



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 26-28, 2018**

**A New Wrinkle on an Old Idea: Using
Diamonds to Balance Your Ensemble**

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**Demonstration Group: Johnson HS, Tejeda MS,
Tex Hill MS (Northeast ISD)**

DIAMOND BALANCE

"A NEW WRINKLE ON AN OLD IDEA"

2018 Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic and Convention

Thursday, July 26, 1:30 – 2:30pm

Presented by Rory Davis, Associate director of bands, Cinco Ranch HS, Katy ISD

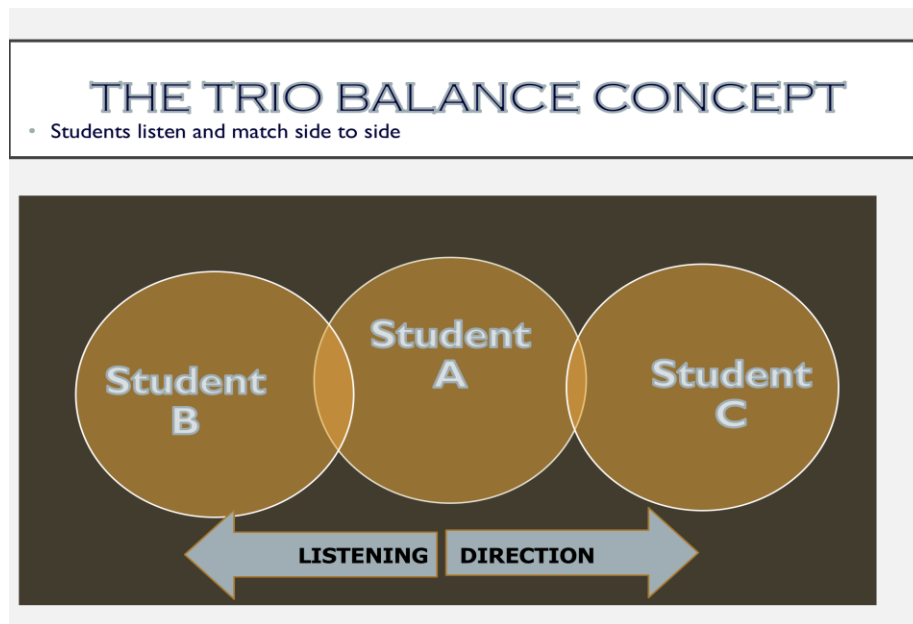
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WHAT IS DIAMOND BALANCE: A unique method to teach ensemble awareness, balance responsibilities, and resonance and give students tangible solutions to the intangible descriptors we often use in ensemble performance education.

WHY: To achieve resonance and colorful tonal balance within the ensemble.

- Resonance and balance are two of the most elusive qualities sought by directors in the modern school band.
- The diamond balance concept gives a tangible visual picture to the intangible concepts we are teaching every student, while creating resonance and color that we've always sought to achieve.

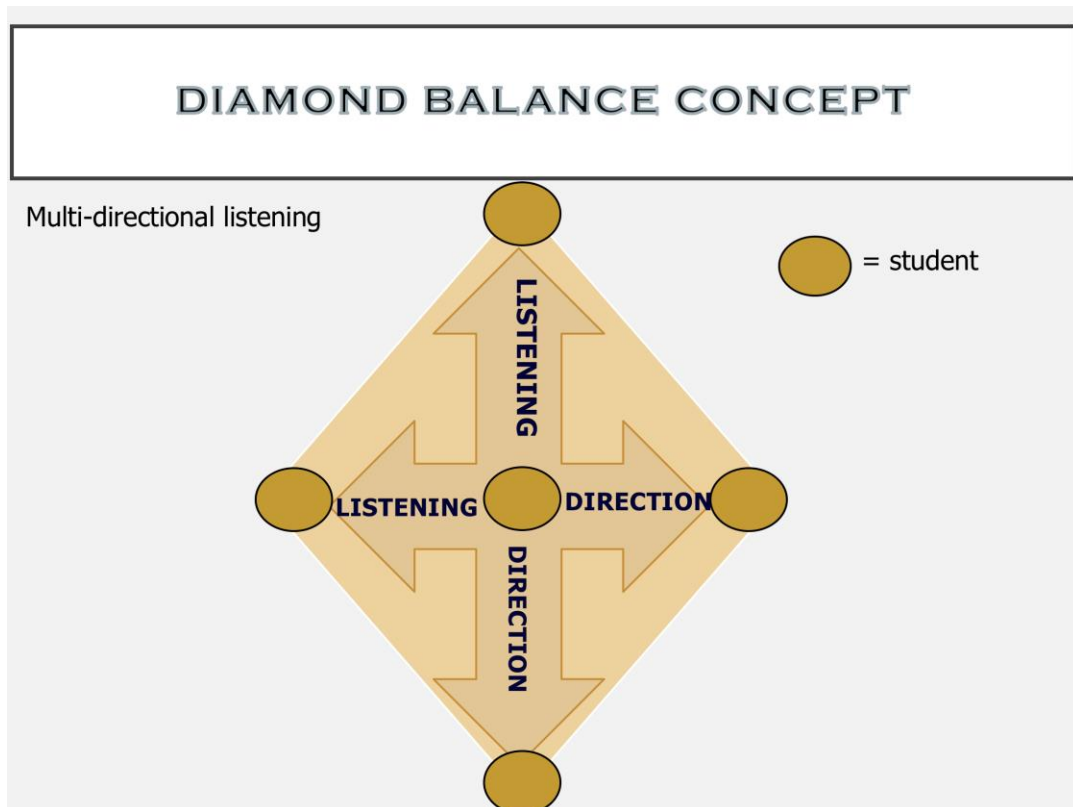
THE ORIGIN OF THE DIAMOND IS FROM THE ORIGINAL "TRIO CONCEPT"



The trio is a widely used concept and is highly successful but from a listening/learning perspective it can have some limitations:
Listening direction focus is, primarily, "side to side."
Listening and matching is always referred to as right and left.

STUDENTS ARE TAUGHT TO FOCUS SIDE TO SIDE.

DIAMOND BALANCE EXPANDS THE LISTENING FOCUS AND MAKES THE MUSIC TANGIBLE



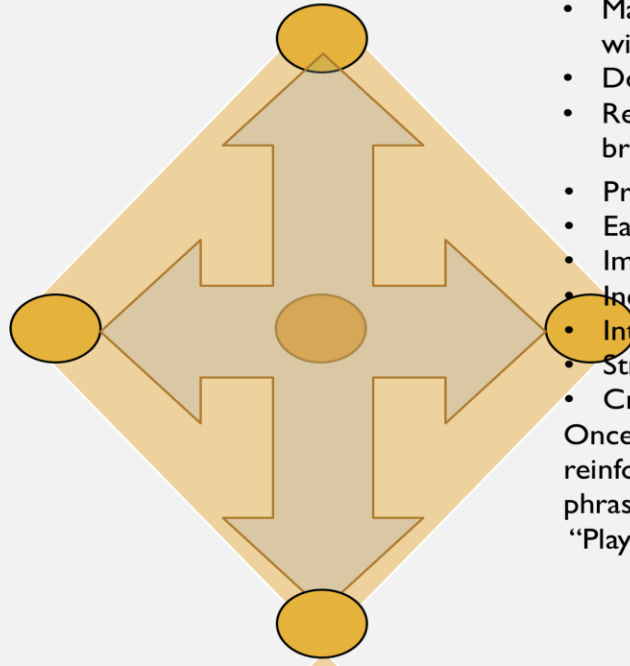
VISUAL OR TANGIBLE ASPECTS ARE RELATED TO AN ACTUAL DIAMOND

- ⦿ DIAMONDS = ENSEMBLE
- ⦿ CLARITY & BRILLIANCE = TONAL CLARITY AND BRILLIANCE
- ⦿ COLOR = INSTRUMENT TIMBRE
- ⦿ IMPERFECTIONS = SOUNDS THAT DEVALUE THE PRODUCT
- ⦿ MASTER JEWELER OBSERVES AND APPRAISES QUALITY = **THE DIRECTOR IS THE MASTER JEWELER**

DIAMOND BALANCE CONCEPT

3 TYPES OF LISTENING

1. Side to Side
2. Octave to Octave
3. Color to Color



- Match Pitch, Energy, & Volume with your diamond members.
 - Don't be an imperfection!
 - Resonance is like diamond brilliance!
 - Provides immediate results
 - Easy to understand
 - Improves Listening Skills
 - Increases student awareness
 - Interactive and intuitive.
 - Structured collaboration
 - Creates intentional listening
- Once installed, director reinforcement is easy...one phrase:
"Play inside your diamond."

DIAMOND BALANCE CAN USE SIMILAR DESCRIPTORS AS THE TRIO, HOWEVER, LISTENING FOCUS IS "MULTI DIRECTIONAL." LISTENING FOCUS.

The diamond sets a student's ears to "ALWAYS ON

It is always interactive and intuitive.

Increases student's aural awareness and proximity awareness

Automatically creates real- time structured collaboration, student to student and director to student.

Requires intentional listening.

It instructs them "how to do what you want them to do."

Clearly identifies balance responsibilities.

Makes the intangible tangible.

NOTE: THIS IS "NOT A FIX ALL."

The diamond is only as good as the pedagogy behind it. Using the phrase "play inside your diamond" is only as effective when the diamond is filled with good information.

DIAMOND BALANCE, A PRACTICAL APPLICATION:

WHEN DO YOU INTRODUCE THE DIAMOND? As soon as the individuals can make a characteristic sound.
High School – summer band. MS - whenever you begin ensemble drills.

MS/JH applications followed by HS - Advanced applications

TRIO and “NON – DIAMOND” EXAMPLES

1. **Playing:** Normal band sound on a concert F (both)
 - a. Non-characteristic but attempting to match
 - b. You can't tune a bad sound
 - c. Characteristic yet not completely resonant

Thoughts: You can't tune or create resonance with a “bad, or uncharacteristic, sound. When used properly, in conjunction with proper instrument pedagogy, diamond balancing can give every level of ensemble a more resonant body of sound.

2. **Playing:** Concert F & Concert C (5ths) to expose common issues with ensemble tone quality
 - a. You can't tune a bad sound
 - b. Around the group
 - c. Within sections

THE DIAMOND CONCEPT

3. IDENTIFICATION OF THE DIAMOND.
 - a. Choose the students that will be in the diamond.
 - b. Have the students look and identify all the “colors” in their diamond.
 - c. Diamonds come in all shapes and sizes (Color, Clarity, Cut, etc.)
4. BUILD THE DIAMOND
 - a. We are making the intangible tangible. Students will now have a much more understandable concept than just match your trio.
 - b. Diamond balance is “4D” sound vs the normal (trio) 3D sound .
 - c. 3D is good but not the most encompassing.
 - d. You can “feel the resonance” in the diamond.
 - e. **4D is the musical “moment’ that evokes memories.**
5. THIS IS NOT A FIX ALL!
 - a. You can't tune a bad sound!
 - b. There is no substitute for correct pedagogy.

SOME THOUGHTS FROM DIRECTORS THAT HAVE “TESTED” THE DIAMOND BALANCE.

- It is fascinating!
- The diamond is not “fixed” in its application.
- Multiple diamond setups are not an issue
- The only limitations are you
- It's like “VR” for band, it brings you into the experience. (Student comment)

USING THE DIAMOND HOW THE DIAMOND SOUNDS

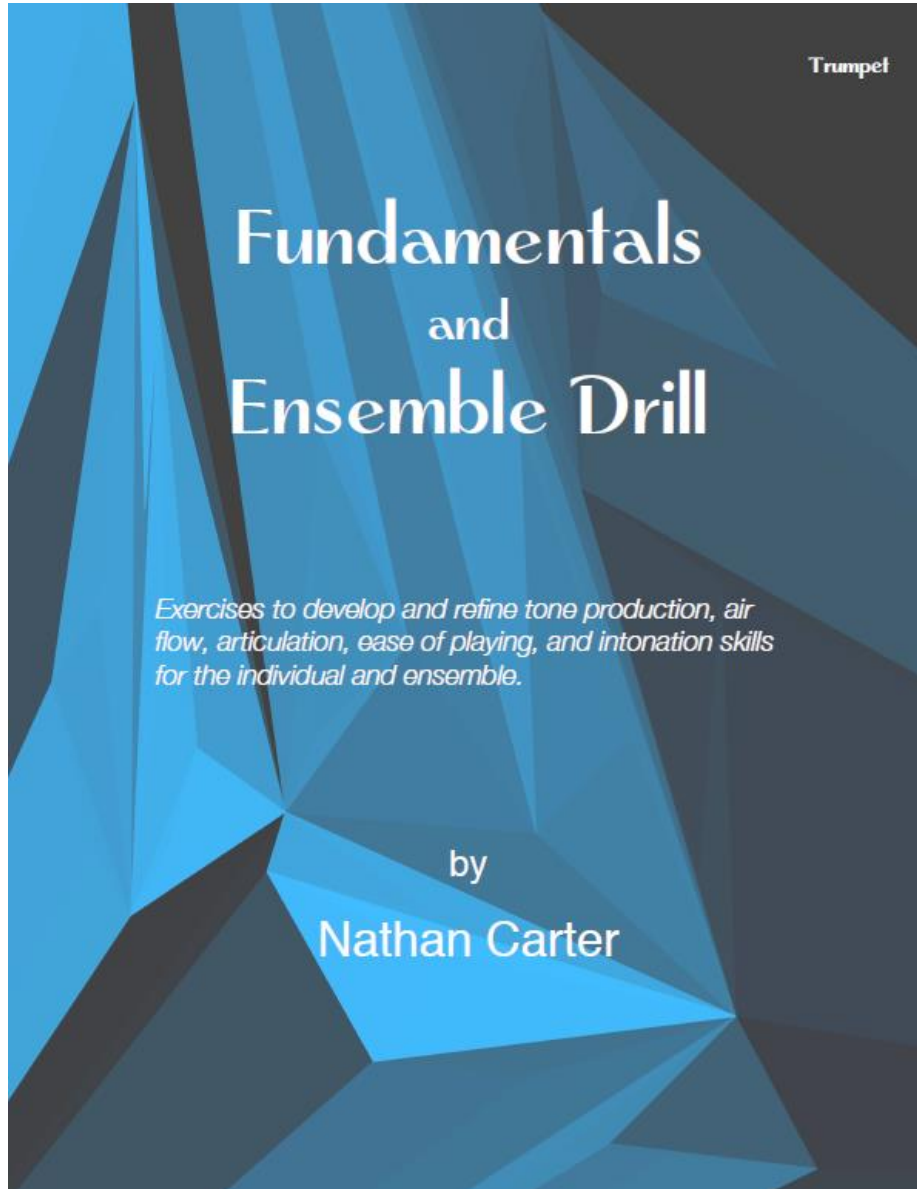
6. **Playing (MS/HS):** Normal band sound on a concert F
 - a. Characteristic
 - b. Students hear and actively adjust
 - c. Resonance may begin minor, but it is evident
7. **Playing (both):** Concert F & C (5ths) to expose common issues with ensemble tone quality
 - a. IMMEDIATE ISOLATION OF TONALITIES AND PITCH
 - b. Around the group
 - c. Within sections
8. **PERFORMANCE EXCERPTS: TUNING DRILLS**

Helps to create color and resonance in chords

 - a. Interval practice in the diamond
 - i. TUNING DRILL #1 (Mr. Carters book has labels to assist how to tune chords)
 - ii. JH first HS same
 - b. Intervals in sequence
 - i. TUNING DRILL #2 HS only (unless time allows for JH)
 - c. Pass through exercises in diamond
 - i. TUNING DRILL #3 (HS only)
 - d. TUNING CHORDS
 - i. Excerpt A. I IV V I (JH)
 - ii. Excerpt B. I IV V₇ I (HS)
9. **TUNING CHORALES: Ensemble awareness note to note**
 - a. Tuning chorale #1 (JH)
 - b. Tuning chorale #3 (HS)
10. **Other diamond activities for use**
 - a. Diamond pass offs. (Rachelle Isaacson, Cinco Ranch JH, Katy ISD)
 - b. Diamond daily drill.
 - i. One diamond leads/models
 - c. Peer diamonds.
 - i. Diamond plays - students evaluate
 - d. Odd/Even diamonds. (Ryan Johnstone, Rouse HS, Leander ISD)
 - i. Number your diamond and have them play by numbers.

Acknowledgements: Texas Bandmasters Association; Mr. Jarrett Lipman and Claudia Taylor HS Band; Mr. Bernard Rosenberg and Tejada MS Band; Mrs. Kim Rosenberg and Tex Hill MS Band; Dr. Nathan Carter, Fine Arts Coordinator/Director of bands, Angleton ISD

ALL EXCERPTS ARE SELECTED, BY PERMISSION, FROM
FUNDAMENTALS AND ENSEMBLE DRILL, BY NATHAN CARTER



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