



## **Custom Tailored for Success**

**CLINICIANS:**

**Jeremy Spicer and Bob Chreste**

# **Texas Bandmasters Association 2016 Convention/Clinic**

**JULY 21-24, 2016**

**HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS**

# Custom Tailored for Success

presented by Jeremy Spicer and Bob Chreste  
2016 Texas Bandmasters Association Convention

Customization, both musically and visually, will ensure student achievement and success are the priorities when developing a curriculum and show for the marching season. A basic knowledge of music and drill writing software is critically important to the customization process.

## Music Fundamentals

- Basic Breathing exercises
  - Over the mouthpiece
  - Breathing Tubes
- Basic Long Tones
  - #1 and #2
  - mf, f, ff, fff
- Basic Flexibility
- Technique Exercises
  - based on show excerpts
- Style Exercises
  - based on show excerpts
- "It does not count if it is not on the move..."
- 2-step step out
- *Exaggerated* mark time technique
- Should be performed at marching show tempos

## Visual Fundamentals

- Shape of Leg Exercises
- Forward/Backward March "8's and 8's"
- Plus-Sign Drill
  - Forward 8, Prep, Backward 8, Halt
  - Backward Slide Left 8, Prep, Forward Slide Right 8, Halt
  - Backward 8, Prep, Forward 8, Halt
  - Backward Slide Right 8, Prep, Forward Slide Left 8, Halt
- Should be performed at marching show tempos
- Basic Dance (positions, plié, releve, tendu, lunge, passé)

## Focus

- Timing
- Body Posture
- Body Texture
- Separation of Body Parts
- Should be performed at marching show tempos

## Music Design

- “When in doubt...make it easier!”
- The marching season is not about developing skill sets, but rather it is about showing off skill sets
- Choose music that the majority of your students already have the ability to play
  - Your students should not be learning how to play their instruments due to marching show music
  - This will allow your students to develop their skills of playing AND marching simultaneously
- Choose tempos that will allow your students to be successful
- Print all articulations, dynamics, set numbers, counts, horn moves, etc. in the music
- Will WW technique be covered up by brass long tones?
  - Put the technique in the keyboards in the front ensemble
  - Put WW’s on parts to match brass
- WW technical phrases
  - Are there 8<sup>th</sup> note checks?
    - “clean the space...”
  - Where does the range on the clarinets fall?
    - Depending on the key, revoice at the 5<sup>th</sup> up or 4<sup>th</sup> down
- Plan out breathing points ahead of time through the addition of rests, so that phrases are seamless and not too long
- Create clarity by not having ties release with an 8<sup>th</sup> note
- Write dynamics that already balance the ensemble
  - Flutes and Clarinets should default to “ff”
  - Alto Saxophones “f”
  - Low Reeds “mf”
  - If WW’s are to be heard, brass will often have softer
- Brass ranges should not be extreme
  - Trumpet – G or A
  - French Horn – G, try to use the G to G octave, too low also creates issues
  - Trombone/Euphonium – F or G, too low also creates issues
- Write percussion parts and dynamics with the final venue in mind
  - LESS IS MORE for percussion clarity and ensemble balance
  - Most battery parts are overwritten...when in support, be in support
- Maximize dynamic contrast based on the size of your band
  - Small bands cannot play as loud as large bands
  - Large bands cannot play as soft as small bands
  - Contrast is the key
  - Create 6-8 dynamic impacts to show contrast
  - Shapes are key
    - “...I have never heard a performance with too much dynamic contrast”
- Adjust chords based on instrument tendencies to allow for better intonation
- Re-voice chords throughout the show to match themselves

- Number of parts based on instrumentation and number of winds is crucial
  - Small bands should rarely have multiple parts on instruments
    - Clarinets and Trumpets *may* be able to be divided
    - Occasional upper/lower parts for Flutes and Low Brass
- Create simplified parts for students that are far below the ability of the regular parts
  - All students should contribute to the best of their ability
  - Try to keep parts to quarters, halves, wholes and in a very comfortable range

### Visual Design

- Just because something looks good with dots on a computer does not mean it will look good with students and being view from a different angle
- Keep students at a comfortable step size
  - Forward March – no bigger than 7/5 (6/5 should be used VERY sparingly)
  - Backward March – no bigger than 7/5 (ANYTHING larger should be used very sparingly)
  - Continual small steps sizes can cause timing issues due to students not using proper technique
  - Jazz Run
    - should rarely be used VERY sparingly, if ever
    - if you plan to use this effect, the type of visual move is extremely important
- Spacing is important for visual clarity and musical confidence
  - Keep spacing to no larger than a 3 step interval unless in some type of block shape
  - Know the location of trombones at all times and adjust drill if spacing does not allow for room for slides
  - If students are placed at a 1.5 step interval while in a straight line, expand it to a 2 step interval if at all possible
- Block Sets
  - If 1-3-3-1 from a yard line, move to on-2-4-2-on
  - If “floating” a block set, try moving on a diagonal so students are not in a 90° slide
- Curved Sets
  - Most drill software rounds the coordinates
  - The students should make final adjustments by using their eyes
- Adjust lines/diagonals so that they are either on whole or half step coordinates
- Avoid 90° if possible to allow students to play and march better
- Brass should be in front of woodwinds at arrival moments to maximize effect
- Staging of similar parts is crucial to ensemble timing
- Only bring battery in front of winds for special effects or features otherwise timing problems will likely occur
- Do your set changes make musical sense?
- Use choreography to travel between sets if marching is not effective enough

For additional information or if we can help in any way please email: [jeremy@studentsleading.org](mailto:jeremy@studentsleading.org) or [bobchreste@gmail.com](mailto:bobchreste@gmail.com)