



**Texas Bandmasters Association  
Convention/Clinic July 25-27, 2019**

**Developing the Moment**

**CLINICIANS:**

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

# **DEVELOPING THE MOMENT**

## *Tips and Tools to Enhance Your Marching Production*

Vista Ridge High School Ranger Band  
Bryan Christian, Reid Atkinson, Zach Santos, Hector Gil, Erin Kosman - Directors  
2019 Texas Band Masters Association Convention  
Saturday, July 27th, Room CC 214AB: 8:00 AM to 9:00 AM

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### **BEYOND THE PAGE**

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It is typical in a concert band setting, for a conductor through score study, to find ways to elevate the music beyond the written notes. These decisions provide an avenue for students to make creative and artistic decisions and ultimately take ownership of the performance. The same process should be taken throughout a marching production. If the goal of a production is artistry, then the music score and drill are just the first step in that process. Through this process of evolving and enhancing the production, students can begin to take ownership in the process and the production

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### **TIPS AND TOOLS**

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#### **Flutter Running**

Flutter running, like marching, is a stylized technique that is best characterized by two things: it is both fast and out of time. Through the use of flutter running, you can manipulate pathways, step-size, and departure to influence the amount of time it takes to move from Point A to Point B. A more complex use of flutter running would be to layer in upper body choreography as the performers flutter and/or create ripples by staggering departures and arrivals. It is important to note that flutter running technique is a judgeable just as forward or backward marching would be so special attention should be given to training.

The following sequence is one way to develop and improve this technique.

1. Have students step with their toe down and turned out. They should do this out of time and slow at a small and comfortable step-size.
2. Slowly increase the speed at your own pace (no tempo) keeping the turn out in the foot. Be careful to keep the upper body, especially arms, still through this process.
3. Put the technique to a triplets at a moderate tempo (90 bpm)
4. Take away tempo having performers move as quickly as possible. Remember fast small steps!

#### **Skipping Sets/Coordinates**

It is not uncommon, in a concert band setting, to revoice parts to minimize intonation or balance issues. These decisions are often made because the time spent learning it as written can be better spent on other concepts. Similar situations can arise when working on visual moments. There are times when working a series of sets is feasible but at the expense of

working other concepts thus resulting in an average performance across all captions. A potential fix is to skip a coordinate. Instead of going from A to B to C, instead go to A to C. This buys you additional counts to play with. You can then use a number of strategies such as staggered step-offs and arrivals, flutter running, or simply march the entirety of the count structure.

Skipping sets should be utilized when a set has an unusual exposure to error (aka “written dirty”) or provides a visual challenge that compromises the performance integrity of the group. For advanced production, it can also be utilized to buy time for staging and character work.

### **Ripples**

Ripples are a great way to add visual texture to a stationary moment in the drill or to reshape when skipping a drill set. They can also be used to enhance an already written staggered arrival or departure. There are two types of ripples: metered and sight. Metered ripples define a count for which to leave and arrive. Sight ripples occur as a chain reaction across the form.

### **Prop Usage**

If students are in the vicinity of a prop, effort should be made to use the prop in some way. Students at the end of forms can often be pulled to stand on the prop or manipulate the prop. Alternately, a simple lunge or hand gesture will integrate the prop into the fabric of the show. Props can also be used as a holding point for “alternates” who can be worked into smaller moments of the show.

### **Opposition for Texture**

There are three key contrasts, or oppositions to use when it comes to texture: high/low, fast/slow, and fluid/sharp. These oppositions allow you to vary your movement greatly by combining different sets of oppositions. Another way to use these pairs is to do one before the other, for example go high before you go low into a move, this will add texture and variety to the visual package.

### **Developing a Visual Motif**

Just like music, a visual motif can provide a visual anchor for choreography. By developing a small set of visual motifs for a show, it reduces the skills needed to train and provides a visual touchstone for the students and audience alike.

Examples

- VRHS 2019 - Compass arm (compass needle)
- Winter show - shivering/crossed arms
- Bluecoats Tilt - everything at an angle or tilted
- Lost show - hand on forehead looking for something