



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 22-24, 2021**

**Making Music the Centerpiece of Your
Marching Band Season**

**CLINICIAN:
Andy Sealy**



HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER - SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS

Making Music the Centerpiece of Your Marching Season

*Presented by Andy Sealy, Hebron High School, Carrollton, TX
Lewisville Independent School District*

2021 Texas Bandmasters Association Convention - Thursday, July 22, CC 217CD

1. Intentional Choices and Questions to Address

- Philosophy/Choice to make music important. Music comes first.
- Making music important as opposed to just making “The Music” important
- Some basic questions for deliberation
 - What are you using as a role model “in your mind’s ear” for the sound of the ensemble? (Drum Corps, College Marching Band, Symphony Orchestra)
 - Is your ensemble sound concept the same for both the indoor setting and the outdoor environment or is it different? What are those differences?
 - What are your expectations regarding the marching band’s commitment to basic balances, blends, and transparencies?
 - Are you exploiting all the colors of the outdoor ensemble?
- What is your expectation of the woodwind section?
 - Sound like the instrument
 - Hear the colors even with the Brass playing mezzo-forte
 - Purposeful staging to be heard or featured
 - Vibrato in flutes or soloists
 - Matched tones, articulations and pitch centers
 - Material written in ranges that are appropriate to the skills of the performer or written in a range to be musically effective
 - Doubling with front ensemble/keyboards
 - Amplification
- What is your expectation of the of the brass section?
 - Instrument sound like the instrument
 - Matched tones, articulations and pitch centers
 - Brass Choir Concepts
 - No distortion from individuals or at higher dynamic ranges
- What is your expectation of the percussion section?
 - And, are you tapping into the colors and textures made possible by the front ensemble?
 - Does your battery percussion provide contrasts and texture changes?
 - Does your percussion section have sufficient control to support wind balance and phrase structure?
- Do you have a systematic set of daily drill fundamentals to create and refine the sound you desire for the marching band?
- Does your daily drill include the same elements that you would want to develop inside in a concert band setting or the sound concept model you desire?

- Do you approach these essential sonic ingredients from multiple directions on a daily basis?
- Same standards of performance applied to all tunes. Stand Tunes/Drill Team Tunes, SS/SSB

2. Design Choices

- Evaluation of musical assets (strengths) and liabilities (weaknesses)
- Music choices essentially become the curriculum for much of the Fall semester
- Music should dictate what sounds we want from the ensemble
- Drill and visual package representation of the music
- See what we hear or hear what we see?
- Play and March? March then Play? Restage
- Music demand versus simultaneous visual demand
- Staging for appropriate presentation of musical priority
- Staging for support elements or competing elements
- Amplification/Microphones/Soundscape design

3. Non-Negotiables for Success

- Same musical expectations indoors and outdoors
 - Tone production
 - Breathing-Air support
 - Intonation and articulation
 - Playing posture as it applies to marching band
- Identical vocabulary usage with regards to tone, style, articulation and volume concepts
- Established daily rehearsal process and procedure-Roll Check, Stretch, Visual/Physical/Marching Fundamentals, Playing Fundamentals, Combined Fundamentals
- Development and systematic usage of a flexible set of Daily Drill/Fundamentals to create and refine the ensemble sound
- Suggested musical elements to include in Daily Drill/Fundamentals/Warm-up
 - Breathing Exercises-Deliberate exercises for air capacity and tension free breaths
 - Long Tones (Remington F Descending and Ascending, Long Tone F “Follow Through” in F, Bb, and C. Rotating Remington, Remington and “Follow Through” in 5ths
 - Air Flow Studies
 - Lip Slurs/Flexibility of increasing difficulty
 - Technique - Major Scales and Arpeggios with articulation variations
 - Articulation Check Patterns for styles
 - Double Tonguing development
 - Chromatic Scale (w/articulation variations)
 - Chorale-Chorale subdivided for articulation/style variations
- Sing everything!
- Purposeful and consistent part distribution and balance concepts
- Outdoor pitch reference source
- Staff “Buy-In”- Uniform, consistent approach from staff to tonal concepts and ensemble fundamentals

- Student “Buy-In”- Students will evolve to value what we emphasize, model, and reward
- Mentorship from someone you trust
- Study “New” UIL Area/State Sheets

4. What You Can Do Right Now In Summer Band

- What are your priorities for Summer Band? Music or drill or....?
- Study the score!
- Make decisions about phrasing, balance priorities, relative dynamics, cadence points, melody, counter melody, accompaniment, etc.
- Musical priorities
 - Individual tone production
 - Balance and matching concepts performer to performer
 - Define articulation and style concepts for music
 - Define relative dynamic levels/volumes
 - Establish Modeling and Call/Response patterns
 - Sing/Buzz-Lip Vibration
 - Breathing Plan Basics...Early, Middle, Late
- Rehearse Student Models/Leaders/Varsity Ensemble separately on Daily Drill/Ensemble Fundamentals prior to full ensemble settings
- Varsity Ensemble fundamentals on concert instruments and immediately transfer to marching instruments. (i.e. French Horn fundamentals then immediately to Mellophone, etc. for Euphonium to Marching Baritone and Concert Tuba to Sousaphone)
- Staff usage-Maximize music instruction opportunities. More sectionals. Less full ensemble.
- Dedicated rehearsal/practice opportunities for Double Reed players. Bring in specialists
- Dedicated instruction time/introduction of All-Region Music
- Critical integration of Daily Drill/Music Fundamentals with Movement/Visual Fundamentals
- Add musical elements to Dance Block-Basic Foot Positions-Tendu, Plie, Releve, Lunge, etc.
- Music staff provide feedback on integrated Music/Visual Fundamentals
- Step-Outs with everything!
- Metronome use. Student vocalization of count-off
- Reinforce Daily Rehearsal Procedures (as per Non-Negotiables)
- Teach and reinforce Rehearsal Etiquette expectations
- Set Fundamental Rehearsal Blocks for Visual/Marching and/or Music Fundamentals
- Use of Concert Arcs or Music Circle. Consider mixed instrumentation

5. Daily Concepts for the Season

- Continue fundamentals on concert instrument/transfer to marching instrument
- Increase the difficulty on musical fundamentals (tonal, technique, flexibility AND DYNAMIC LEVELS progressively over the course of the week and over the course of the season.
- Change key centers. Increase articulation challenge.
- Change daily focus for daily drill/fundamental sequence to keep approach fresh
- Continue breathing regime in fundamentals

- Adjust refine Breathing Plan...Early, Middle, Late
- Add variety and challenge to Music/Visual Fundamentals by changing facings, horn angle or positioning (to the box). Different planes. Turret Exercise
- Vary step sizes, facings, and tempi
- Prep tempi in advance. Music/Visual Fundamentals at “Ballad” tempo and extreme velocity tempi before needed in drill/music.
- Build endurance
- Create or Assign Mini Bands (3 or 4 groups with balanced instrumentation)
- Identify and isolate musical segment of the week for daily use in the arc, in class, or tracking
- Musical segments or drill and music segments to emphasize phrasing and building and long phrase or breathing responsibilities
- Special attention to challenging technical passages for tracking or daily practice. Same with choreography challenges
- Create exercises based on the needs of the show
- Rehearsal Strategies to help with Student Accountability
 - Vocalization of count structures
 - Playing and stepping out in place
 - Singing parts and marching
 - Playing parts on single pitch
 - Sing parts or say on syllables
 - Air Flow/Air and Finger
- Rehearsal Strategies for Timing Development:
 - Counting/vocalization
 - Step-outs and Mark Time
 - “Bopping”
 - Met in cut time or quarter time
 - Met “in and out”
 - Play without met
 - ID listening/pulse center
 - Mobile met
 - Silent Drill-only DM hands
 - Some DM only work within arc or block with hands only
- Schedule/Prepare a Fall Concert with Varsity Band

6. Student Accountability

- Hear students individually often
- Individual Passoff/Playoff Objectives by Memory (Standing at POA)
 - Fundamentals
 - Traditional football/school related tunes
 - Competition Show tunes at tempo, marking time and with step-outs
 - All-District/Region/State Music
 - In pairs? For student leaders?
 - Timetable for completion

- Electronic/Digital/Online student submissions
- Create or Assign Mini Bands
- Same expectations for Stand Tunes or Drill Team Tunes or Pep Rally
- Utilizing Students Leaders as peer mentors
- Share feedback from judge's comments or recordings of performances

7. Electronic Soundscape, Sampling, and Amplification

- Acknowledge that music media technology has the capacity to alter our approach to music education and marching band
- Acknowledge that technology can be leveraged in non-traditional ways to reach students differently than ever before
- Difficult to legislate or create one size fits all policy
- Contributes to the ongoing "arms race" of equipment and support staffing that furthers widens the real or perceived inequity between programs
- Matter of personal choice on value of live, acoustic music, music education, marching band as music education, performance, pageantry, entertainment, and competition
- Disparity real or perceived between the creative, innovative, and effect-oriented use of audio/sonic technological capabilities versus the student produced acoustic sounds and student achievement
- Designers think "effect" or effectiveness of electronic contribution rather than student contribution and student achievement
- How electronic and amplified elements are credited/rewarded numerically sets the expectation. What gets rewarded gets repeated/imitated.
- Becomes an ethical issue when...
 - Used to hide flaws
 - Remixes or equalizes ensemble sound
 - Misrepresents the sound/volume of the ensemble and/or student performers
 - Innumerable opportunities for questionable usage
- Microphone use for soloists
- Microphone for soloists or select group within tutti ensemble
- Shotgun mics for the entire ensemble
- Unintended consequence is to devalue the importance of teaching individual tone production and de-emphasizing student driven performance

Special Thanks to:

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