton
Lead Visual Instructor:	Aaron Barnes
Middle School Head Director:	Bernard Rosenberg
Visual/Music Assistants:	Conrad Isenhour, Spencer Rau
Primary Clinicians:	Tom Bennett, Gino Cipriani, Joe Dixon, Jodie Rhodes

**A Culture of Excellence in Everything We Do - Questions we ask yearly**

1. *What do we want to accomplish this year as a team?*
2. *How does the band hall look?*
3. *How does the front sideline look?*
4. *How do we carry our instruments?*
5. *How do we get off the buses?*
6. *How do we line-up our instruments, shakos, etc.*
7. *How do we behave in uniform?*
8. *What is our personality like in the stands?*
9. *How do we behave on the field during rehearsal?*
10. *How do we behave inside during rehearsal?*

**Focus & Involvement - Developing a Culture of Interactive Rehearsal**

1. *Engaged, Active, Responsive*
2. *Listen with your eyes*
3. *Mental calmness, visual silence (be still)*
4. *Repeat instructions aloud, reminders to your neighbor*

**Before each and every rep - Performers will have a game-plan:**

1. *When am I going to breathe?*
2. *How do I want to sound?*
3. *How loud do I want to play?*

**Three-levels of Listening -**

1. Individual goals - *How well do I play my individual part in tone, in tune, and in time?*
2. Section goals - *How well am I BALANCING to each player in my section, and matching their style, energy, articulations? How should my section sound? How am I working to maintain that sound and texture?*
3. Ensemble goals - *How well can I hear all of the instruments in the band? How do I want the band to sound? How do I think it should sound and what am I doing to achieve that sound? \*\*A challenge outside*

*"You, your neighbor, and the neighborhood."*

**PRIMARY TOOLS - How do we use them?**

1. *Breathing*
2. *Posture*

## **“Concert Band Sound” vs. “Marching Band Sound”**

- Sound and Balance Concepts Similar; approach to the volume of air is different
- Combining approaches and philosophies; bringing together concepts from our mentors Tom Bennett, Gino Cipriani, and Joe Dixon
- We are in an outdoor arena, working to generate effect and a sound that will “involve” and “excite” your audiences
- Effect is subjective; floating the lazy river at the water park can be beautiful and fulfilling; so can riding the “master blaster”; depends on your preference; practice whichever you prefer
- Learning how to control Brass instruments at larger volumes
  - Learning to “press” the instrument without distorting
- Woodwinds - how do we handle this?
  - During features/exposures, all instruments play as strong as possible, within balance as a section; dynamics move from a F - FF
  - During tutti moments with brass, concert band sounds w/dynamics

## **“Tone Triangle” (Based on the “Brass Triangle”)**

- 1. Air**
- 2. Embouchure/Aperture**
- 3. Tongue (*Placement in the mouth/Definition of note*)**

## **Air Exercises**

**Defining “efficiently” - “Only the muscles you absolutely need to move the air...”**

- \*\*Get the air in and out of the body as quickly and efficiently as possible
- \*\*Don’t change the way you play the horn based on the volume of air

-Practice berthing to play, not just breathing to live. A different art form. Learning how this feels so we can apply it to our music.

-Practicing breathing so that band members remember to do it in context of music. Having a breathing plan that is clear and marked in their music.

1. Through the nose, through the mouth; “OH” syllable on intake, “HO” syllable on exhale
2. Air flow exercises/calm air blowing through the instrument
  - Brass Players mouthpiece inside the mouth/behind the teeth; valves down/trombones in 7th
  - Woodwinds Flow air through the horn
3. Volume of air exercises - (Work sustained air for 4-8-12 counts at FF)
  - Brass blowing into the horn, mouthpiece on the face
  - Woodwinds blowing air into the horn
4. The art of the “recovery breathe;” maintaining the consistent sound; 8th & 16th note breaths
5. Articulation, mouthpiece on the chin, all blow air through a “Tu” syllable

### **Singing to Be Musical; Singing to Center Pitch**

*See Supplement on Singing/Solfeggio by Alan Sharps*

### **Lip Vibrations for Brass (Using BERP preferably)**

- Base lip off humming or singing; use a constant pitch or drone to begin with
- Important to make sure lip vibrations sound correct and vibrate correct pitch
- Train kids what the correct “sound” to go for is
- Important to monitor these closely as vibrating the incorrect pitch will fight the instrument
  - Ensure that band members are always vibrating the correct pitches
- Learning to create an efficient, full sound on the mouthpiece that is musical
- Vibrate an exercise, then transfer it to playing - always make the connection

### **Long Tones - Do Daily**

- Normal Johnson Routine and at “*The Cadets*” will include 3-4 long tone exercises at tempos 68-96

### ***“Remington” Interval Exercises ... Remington Down, Remington Ascending, Rotating Remington***

- Learn to play intervals in tune, and not allow sound to shift
- Ask kids to be aware of what intervals they are playing
- Can do from different notes; Normal Concert F, Low Bb, High Bb

### ***Goals...***

- Long tones should be full, resonant, and steady
- Default dynamic at Johnson is MF (MF different strength depending upon indoor or outdoor)
- Long tones bring together all elements of the brass triangle, and go slow enough to allow band members to assess how they feel and how they sound
- Focus on the front/start of the note, the body of the sound, and the quality/approach to the release
- Work follow through and consistent air
- Above all work to sustain and establish both the sound of the individual and the sound of the section
- Can work ensemble during this time; but more focus on awareness of self and neighbors
- Brass players remain flexible in the center of embouchure

### **Range Extension - Do Daily**

- Normal Johnson routine will include F Descending and F Ascending Exercises; See *Joe Dixon's* brass website for procedures, and structures of these exercises
- 2 note drill, half notes connected, quarter notes; 8th notes
- Subdivisions of the exercises welcome
- Brass will work chromatics in the lower register of the horn
- Sustained long tones in the upper register
- With range, cautious not to move too quickly, but need to play on notes that don't sound “good” and work to gain control, especially of all the notes you will play in your marching show or concert music

### **Lip Flexibility/Technique**

- Basic Lip Flexibilities (1-5-1) (5-1-5) are important
- Normal Johnson routine includes exercises that combine flexibility and technique
- “*The Cadets*” *Drum Corps* utilizes many exercises developed each year by Brass Caption Head, *Gino Cipriani*, to combine multiple elements that will build a stronger player and be efficient with time during fundamentals; Work to develop something in your program that addresses the needs of your ensemble
- Activates all three parts of the tone triangle; air/embouchure & aperture/tongue placement
- Woodwinds learn to control tone and volume of notes in different registers

***-Pitch Bends*** for the brass are a great way to build control; work to bend single down half a step, then up half a step to gain greater control of the center of the note

## **Pitch and Time Management – Two Long-Term Elusive Goals - Alan Sharps**

*Well trained and musically sensitive musicians heal themselves. Why and How we started.....*

**Singing** – The gateway to listening with more detail (Why do we sing? We sing to be musical! - Tom Bennett)

- ✓ Incorporates and reinforces proper breathing
- ✓ Voice is hardwired to the ears and brain for more direct transfer
- ✓ Identifies air needed for proper tone and projection
- ✓ Simplifies the listening process by isolating the instrument
- ✓ Encourages students to focus their minds and ears at a high level
- ✓ If you can't hear the pitch, you can't tune your instrument
- ✓ Easier for the instructor to evaluate individual participation visually
- ✓ Establishes the tonic pitch and its relationship to other scale degrees (F=Do, up P5 down P4)
- ✓ Awareness of diatonic and chromatic intervals
- ✓ Opportunity to incorporate Just Intonation
- ✓ Learning to control active tones and tension intervals
- ✓ Getting the major mode set in their ears/minds
- ✓ Making them sensitive to pitch discrepancies
- ✓ Encourages balance of parts within the ensemble
- ✓ Works balancing volume and intensity of tones by range
- ✓ Encourages resonance
- ✓ Opportunity to focus on and make students sensitive to vowel sounds
- ✓ Opportunity to focus on and make students sensitive to consonants for articulation
- ✓ Gives students a gateway into hearing themselves really in tune

## **Pitch and Time Management – Two Long-Term Elusive Goals - Alan Sharps**

**Rhythm/Time Division** – If you don't know where to place each note it's impossible to express a musical thought in a meaningful way.

- ✓ Students will avoid participating due to coordination/embarrassment factors (encourage them)
- ✓ Teachers will avoid instructing due to coordination/embarrassment (practice first/ embrace risk)
- ✓ Start slowly and begin to go faster only after complete mastery of the material (60-)
- ✓ Pulse needs to be addressed separately from rhythm subdivisions (Demonstrate early/late)
- ✓ We need to be physically involved in producing pulse and subdivisions (Eurythmics)
- ✓ Students should tap shoulders, mark time, conduct in various combinations
- ✓ Eventually act out pulse and rhythm at the same time
- ✓ Counting the rhythms is mandatory for students. Don't allow silent counters.
- ✓ Method 1: Count the grid (ex: 1 2 3 4 or 1 + 2 + 3 + 4 + or 1e+a 2e+a 3e+a 4e+a)
- ✓ Method 2: Count the written rhythms AND all beats (ex: 1 2 (3) + (4) +)
- ✓ Method 3: Count only the written rhythms and sustain note values (1----- + 3----- +)
- ✓ Use Bop rehearsal technique to refine note starts and rhythms
- ✓ Be VERY picky about what you hear and DON'T GIVE UP! Rome was not built in a day.

# **2014 CTJ Visual Clinic**

## **Fundamentals Philosophy**

- Use Checkpoints – We build our technique around the pulse, creating a picture of what we want them to look like on the downbeat and upbeat as they move.
- Keep it Simple – Marching is unintuitive, so we simplify our explanations so that the technique is easy to teach and to understand.
- Go Slow – Students don't enter the program with a marching or movement background. We start every year from the beginning and build skills slowly and correctly.
- Repeat Often – Repetition is the most effective way to teach a new physical skill, so we try to stay out of the way and give them many opportunities to practice and explore the technique.

## **Exercises:**

During band camp, we build a collection of exercises to isolate specific issues. Once the school year begins we use these to refine our technique.

## **Body Awareness**

Exercise we use to teach the correct mental and physical approach to our ideal body alignment and carriage. We begin by breaking the sections of the body apart. After we rebuild our posture, we open our bodies up to try and create as much individual presence as possible.

Focus:

- Having correct alignment and taking up space
- Understanding and separating each section of the body
- Creating a uniform look through the ensemble

## **Dance Warm-up**

Integrating dance skills into the vocabulary of wind players has become much more important. Our choreographer, Curtis Uhlemann, gave us this exercise so that we could expand our movement vocabulary.

Focus:

- Increasing movement quality, fulfilling each motion
- Connecting the timing of the visual phrase to the music
- Maintaining balance and body control

## **Box Drill**

This is the staple of our visual program. Once the school year starts this becomes our primary exercise during our limited fundamentals time. This fairly standard box exercise incorporates our major forward and backward slide techniques, along with direction changes.

Our goal is to develop the quality of this exercise over the season so that the students all have the same understanding of what our visual expectations are for individual technique and ensemble awareness. We will create variations of this exercise by changing count structure, tempos, form responsibilities, or by isolating key phrases in order to focus on specific needs throughout the course of the season

Focus:

- Displaying good foot timing and technique
- Maintaining posture and movement quality on the move
- Maintaining cover downs and form awareness
- Exhibiting control through direction changes



# Technique Breakdown

(All exercises performed at same tempo)

♩ = 60-90

## Original Melody

A single musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody consists of four measures of eighth-note patterns: the first measure has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note; the second and third measures have eighth-note pairs; the fourth measure has a dotted quarter note followed by an eighth note. The piece ends with a whole note on the second line of the staff.

## A

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef. The exercise consists of two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note, followed by two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note. The piece ends with a whole note on the second line of the staff.

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef. The exercise continues with two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note, followed by two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note. The piece ends with a whole note on the second line of the staff.

## B

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef. The exercise consists of two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note, followed by two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note. The piece ends with a whole note on the second line of the staff.

A musical staff in 4/4 time, starting with a treble clef. The exercise continues with two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note, followed by two measures of eighth-note pairs with a grace note. The piece ends with a whole note on the second line of the staff.

Flute & Oboe

# Technique Breakdown

(All exercises performed at same tempo)

$\text{♩} = 60-90$   
Original Melody

Musical notation for the original melody in 4/4 time. The key signature has two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The melody consists of four measures of eighth and sixteenth notes, followed by a final measure with a whole note.

A

Musical notation for exercise A, focusing on eighth notes with slurs. It consists of two measures of eighth notes with slurs, followed by two measures of eighth notes with slurs.

Musical notation for exercise A, focusing on sixteenth notes with slurs. It consists of two measures of sixteenth notes with slurs, followed by two measures of sixteenth notes with slurs.

B

Musical notation for exercise B, focusing on eighth notes with slurs. It consists of two measures of eighth notes with slurs, followed by two measures of eighth notes with slurs.

Musical notation for exercise B, focusing on sixteenth notes with slurs. It consists of two measures of sixteenth notes with slurs, followed by two measures of sixteenth notes with slurs.