

# THE MYSTERY & MAJESTY OF ARRANGING MUSIC FOR MARCHING OR CONCERT BAND

Nebraska State Bandmasters Association

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WHAT IS YOUR PRIMARY OBJECTIVE AS TEACHER/BAND DIRECTOR?

HOW DO YOU BEGIN? Or why? Do you need an arrangement, adaptation, or simple scoring of a selection of music?

WHAT DOES IT TAKE TO BE AN ARRANGER?

- A basic knowledge of harmony.
- An understanding of the peculiarities of every instrument included in your arrangement.
- A complete understanding of the ensemble you are writing for.

BEFORE WE BEGIN, SEVERAL QUESTIONS NEED TO BE ANSWERED!

TODAY'S DISCUSSION IS DIVIDED INTO TWO SECTIONS.

- Selecting suitable music for your production.
- Adapting Published Arrangements or Making Your Own Arrangement.

"FROM THE NSBA MUSIC EFFECT BALLOT"

*Evaluate the effectiveness of the program and the performers. The ability to maintain a connection with the audience through a combination of components contributes to effect. The performers are measured in part through excellence but, more significantly, in their ability to communicate the product to the audience. Evaluate what is being performed and how it is being performed. The construction and content of a program, in combination with the performance level, which is being demonstrated, will determine the achievement level.*

EFFECTIVENESS OF THE REPERTOIRE

*Pacing, Concept, Interpretation of the Music, Impact and Climaxes, Tension/Release, Aesthetic/Intellectual/Emotional Qualities, Creativity, Originality and Variety.*

FIRST ASK YOURSELF .....

CAN YOUR MARCHING PRODUCTION BE ENTERTAINING, EDUCATIONAL, ACHIEVABLE, FUN, AND REACH THE JUDGES? How? What does it take?

- Planning - lots of it!
- Preparation - both mental and physical.
- Precise execution brings excitement.
- Anticipation. Expectation and fulfillment—an ebb & flow.
- Energy...Commitment.... Desire.... Follow-through...
- Discipline - yes, even "entertainment" requires discipline.

AND WHAT IS YOUR COMPETITION PHILOSOPHY?

- Is success to you and your program measured in winning, getting a superior, or growing through the season by doing the best possible?
- Will the music chosen help the students improve musically? Is that a concern?
- Will the music appeal to the students?
- Will the audience grow musically from our music?
- If the band is a competitive band, is the music selected consistent with the judging ballots?
- Who is your show for? The students, parents, friends, judging community, or part of all of these.

DON'T LISTEN TO THOSE DEMO'S OR GO THROUGH THAT STACK OF SCORES JUST YET!

SELECTING THE MUSIC - "THE EVALUATION PROCESS"

How do you select effective, appropriate or "What is good music"?

- Evaluate the Strengths
- Evaluate the Weaknesses
- Evaluate the Maturity Level of your entire outdoor performing ensemble. (Brass, Woodwind, battery, frontline & auxiliary)
- Evaluation Form
- Evaluation your rehearsal time?
- What "obstacles" are in your way?
- Are you "The Staff"?
- What is your Budget?
- How many and kind of contests you will enter.
- What is unique to your band?
  - ◆ Available Soloists

- ◆ Possible Ensembles
- ◆ Percussion feature
- ◆ Guard feature
- ◆ Possible Music Effects

YOU NOW HAVE FAIRLY ACCURATE IDEA OF WHAT YOUR BAND  
IS CAPABLE OF AND WHY YOU ARE WRITING THIS  
SHOW....WHAT'S NEXT!

### SELECTING THE MUSIC – MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

#### Musical Items to Consider When Selecting the Music for Your Show

- Emotional contour.
- Range of DYNAMICS.
- Range of EXPRESSIONS.
- Range of TIMBRE possibilities.
- Harmonious & logical packaging of all of the above.

#### Physical Items to Consider When Selecting the Music for Your Show.

- Adaptability to the field.
- Visual possibilities.
- Potential staging problems.
- Potential problems of protecting the stylistic integrity of the piece after you take it outdoors.
- Tempo, control of tempo.
- Accents in interpretation.
- Adaptability to players on hand.
- Negative factors.
- Positive factors.
- Wearability?

#### Sources of Music

- Favorite tunes of director
- Pop/rock tunes – text, look at the lyrics
- Jazz Tunes
- Swing Charts
- Current Popular Tunes
- Orchestral music from the classics
- Band literature
- Current Popular tunes
- Sacred literature
- Broadway/show tunes

- Movie/TV theme shows
- Commercial tunes and jingles
- Drum Corps Rip off.

#### WHAT STYLE OR THEME DO YOU WANT?

- Pachelbel's Canon in D – Canon Cubed
- Scheherazade A Tale of Arabian Knight
- Color of Emotion, (Joy, Compassion, Courage)
- Dusk Til Dawn (Bach, Rachmaninoff, Respegi)

OK – Now you can listen to the recorded promos

As You Listen.... Will the arrangement:

- Highlight the strengths of your band while minimizing the weaknesses.
- Allow the largest percentage of your students to perform music that matches their playing ability.
- Be enjoyable and challenging, yet playable by all members, in order to maintain student interest.
- Be playable within the students' allotted time for rehearsals.
- Permit the students to meet the physical demands required by the drill movements while performing the music.

As You Listen...Evaluate the:

- Ranges for all of the instruments & possible fingering problems.
- General all over Voicing's and opportunity for different texture changes.
- Alto Sax/Horn Parts– are they independent or pretty much the same.
- Tenor Sax/Baritone Parts – are they independent or pretty much the same.
- Demands placed on the front line ensemble.
- Possible show concept ideas.

NOTE! Key ingredient to all segments to be considered is CONTRAST! This is what makes for musical interest. This is what makes for easier writing of drill design. This is what makes guard movements easier to write and to understand.

Bottom line- does the 8 minute show seem like 4 or 20 minutes long?

**See with Your Ears and Hear with Your Eyes.  
In tune and In Time!!!**

## ARRANGING ... SCORING ... ADAPTING ... OR NEW COMPOSITION?

### ADAPTING PUBLISHED MARCHING ARRANGEMENTS

Copyright permission REQUIRED, NOT REQUIRED.

#### Adapting

- Cut & Paste
- Mix & Match
- Where is the Melody? Does it show YOUR strength? Does it move around to different voices, or is it predominantly trumpet lead with band accompaniment?
- Is the intro & ending right for the show segment?
- Will the harmony SOUND outside?
- How do the individual selections fit together?
- Is the piece scored most effectively?

#### Recorded Examples

- Full Arrangement
- Change the intro.
- Eliminate repetitive phrases
- Switch parts for variety. Help the woodwinds.

#### Dealing with Instrumentation Problems

- No Tuba
  - Train someone
  - Post
  - Electric Bass
  - Keyboard Bass
  - Bari Sax and or bass clarinets
- Very weak or limited low brass
  - Use saxes
- Limited percussion
  - Post your percussion ensemble. Explain the new listening responsibilities.
- Weak Flutes/clarinets
  - Score in unison, eliminate 2<sup>nd</sup> parts.
- Hard or unrealistic rhythmic figures in the harmony.

## ARRANGING FOR THE MARCHING BAND

OK so you have decided to make or have made your own written. What is next?

- Keep in mind during the process why you chose to do this.
- All the principals we discussed when "Selecting and Adapting Music" still need to be considered.
- Get written permission from the publisher or make sure you can get the rights.
- <http://www.bands.org/public/resourceroom/copyright/>
- <http://www.nsbma.org>

### COMPUTER or PEN & PAPER

- Computer (Finale or Sibelius)
- Must Know How the different instruments will sound when combined. Don't trust the computer playback file.
- Balance & Instrument Sounds

### HOW DO YOU START?

#### PLAN, PLAN, AND PLAN – SINGLE LINE LEAD SHEET

- ...emotional form of the chart! Applause factor
- ...highs and lows!
- ...tension and relaxation!
- ...repletion & contrast
- ...effects
- ...modulations
- ...hits, solos, ensembles, & voicing
- ...key (Bb, Eb, Ab, or F. Maybe Db) Look at the melody in the trumpets.
- ...trumpet range and general tessitura information.
- ...tempo changes.
- ...instrumentation- suggestions.
- ...possible percussion features or breaks.
- ...staging ideas.
- ...sudden dynamic changes
- ...full range of music expression
- ...percussion breaks/solo
- ...the unexpected.

Add Bass Line And Harmonic Rhythm To Single Line.  
 Make A Four Line Condensed Score In Concert Key.

- Line one - Woodwinds
- Line two - High Brass
- Line three - Low brass and bass
- Line four - Percussion
- Bring in short segments to play with your band

EXPAND TO A FULL SCORE

- Concert key vs. transposed.
- Cues, cross-cues.
- Dynamic markings etc.

SCORING CONSIDERATIONS - RANDOM THOUGHTS

- How Elaborate Will The Arrangement Be? Don't Be Too Cute.
- Melody
- Bass line
- Countermelody/harmony
- Jazz piano voicings, background /harmony.
- Additional harmony
- Baritone/trombone parts
- Horns parts
  - Support lower Tpts
  - Support upper trombone parts
  - Independent voice - Turbo charger
- Percussion part
- Density - Scoring vs. volume.
- Electronics

CONSIDERATIONS WHEN ARRANGING A CLASSIC! i.e. Bach, Beethoven....

- Make sure you include what got you there.
- Use contrasting sections or section.
- Add additional material if time allows.
- Does not have to be in the same form as original.
- Maintain the integrity of the original.
- Transitions-as the composer would have done it.

GENERAL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS - TEXTURES

- Must understand the sound qualities and fingering problems of the complete playable range of all the instruments.
- Must understand the timbre & texture possibilities of different combinations of instruments.

- Interesting and playable parts.
- Rhythm considerations in wind parts.
- Instrument peculiarities.
- Instrument intonation problems.

#### SPECIFIC SCORING CONSIDERATION

- Trombone positions
- Scoring for brass choir. Divisi parts.
- Scoring for woodwind choir. Divisi parts.
- Woodwind section. Cl & Fl - Bass Clarinet
- Woodwind 6-9 trill.
- Alto voice
  - Sax in unison (A&T)
  - Sax choir for small band.
  - Add clarinet when appropriate
- 3rd trumpet-double horn line.
- Strongest sound-maximum projection-unison trumpets.
- Complete chord in trumpets and trombones. Cylindrical
- French horn - Turbocharger of the ensemble.
  - Support lower trumpets
  - Support upper trombones
  - Independent part
- B section w/low brass or clarinets. Trumpets out.
- Baritone scoring.
- Tuba scoring. Multiple tuba parts, 8va or 5th.

#### OVERALL SCORING CONSIDERATIONS

- "F-F" Heart of band. Three voices + melody & bass.
- Major change of some kind every 15-30 seconds.
- There should be no stagnant places in the music. Most of the time one should hear movement of some sort or should be filled by percussion.
- When the melody is static, movement can occur in the background.
- Make sure the background is not "corny or tasteless."
- Watch the use of cymbals with a low brass lead.
- Wait until the last note to bring in the low bass drum.
- Avoid using Dominant 7th chords - use substitute IV/V.
- Secret to the sound of the marching band is the low brass choir

#### SCORING CONSIDERATIONS - THEMATIC/HARMONIC

- Possibilities for Introductions, Modulations, Transitions, and Endings
- Can all be built from: fragments of the tune or counter melody, harmonic rhythm, chord progression or new material.

- Completely unrelated material (usually in the same general style as your tune.)

#### CHORD SUBSTITUTIONS

- IV/V for a dominant seven chord.
- See chart.

#### MODULATIONS

- Direct modulation (Rock style)
- Most effective at the beginning of a chorus or phrase.
- New key above original (half, whole, 3rd, 4th)
- Most effective when the first chord is a clearly stated I mi7, V7/ or I chord in a major key or II mi/(b5), V7(b9) or I mi chord in a minor key. Any conventional substitute chord for the above definitive chords also work.
- II-V Modulation
- This modulatory approach prepares the modulation by preceding the phrase in the new key with an IImi7-V7 of the first chord in the new key. The preparation normally occurs in the measure immediately preceding the new phrase.
- Work backwards by 5ths.
- Random modulations
- Common tone
- Sequential melodies
- Sequential phrases

#### ENDINGS

- From fragment of intro
- Written over a chord progression
- May start out just like the chorus melody and then work into final cadence.
- May use a surprise chord (deceptive cadence) on last note of chorus and then resolve into final chord.
- Surprise chord may turn back into last phrase of tune (Extension).
- Another type of extension may be effected by avoiding the root of the tonic chord in the bass on the last note of the chorus and then extending the phrase.

#### HOW TO DO TO ADD HYPE

- Intro & Endings.
- Drastic Dynamic Contrasts.
- Tempo changes.

- Add solos or small ensembles.
- Bar of percussion before big hit.
- Doubling note values at end (extensions).
- Add trills or obligatos in woodwinds.
- Flashy mallet parts.
- Key change before final statement.
- Obligato (soaring) horn part to cover phrase endings.
- Addition of percussion "toys" (Shaker, vibra-slap)
- High trumpet notes.
- Percussion fill after tune has ended (all percussion).
- Change length/order of events.
- Texture changes.

#### IDEAS TO MAKE THE CHART MORE PLAYABLE AND/OR POWERFUL.

- Get rid of rhythmic figures in harmony that won't be heard anyway- block scoring.
- Get rid of high trumpet notes. Rescore if necessary.
- Simplify percussion parts - sixteenth pattern.
- Simplify tuba rhythms & number of notes by using root position chords.
- Rescore or reassign low brass parts for the biggest sound.
- Change keys-down a step.
- Delete parts altogether-unison trumpet line
- Use percussion for rhythmic drive-whole notes in brass.
- Too many notes. Rewrite and simplify. Keep composer's intent.

#### REMINDERS AND CONSIDERATION

- Make sure that there is a change in the music (background, melody, pulse, style, etc.) every 15-30 seconds.
- Music should have high points and points of less tension built into it. Work to exaggerate these points with musical adjustment and drill (placement on field).
- Develop musical contrast from segment to segment (opener to production) .
- Work to develop points of highest impact in your musical show. Try for three points of highest impact (end of opener, during concert, and end of show).
- Try to cover weak musical segments that develop by making musical adjustments or deletions. Try to show off strong musical attributes present in your band.
- Time your overall musical show for: General length, Musical changes and contrast, Dead time between selections, and Applause points
- Stand back and listen to your band from a spectator's position.
  - Do you hear what you want to hear?

- Do you hear impact points.
- Do individuals or sections dominate the overall sounds
- Is the band in tune?
- Do you hear music?
- Are any of the problems a result of placement on the field?
- Balance your band musically while they are performing on the field.
- Is the percussion section steady with tempo and solid in playing their part? A solid percussion section greatly helps to clean up precision problems in both music and drill.
- Spend as much time working on music as you do the drill. Both are important and neither should be neglected. Drill design and movement is a Visual e

#### WHY MAKE ARRANGEMENTS?

- The published arrangement is simply too difficult or possibly too easy for the ability level of the band.
- The nature of the performance dictates a need for a special arrangement, unlike available arrangements.
- You want to get the best sound possible with the instrumentation you have so that your kids can succeed!

#### LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

- Find out which publisher owns or has license to the copyrighted material that is to be arranged.
- Fill out a "Request to Arrange Form" and send it to the publisher.
- What to expect?
- Takes time.
- You can expect to pay a fee of \$75 and up for each tune.
- Publisher will want a copy including percussion parts.
- Performances are limited to your band in one school year.
- A good source information is the BOA Web site [www.bands.org](http://www.bands.org) and click on Resource Room.

#### POINTERS FROM FRANK ERICKSON

##### Woodwinds

- The extreme registers are easier to play in louder passages.
- The extreme registers are better approached by small intervals.
- Large intervals are easier articulated than slurred.
- Restrict the notes on which a player enters to those lying within the suggested limited ranges.
- Avoid intricate, tongued passages in the low register.

### Woodwind Section

- The bass line should not be doubled above its original pitch.
- The melody usually can be doubled an octave lower.
- Avoid large gaps.
- Chords should be voiced as completely as possible in each section.
- Omit the piccolo in slower passages.

### Brass Section

- Notes from low B<sup>b</sup> on down should be doubled in the upper octave.
- Notes from middle line D on up should be doubled in the lower octave.
- Trumpets and horns usually should be voiced in closed position.
- Open voicing for the trombones are rich and sonorous.
- Chord roots and 5<sup>th</sup> are more safely doubled than 3<sup>rd</sup>s and 7<sup>th</sup>s.
- When the chord 3<sup>rd</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> of a major chord is in the bass, it should not be doubled in the upper voice.
- When a section is divided into two parts, 3<sup>rd</sup>s, 5<sup>th</sup>s, and 6<sup>th</sup>s are better intervals than 2<sup>nds</sup>, 4<sup>ths</sup>, and 7<sup>th</sup>s.

### General Comments

- When the chord 4<sup>th</sup> resolves to the 3<sup>rd</sup>, the 3<sup>rd</sup> should not be present in other voices.

### HOW TO WORK WITH AN ARRANGER

- Go to the arranger with a specific tune that you want presented in a specific part of your show. Do not ask what would be a good tune to do."
- Specify length, soloists, sections to feature, percussion breaks, strong or weak beginning and ending. In short, be specific as you can be.
- Take time to describe the overall show segments that surround the tune to be arranged.
- Explain that you want to tune to follow the 15-30 second rule.
- Specify within each section of your band, range limitations and technique. (Be conservative in your limitations).
- Specify which sections you DO NOT want exposed in any way.
- Often an arranger will have very general drill concepts developed while doing an arrangement. Therefore, be as specific as you can be so that those concepts come from you.
- Come to an agreement on payment for arranging services before the work is started. Some arrangers charge an amount per measure. Others charge by the hour or by a flat rate.
- Find out exactly what you get for your money. Some arrangers produce a C score only. Others give a full score but do not include individual or

- percussion parts. Often the percussion parts will have to be done by a percussion specialist at an additional price.
- Determine when it is that you must have the work completed. Be sure to allow additional time for the percussion writer and part copying time. Allow some additional time in case the arranger falls behind in the work process.
  - Finally, it is your responsibility to obtain the right to arrange form from the original copyright holder. Failure to do this is a violation of copyright laws. You and the institution you work for are the parties directly responsible in a legal sense.
  - Lastly, who writes out the parts?

Include Permit to arrange form, NSBA form, BOA info