

Kansas Bandmasters Association 2018 Summer Conference

Making Sound Decisions about
Concert Band Repertoire

Dr. Jay W. Gilbert

Doane University, Crete, Nebraska
jay.gilbert@doane.edu

A teacher affects eternity; he can never tell where his influence stops.
Henry Adams

Everyone you deal with is the product of someone's music education system.
Edward Lisk

What Do We Teach

Skills – Attitudes - Appreciations

National Standards (2014)

Create – Perform – Respond
Connect

The basic purpose of the school music program is to teach musical independence.
(Caldwell/Goolsby: *The Teaching of Instrumental Music*, page 13)

We have two essential curricular responsibilities:

- 1. To organize a viable program of studies that correlates instrumental music performance with the study of music structure and style and encompasses a diversity of musical behaviors: performing, listening, analyzing, composing, conducting, arranging.*
- 2. To establish a stimulating musical environment in which students are continually brought into contact with the "creative musical experience" either directly or indirectly.*

(Garofalo: *Blueprint for Band*, page 1)

The performance score provides the nucleus from which all objectives flow. Hence, the critical factor in building a comprehensive musicianship program is the selection of a qualitative body of literature for performance and study. In the performing ensemble, the repertoire represents the foundation of the curriculum.

(Garofalo: *Blueprint for Band*, page 28)

Children should be taught with only the most musically valuable material. For the young, only the best is good enough. They should be led to masterpieces by means of masterpieces.

(Kodaly: *Children's Choirs, the Selected Writings of Zoltan Kodaly*, page 76)

What is Good Music?

Criteria for Making Judgments about Serious Artistic Merit

1. The composition has form -- not a form but form -- and reflects a proper balance between repetition and contrast.
2. The composition reflects shape and design, and creates the impression of conscious choice and judicious arrangements on the part of the composer.
3. The composition reflects craftsmanship in orchestration, demonstrating a proper balance between transparent and tutti scoring, and between solo and group colors.
4. The composition is sufficiently unpredictable to preclude an immediate grasp of its musical meaning.
5. The route through which the composition travels in initiating its musical tendencies and probable musical goals is not completely direct and obvious.
6. The composition is consistent in its quality throughout its length and in its various sections.
7. The composition is consistent in its style, reflecting a complete grasp of technical details, clearly conceived ideas, and avoids lapses into trivial, futile, or unsuitable passages.
8. The composition reflects ingenuity in its development, given the stylistic context in which it exists.
9. The composition is genuine in idiom, and is not pretentious.
10. The composition reflects a musical validity which transcends factors of historical importance, or factors of pedagogical usefulness.

(Ostling: *An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind-Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit*. Diss., University of Iowa, 1974.)

Criteria for Selection – Nebraska State Bandmasters Association – Recommended Music List Committee

1. The composition provides opportunities for educational and musical growth.
2. The composition provides opportunities for technical advancement.
3. The composition provides opportunities for the development of the expressive qualities in music (including melody, rhythm, harmony, form, tone color, texture, phrasing, and dynamics).
4. The composition provides opportunities for the development of musical independence.
5. The composition represents a balance between repetition and contrast.
6. The composition reflects sensitivity in the treatment of block scoring.
7. The composition reflects sensitivity toward the possibilities and limitations of each instrument.
8. The composition attempts to be genuine and original as an educational and artistic work.

NYSSMA - Criteria for Selection

The Committee evaluates the submitted compositions based on three broad criteria:

- Compositional Technique
- Overall Musical Appeal
- Originality

Compositional Technique includes the following elements, where applicable:

- organization of pitch elements (such as melody, harmony, and counterpoint)
- organization of rhythmic elements
- formal design
- accuracy and clarity of notation
- appropriate writing for instruments and/or voices

Overall Musical Appeal includes the following aspects:

- stylistic coherence (regardless of the particular style)
- effective handling of unity/variety and tension/release
- effective use of dynamics, articulations, and expression marks

Interaction of all of the elements (atmosphere, mood, direction and flow of the music)

Originality refers to aspects of the piece that reveal the composer's individual "voice," and distinguish the piece from a musical exercise or a direct imitation of another piece.

(source: www.nysma.org)

Criteria for Music Selection - Thomas L. Dvorak

Note: The following is a criteria statement from the preface material in the reference work Best Music for High School Band. The general rationale upon which compositions were selected for that text are reflected in the following principles:

Compositions must exhibit a high degree of compositional craft. This will determine what students will learn from a piece, and more importantly, what level of aesthetic experience they might ultimately gain from it. *Only by playing the best music will students gain a knowledge of, feeling for, and appreciation of what is meaningful and what is valuable in music.*

Compositions must contain important musical constructs necessary for the development of musicianship. Among these (not all of which need be present in any given work, of course), are: a variety of keys -- major, minor, modal; a variety of meters -- duple, triple combinations, and both proportional metric or graphic notation; a variety of harmonic styles, ranging from traditional to contemporary to avant garde; a variety of articulation styles -- smooth, light, heavy, detached, legato, and so on. Compositions lacking in sensitivity, appropriateness, and perhaps variety in these areas are less likely to be of musical value and interest.

Compositions must exhibit an orchestration that, within the restrictions associated with a particular grade level, encourage musical independence both of individuals and sections. Too much repertoire emphasizes homophonic scoring, usually with large groupings within the ensemble playing all at once. When this is done too much and too often it will rob the individual of independent musical growth. Although this tendency to "safely score" may allow the ensemble to sound better initially, these pieces will over a period of time preclude the real issue at hand, that of developing functioning, independent musicians. Scoring that is "heavy-handed," which thick doublings predominating, inhibits the musical clarity, texture, and color that are so integral to the sounds of the band and wind ensemble.

All great music displays
Craftsmanship – Sensitivity – Originality

Great Works of Art

Great Musical Works of Art

Of the eighty-nine works listed the following ten were cited most often:

1. Stravinsky: *The Rite of Spring*
2. Copland: *Appalachian Spring*
3. Schoenberg: *A Survivor from Warsaw*
4. Mozart: *Serenade No. 10 in Bb (Gran Partita), K. 361*
5. Bach: *Six Suites for Unaccompanied Cello*
6. Bartok: *Concerto for Orchestra*
7. Beethoven: *String Quartet, Op. 132*
8. Beethoven: *Symphony No. 3 (Eroica)*
9. Brahms: *A German Requiem*
10. Ives: *Three Places in New England*

(Camphouse: *Composers on Composing for Band*. Clinic, Midwest 2002)

Great Wind Works

Dvorák: *Serenade in D Minor, op. 44* (1878)
Grainger: *Lincolnshire Posy* (1937)
Husa: *Music for Prague* 1968
Mozart: *Serenade Number 10 in Bb Major, K. 361* (1782-95)
Dahl: *Sinfonietta for Band* (1961)
Hindemith: *Symphony in Bb* (1952)
Holst: *Hammersmith (Prelude and Scherzo), op. 52* (1930)
Stravinsky: *Symphonies of Wind Instruments* (1947 version)
Schoenberg: *Theme and Variations, op. 43a* (1943)
Schwantner: *...and the mountains rising nowhere* (1977)
Holst: *First Suite in Eb* (1909)
Strauss: *Serenade, op.7* (1881)

If the teacher studies only the works of a typical band composer, he's not going to be deep enough; he must be well acquainted with the late quartets of Beethoven, the Beethoven Piano Sonatas and the Mahler symphonies among others. Then because he has done or is doing that kind of study, when he goes to Air for Band by Frank Erickson he'll get from Air for Band what's really there.

(H. Robert Reynolds quoted in Casey: *Teaching Techniques and Insights for Instrumental Music Educators*, page 28)

JWG Selective List

72 pieces of music every band director should know.

GRADE 1 (NB All pieces in grade 1 are in the beginning middle level volumes of the TMB series)

Balmages	<i>Midnight Sky</i>	TMMLB; p. 225
Broege	<i>Train Heading West</i>	TMBB; p. 361
Byrd/Fenske	<i>La Volta</i>	TMBB; p. 239
Daehn	<i>Song for Friends</i>	TMBB; p. 325
Edmondson	<i>Anasazi</i>	TMBB; p. 128
Hillard/Elledge/Pearson	<i>African Festival</i>	TMBB; p. 92
McGinty	<i>African Trilogy</i>	TMBB; p. 99
Mozart/Williams	<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	TMBB; p. 151
LaPlante	<i>Barn Dance Saturday Night</i>	TMBB; p. 145
Pearson	<i>Ayre and Dance</i>	TMBB; p. 141
Smith, R. W.	<i>The Tempest</i>	TMBB; p. 352
Sweeney	<i>Celtic Air and Dance</i>	TMMLB; p. 184
Ticheli	<i>First Light</i>	TMMLB; p.197

GRADE 2

Broege	<i>The Headless Horseman</i>	TMB vol 1; p. 148
Broege	<i>Rhythm Machine</i>	TMMLB p. 604
Curnow	<i>Korean Folk Rhapsody</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 104
Dunscombe/Finlayson	<i>Early English Suite</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 122
Erickson	<i>Balladair</i>	TMB vol. 3; p. 128
Grundman	<i>Little Suite for Band</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 112
Grundman	<i>Kentucky 1800</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 100
Holsinger	<i>A Childhood Hymn</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 85
McGinty	<i>The Red Balloon</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 139
LaPlante	<i>Overture on A Minstrel Tune</i>	TMB vol 4; p. 187
Susato/Margolis	<i>The Battle Pavane</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 77
Ticheli	<i>Joy</i>	TMB vol. 6; p. 201

GRADE 3

Carter	<i>Overture for Winds</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 191
Daehn	<i>As Summer Was Just Beginning</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 74
Erickson	<i>Air for Band</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 154
Erickson	<i>Tocatta for Band</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 207
Holsinger	<i>On a Hymnson of Philip Bliss</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 188
LaPlante	<i>American Riversongs</i>	TMB vol. 3; p. 198
Macky	<i>Underton</i>	TMB vol. 8; p. 542
McBeth	<i>Chant and Jubilo</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 170
Stuart	<i>Three Ayres from Gloucester</i>	TMB vol. 3; p. 204
Ticheli	<i>Joy Revisited</i>	TMB vol. 6; p. 371
Tschesnokoff/Houseknect	<i>Sabation is Created</i>	TMB vol. 4; p. 370
Vaughan Williams	<i>Flourish for Wind Band</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 179

GRADE 4

Arnold/Paynter	<i>Prelude, Siciliano, and Rondo</i>	TMB vol. 4; p. 276
Chance	<i>Variations on a Korean Folk Song</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 304
Dello Joio	<i>Scenes from "The Louvre"</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 281
Grainger/Rogers	<i>Irish Tune from County Derry</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 255
Hanson	<i>Chorale and Alleluia</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 229
Holst/Matthews	<i>First Suite in E-flat</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 251
Holst/Matthews	<i>Second Suite in F</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 286
Persichetti	<i>Pageant</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 271
Reed, Alfred	<i>Hounds of Spring, The</i>	TMB vol. 1; p 567
Vaughan Williams	<i>English Folk Song Suite</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 241
Whitacre	<i>October</i>	TMB vol. 5; p. 453
Zdecklik	<i>Chorale and Shaker Dance</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 234

GRADE 5

Arnold/Paynter	<i>Four Scottish Dances</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 452
Dello Joio	<i>Variants on a Medieval Tune</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 378
Grainger	<i>Colonial Song</i>	TMB Vol 1; p. 624
Grantham	<i>Southern Harmony</i>	TMB vol. 4; p. 680
Jacob	<i>Williams Byrd Suite</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 385
Mennin	<i>Canzona</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 601
Milhaud	<i>Suite Française</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 349
Persichetti	<i>Symphony No. 6</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 361
Reed, H. O.	<i>La Fiesta Mexicana</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 330
Schuman	<i>Chester</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 431
Schuman	<i>George Washington Bridge</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 326
Ticheli	<i>Blue Shades</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 547

GRADE 6

Colgrass	<i>Winds of Nagual</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 644
Copland	<i>Emblems</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 812
Dahl	<i>Sinfionetta</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 461
Grainger/Fennell	<i>Lincolnshire Posy</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 410
Hindemith	<i>Symphony in B-flat</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 465
Holst	<i>Hammersmith</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 403
Husa	<i>Music for Prague 1968</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 420
Maslanka	<i>A Child's Garden of Dreams</i>	TMB vol. 3; p. 592
Schoenberg	<i>Theme and Variations op. 43a</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 482
Schwantner	<i>and the mountains rising nowhere</i>	TMB vol. 2; p. 529
Stravinsky	<i>Symphonies of Wind Instruments</i>	TMB vol. 1; p. 104

Suggestions to Consider

Everything we do should be guided by this principle: *What is in the best interest of the students?*

Therefore, you should carefully consider both the technical and musical strengths and weaknesses of individuals, sections and ensemble as you are evaluating literature to perform and program.

- Pick one piece that will challenge your student technically, but that the band can ultimately perform well. This will most likely be a core repertoire or big piece.
- Pick one piece that challenges the students musically but is technically playable on the first or second reading.
- Consider an that will compliment the these tunes, but the band can play well and “comfortably.”
- Be intuitive and intentional in the way you end a concert. Most concerts end big with a march, a gallop, something exciting, noisy, or joyful. Some concerts might appropriately end quietly.
- If you have a soloist, carefully consider the band accompaniment. Consider how much rehearsal time you are going to commit to this piece.
- Regarding new pieces. Program no more than one new piece a concert. If it is polytonal or atonal consider following it something very tonal and melodic.
- Regarding popular/commercial/movie music. Be careful how much of this music you are using. Students get a steady diet of pop music in pep band. Ultimately they will believe in the music you believe in.

Desire to learn as much about repertoire as you can. This is achieved in four ways:

- Try to listen to a new band piece a week. If you can listen with the score, that would be better.
- Attend the concerts of the colleagues in LPS and at UNL.
- Go to NMEA and NSBA conferences.

Ask for help from your colleagues.

- Opening – fanfare, overture, march
- Contemporary work (new music)
- Quiet tune – folk song, ballad, hymn
- Big Piece – ternary form, suite, symphony
- Closer – march, gallop, dance

- What is in the best interest of all students is to equip them to the proper skills, attitudes and appreciations to perform the best of our wind music that they are capable of playing.
- What is in the best interest of all students is to make them creative, responsive, independent performers of music.
- What is in our best interest is to perpetuate our art by programming appropriately challenging literature at all levels.
- You must have a passion for the music you choose to perform. You must make a commitment to drink deeply of music and art so that you can create and perform musical masterpieces every day.

If you would like a complete list of the more than 1,200 included in *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*. Please email me at: jay.gilbert@doane.edu. In the subject line

NOTES