



**Texas Bandmasters Association
Convention/Clinic July 20-22, 2023**

**Effective MS/JH Warm-up and Rehearsal
Procedures, Strategies and Techniques**

**CLINICIAN:
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Demo Group: Bush & Lopez MS Bands



Effective MS/JH Warm-up and Rehearsal Procedures, Strategies and Techniques

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TEXAS BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION CONVENTION

Friday, July 21st, 2023
1:00-2:00 p.m. / CC 214

EFFECTIVE MIDDLE SCHOOL/JUNIOR HIGH WARM-UP AND REHEARSAL PROCEDURES, STRATEGIES AND TECHNIQUES

I. Posture

1. The upper part of the body must be very stoic so air can naturally pass from the body to the instrument.
2. Students should never move when breathing or while breathing.
3. When playing wind instruments, students should never look AT their instruments, but instead, look BEYOND their instruments. Students should keep their eyes still and look ahead PAST their instruments.
4. Students should sit ON their chair—not IN it. The sternum should be lifted and the shoulders should be sloped. The tendons that connect the shoulders to the neck are very soft; the neck in turn is very soft and therefore allows free air all the time. The upper body down to the diaphragm should be natural.
5. Regarding bassoon, saxophone and bass clarinet players, the right arm should follow the line of the upper body. It should never be placed back behind the chest cavity. When the appropriate and respective balance points pertaining to these instruments are achieved, the posture will look very natural.
6. It is not recommended for neck straps to be used with bass clarinet players until they are in marching band and have played the instrument for at least 2-3 years. Neck straps are not natural and should be considered exceptions for older students.
7. Students must be taught to correctly adjust their stands at the start of each rehearsal.

II. Body Texture/Hand Position/Technical Facility

1. From the very beginning, students must be reminded that the texture of the body parts never change, regardless of the speed of movement.
2. At all levels of performance, students must always be reminded that all finger movement is controlled by the first (big) knuckle.

- Exceptions:
 - flute left hand index finger
 - clarinet left hand index finger
 - oboe left hand middle knuckle when using side octave key
 - saxophone when using certain palm keys (high E and F)
3. Because of the lack of a “mouthpiece,” oboe and bassoon players must be especially aware of body texture and hand position at all times. Reed vibration can be negatively affected by any force or tension felt in the body or embouchure.
 4. Trombone positions are created at the elbow and pitch tendencies are adjusted at the wrist.
 5. Regarding piston valve brass instruments, the palms of the hand should be soft and the thumb is never bent.
 6. Regarding rotary valve brass instruments, the fingers lie flat.
 7. The elbows must be soft and must not pull toward the body, especially when tempos/rhythms become significantly more active....and tessitura becomes a factor in brass playing.

III. Ready Position, Set Position and Relax Position

1. Ready position: students are READY to RECEIVE information...and ready to PLAY.
2. Playing or set position: students are PHYSICALLY set to PLAY.
3. Relax position: allows students to sit professionally in the backs of their chairs.
4. Percussionists should also have a ready, set and relax position with whatever sticks, mallets, etc. they are holding.

IV. Set-up Suggestions

V. Incorrect and Correct Instrument Angles

VI. Sound Production

1. With younger students, it is important that you find someone that can demonstrate the most characteristic, colorful and focused sound.
2. Airflow must be even and constant as it moves past vibrating lips or reeds, and not feel forced for speed or energy past what will create their most resonant sound at a particular movement in their experience. Air that moves

past resonance (too fast) or does not reach resonance (too slow or unfocused) will contain extraneous noise. Tonal color and energy is only a result of the appropriate ratio of air to resistance of the specific instrument being played. ****This can absolutely be taught to beginners!!**

3. Once students have processed information concerning how their air moves from their diaphragm through their instrument—to the point of placement—they must be constantly reminded to think about how it FEELS, how it SOUNDS and what they are THINKING.
4. Tuning problems are not as prevalent when students are taught as beginners to think about the resonance of their tone, the placement of their tone, how the body feels when the placement of air and the resistance of the instrument merge to create the most colorful and characteristic sound.
5. If we tell a student that a note has sharp tendencies, it will be thinner and have a less resonant body of sound if they do not mentally and physically adjust how their air is moving and where it is moving.

VII. Intervallic Exercises

1. Utilizing the words “start”.....“change”.....“stop” while positioning
2. 3 note Remington in half notes slurred (Long Tone 1a in *Foundations for Superior Performance*)
3. 3 note Remington in half notes articulated (Long Tone 1a in *Foundations for Superior Performance*)
4. Low D and C# slide rules for trumpet
5. Trombone players should not be using trigger on any Remington exercise.

VIII. Touching the Spot Where Air is to be Placed While Playing

1. Flute/Piccolo –
2. Oboe –
3. Bassoon –
4. Clarinet –

5. Low Clarinet –
6. Saxophone –
7. Trumpet –
8. French Horn –
9. Trombone –
10. Euphonium –
11. Tuba –

IX. Passing a Rhythm Around the Room

1. Passing 4 touching/legato quarter notes around the room with no rest in between players
2. “Don’t break the chain.”
3. Working with students who are not able to connect their notes

X. Articulation and Style Markings

1. Tenuto Notes

This style is more about air follow-through, phrase direction and focus. The fronts and backs of notes should not be affected at all when playing tenuto notes.

2. Accented Notes

This style requires getting more air to the center of the notes. Though air will move through the instrument, the mental focus should be on the middle of the resonating note. Accents have little to do with the front or back of the note (because the strongest tonal vibration will occur with the air moving from center to center).

The sound must not lose its focus or energy. With younger students it may be helpful for them to tongue the front of the note firmer and the air will be more focused to the center of the tongue with slightly more tonal weight.

Accents are not special effects, but instead have more to do with the resonance and weight of the notes.

3. Long-Lifted Notes

This style requires using more tastebuds of the tongue and sending air to the center of the note. These notes should sound more buoyant than accented notes. Long-lifted style is the most challenging to achieve because of the mere fact that students can easily play a note either too long...or too short. Long-lifted style is as much about mental concentration as it is about the note start, note length, etc. Space must be created while the illusion of phrase direction is not impaired.

4. Lifted Notes

Be cautious of using the word “short” as most students play “staccato” notes way too short. These notes should be lifted but still with proper “body of sound” and tone.

Watch carefully for students that are letting go and/or collapsing embouchures between **long-lifted and **lifted** notes, as they can still create a good sound but are getting away with extra movement.

5. Marcato Accents

These accents require firmer/broader articulation with the required weight in the body of the actual note/sound.

XI. Incorporating Rhythm and Style Exercises Into Daily Drill

You are strongly encouraged to incorporate prominent rhythms of your performance into any of your daily drill exercises. This can be done through basic Remingtons, F-Around-the-Room (either by sections or individually), ascending or descending scale passages, articulation series, etc. Rhythm sheets should be created and utilized in ensemble rehearsals no matter the age or skill levels of the students. If, for example, your rhythm sheet contains 8 lines—practice not just on one note....but eventually choose a scale and perform each line on a different scale

degree. This is then reinforcing more basic skills (tonal movement, rhythmic movement, scales).

Three-note descending Remington for NON vibrato-producing instruments



Etc.

Three-note descending Remington for vibrato-producing instruments



Etc.

Three-note ascending Remington



Etc.

Specific rhythm(s)/articulation(s) applied to descending Remington



Etc.



Etc.

XII. Scales and Instrument-Specific Range/Flexibility Exercises

In ensemble daily drill, do not try to play your scales at quicker tempos that students are not ready for. Do not sacrifice overall accuracy for speed. Scales should not just be practiced during All-Region timeframes (for MS/JH students),

but in fact should be integrated into daily drill the entire year. The reality of our band world today has proven that after students “pass off” scales, they stop practicing them. We then need to assume that the ONLY time they will CONTINUE working on their scales is if we are making them a part of our daily drill. This will help you when you start working on sightreading skills throughout the year. Some scales can be performed during daily drill...and others during sectionals—particularly scales that are more challenging that will help students correctly increase their ability to extend the overall range of the instrument.

It goes without saying that in addition to scales, instrument-specific range/flexibility exercises should be a **vital part** of your weekly sectionals. With older/more advanced players, articulations can be added to the top notes of register slurs, clarinet harmonics, etc. You are simply using exercises the students learned during their beginning band experience in a more sophisticated manner which helps technical All-Region/All-State etudes as well as certain passages of performance literature.

The image displays three staves of musical notation for Clarinet, labeled "Clarinet" at the top left. Each staff is in 4/4 time and begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff shows a slur over a half note B-flat and a half note D, followed by four quarter notes: E, F, G, and A. The second staff shows a slur over a half note B-flat and a half note D, followed by eight quarter notes: E, F, G, A, B, C, D, and E. The third staff shows a slur over a half note B-flat and a half note D, followed by sixteen eighth notes: E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, F, G, A, B, C, D, E, and F. The notation is presented in a clean, black-and-white format on a white background.



The faster the subdivisions move, the more the students must depend upon the definition of each note....and placing the air in the center of the tongue which allows the tongue to move faster without changing how they sound or changing their tonal energy. The faster the subdivisions move, the more students must play **through** the notes and not **at them**. The only difference between the whole note and the subdivisions is the speed of the movement of the tongue....and the definition of the note is more easily created by placing the tongue in the same place.

It is not necessary to practice all skills every day; however, they should be practiced every week during both sectionals and full ensemble rehearsals. If you do everything the **same** way **every day** during your daily drill, students in today's

world will stop having to think...will be on autopilot....and will become disengaged and possibly even disinterested in general.

Have a plan!! Pick certain things out of certain passages out of your music....and make it your goal to accomplish these goals within a reasonable amount of time.

XIII. F-Around-the-Room

1. Provide a suggested order of sections...and how to help students memorize the order.
2. The order can change based on your ensemble needs...and/or a clinician's recommended order.
3. Passing whole notes around the ensemble with a whole rest in between each section

XIV. Saying Note Names with "Robot Voice"

1. Verbalize note names using "robot voice" on a 1-octave concert Bb scale in "All-Region" scale rhythm

XV. Vibrato

Non-vibrato moments should either take place when it is printed (nv) or regarding students who have not yet been taught or whose vibrato negatively impacts their overall tone qualities.

Once students are ready, they must be taught how to connect notes with vibrato. They have to think about the center of one note to center of next note as opposed to going from the back of one note to the front of the next note. This holds true for both tuning notes/sequences and in music all the time! Students' notes will be the same if they do not try to do different things with each note.

If you tune students with a straight tone, they will most likely register flat because of the energy and resonance that vibrato adds. If you want students using vibrato in their performance music, they should also be using as default in daily drill, tuning, etc. It does not make sense to have students set their pitch level in a different manner than they perform music.

1. Passing around a whole note with eighth note vibrato
2. Passing around a whole note with triplet vibrato
3. Passing around a half note with triplet vibrato
4. Passing around a quarter note with triplet vibrato

XVI. Non-Playing Techniques to Utilize

1. Counting rhythms using a consistent counting system done throughout the students' band experience thus far
 - a. Student voices must be confident and should correlate to the energy and confidence that you want them to play with. Voices with little or no energy should not be allowed. As students place their air in front of them, their voices must "project" in a similar manner as the tonal energy used when playing notes in general.
 - b. No matter what counting system is used, make sure the corners of the mouth stay set and forward while counting.
 - c. No matter the counting system, do not let students be sloppy in their enunciation or they will play sloppy.
2. Vocalizing note names out loud while positioning
 - a. Slower/more achievable tempos must be provided due to the challenge of this particular skill/technique.
3. Tapping rhythms on shoulder/collarbone (with and without air through the embouchure)

****I refer to this as "T1"**

 - i. Students should be sitting tall and not allowing their arms and/or elbows to touch their legs. Their instruments should be in the vertical position as much as possible.
 - ii. It may be necessary to simplify more challenging rhythms by allowing students to use 2 fingers instead of their hands while tapping.
 - iii. Do not allow students to move any other part of their arm/elbow/shoulder...only the wrist and hand moves. The rest of the area should be very still.
 - iv. By utilizing this technique, it is very possible to not only practice timing...but also include style, dynamics, etc. as long as the rest of the area is still and soft.
 - v. Regarding duple and triple meter sections, remembering that duple is a more angular feel and triple is more linear feel,

meaning that there might be a slight difference in the overall “feel” of the body.

4. Clapping rhythms with 2 hands

****I refer to this as “T2”**

- i. instruments are temporarily on their laps since students are using both hands (one hand of their choosing stays stationary at chin level...the other hand moves)

5. Performing with 2 fingers on the palm of a chosen hand

****I refer to this as “T3”**

- i. again, instruments are temporarily on students’ laps since they are using both hands (one hand at chin level....two fingers from other hand lightly tap the palm of the stationary hand)

6. Articulation simulation—performing articulations with and without air through the embouchure—by using the right hand as a “pretend” tongue....and this hand touching a “pretend” articulation surface (tooth-gum line, blade, tip of a reed) with the left hand

7. Positioning with air through mouthpieces/instruments (flutes off lip plate in the “offset” or “3-quarter” position)

8. Positioning only without air

XVII. Engines of Resistance by Larry Clark

1. Band will perform measures 42-67 demonstrating T1, T2 and T3.
2. Band will perform measures 42-67 demonstrating air + positions only (“air band”).
3. Band will perform measures 42-67 as written.
4. Band will demonstrate played “bopped” or lifted style....the band can be divided into A’s/B’s--have A’s bop and B’s perform as written---then switch assignments.

****For all non-playing techniques utilized, the metronome should be just loud enough for students to hear. Since these techniques are creating awareness levels regarding precision, then it is vital that the metronome is not covering up these non-playing sounds.**

****Regarding foot tapping: students should understand that the ankle controls the down and up movement of the foot....not vice versa.**

- i. For directors who ask students to not tap because of the sounds that are made on risers or hard-surfaced floors, instead ask

students to remove the shoe on their tapping foot! This will alleviate the extra sounds heard both during rehearsals and public performances.

**THANK YOU FOR ATTENDING AND ENJOY THE REST OF
YOUR TBA CONVENTION!**

LARRY CLARK

ENGINES OF RESISTANCE

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt.

Hn. in F

Tbn./Bar./Bsn.

Tuba

Bells

Xyl.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

47

Fl. *mf* *legato*

Ob. *mf* *legato*

Cl. *mp*

B. Cl. *mp*

A. Sax. *mf* *legato* Play

T. Sax. *mf* *legato* Play

Bar. Sax. *mp*

Tpt. *p* unis. 47

Hn. in F *p*

Tbn./Bar./Bsn. *mp*

Tuba *mp*

Bells *p*

Xyl. *p*

Timp.

Perc. I *mp*

Perc. II *mp*

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt.

Hn. in F

Tbn./Bar./Bsn.

Tuba

Bells

Xyl.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

Snares off

Susp. Cym.

p *mf* *mp*

50 51 52 53 54

55

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

55

Tpt.

Hn. in F

Tbn./Bar./Bsn.

Tuba

Bells

Xyl.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

mf

mf

55 56 57 58 59

Fl. *f*

Ob. *f*

Cl. *f*

B. Cl. *f*

A. Sax. *f*

T. Sax. *f*

Bar. Sax. *f*

Tpt. *f* div. unis.

Hn. in F *f*

Tbn./Bar./Bsn. *f*

Tuba *f*

Bells *f*

Xyl. *f*

Timp. *f*

Perc. I *f* Snares on

Perc. II *f* Cr. Cyms.

Fl.

Ob.

Cl.

B. Cl.

A. Sax.

T. Sax.

Bar. Sax.

Tpt.

Hn. in F

Tbn./Bar./Bsn.

Tuba

Bells

Xyl.

Timp.

Perc. I

Perc. II

Cue: Hn. in F

Play

Cue: Hn. in F

Play

div.

unis.

div.