



# Kjos Band News

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR BAND EDUCATORS

## The Band Director As Servant/Leader

by Bruce Pearson

**M**e, a servant/leader? You've got to be kidding! How can a servant be a leader, or a leader be a servant?

While training young musicians to become band directors, a considerable amount of time is devoted to the study of music theory, music history, musicianship, stylistic practices, conducting, and to the pedagogy of the instruments in the ensemble. These studies are critical to the success of the band director and his or her students.

However, one important component that will determine the success or failure for the director receives little attention. That component is the training to become an effective *servant/leader*.

A band director's leadership can be positive or negative. We can *influence* our students to love music and learning, or we can *influence* them to feel exactly the opposite. A *servant/leader* not only leads but serves in his responsibility to meet the needs of his or her students. This requires great wisdom and a sensitivity to student's needs.

Successful *servant/leadership* is a dynamic and intricate process that engages the wills, emotions and spirits of distinct individuals. Our students will work harder and longer when they understand the overall significance of their contribution. This speaks clearly to the need to teach comprehensive musicianship to our bands. We should explain the music to our students as thoroughly as our understanding of the music permits. By doing so, we inform our students of the importance of their part and their contribution to the success of the entire ensemble. When a student appreciates their contribution, they will appreciate the musical goal that is before them.

We have an impact on the lives of our students and colleagues as we interact with them in the course of doing our job as band *servant/leaders*. We *influence* them by the quality

of the work we do and the way we live our lives. *Students won't care how much we know until they know how much we care!* Love, trust and respect are the pillars of every relationship. It is our responsibility as band *servant/leaders* to cultivate a positive environment, primarily by setting a good example. Beautiful music and learning exist most often in an environment of love, trust, and mutual respect. These qualities are gained through an extended process. Thankfully, we often have our students for several years which provides the necessary time to develop those qualities in our student relationship. We face new situations everyday that challenge our values, our self-control, our creativity, our sensitivity as musicians, and our compassion. It is through these challenges and our response to them that we influence our students — either for good or bad.

In his book, *Leadership Is An Art*, Max De Pree states "when leadership understands that it exists to serve rather than be served, it will do so with integrity. The leader is the servant of his followers in that he removes the obstacles that prevent them from doing their jobs. In short, the true leader enables his or her followers to realize their full potential."<sup>1</sup>

We, as band *servant/leaders*, have the greatest job in the world! We have the privilege of providing inspired influence by helping young people to love music, love learning, love others and love themselves all while making beautiful music.

1. Max De Pree, *Leadership Is An Art*, (New York: Dell Trade Paperback, 1989), xvii-xviii.

*Bruce Pearson is an internationally-known author, composer, clinician, and conductor. He has taught at the elementary, junior high, high school, and college levels for over thirty years. In December of 1998, Bruce was awarded the prestigious Midwest Clinic Medal of Honor in recognition of his outstanding contribution to music education.*

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## Five GUARANTEED Strategies To Improve Your Ensemble NOW!

by Dr. James M. Bankhead

**M**usic directors of any level ensemble (beginning through professional) should be constantly working to improve the performance of their groups. Often we get into a rut that seems to keep us from moving to the next higher level of artistic development. While I don't want to oversimplify the many complex processes that a conductor must attend to, there are some very basic things we can all do that will definitely make a huge difference in our ensembles in a very short amount of time.

### 1. Select HIGH QUALITY MUSIC for every ensemble.

This may seem to be obvious but in practice it is not. Often, selecting music is left to the last minute or given only the most cursory consideration. In fact, a conductor/music director should spend a lot of time, effort and resources researching, planning, evaluating and listening to music that might be used with her/his ensembles.

There are many great lists of graded music. You can and should consult with other colleagues and hear performances. Publishers often provide recordings of their music. But in the final analysis, it is the conductor's first responsibility to choose music appropriate for the ensemble, the audience, and the occasion while keeping in mind the concepts to be taught by way of that music.

If you are going to spend time preparing for a season or for one concert, the time spent selecting high quality music is the most valuable investment you will make.

### 2. Concentrate on TONE QUALITY in every section at every rehearsal.

Simply stated, the sound your ensemble makes can and should be a top priority at each rehearsal. Music is first and foremost about sound. The better the sound of an ensemble the better the music making. Simply playing all the scales or slamming through a tough piece of music while ignoring the basic concept that tone is vitally important is not the way to build a

high quality learning environment where artistic achievement (even at the beginning levels) can be achieved.

We all know what a bad band or orchestra or jazz band sounds like. Most often a lackluster sound (yes, it's difficult to put into words) is simply a matter of the players getting the most uncommon sounds from rather common instruments. Make fixing the tone of every instrument part of your daily routine with the band. Stop spending all of your time "running scales" and instead spend a few minutes each day focusing on getting each player to make a better sound/tone on their instrument.

So at the very least, pay attention to these simple tone tips :

**Flutes** – posture; get rid of that airy sound – form the aperture

**Oboe** – READ THIS! It's the reed (and don't bite)

**Clarinet** – point the chin and grin – fix the embouchure

**Bassoon** – the reed-yes, but pressing or pinching will kill the sound

**Saxophone** – in concert band, no metal mouthpieces...ever; dry reed sound – no wet sounds

**French horn** – the air/breath support; fix the right hand position; bold, dark sound

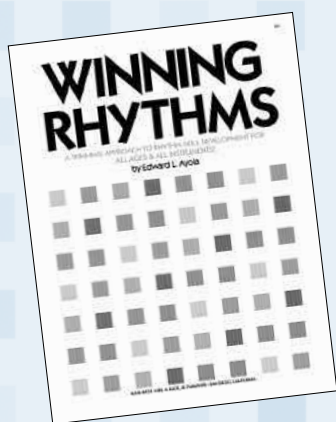
**Trumpet** – the air/breath support and holding the instrument properly; rich, vibrant and not blatty

**Euphonium** – the air/breath support and hold the instrument properly; dark, rich tone

**Trombone** – the air/breath support and posture; dark, rich tone

**Tuba** – the air/breath support, posture and holding the instrument properly; dark, rich tone

**Percussion** – the right thing to hit; the right thing to hit with; the proper hitting technique; the snare, bass drum and timpani are the foundation of your section



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By Bruce Pearson

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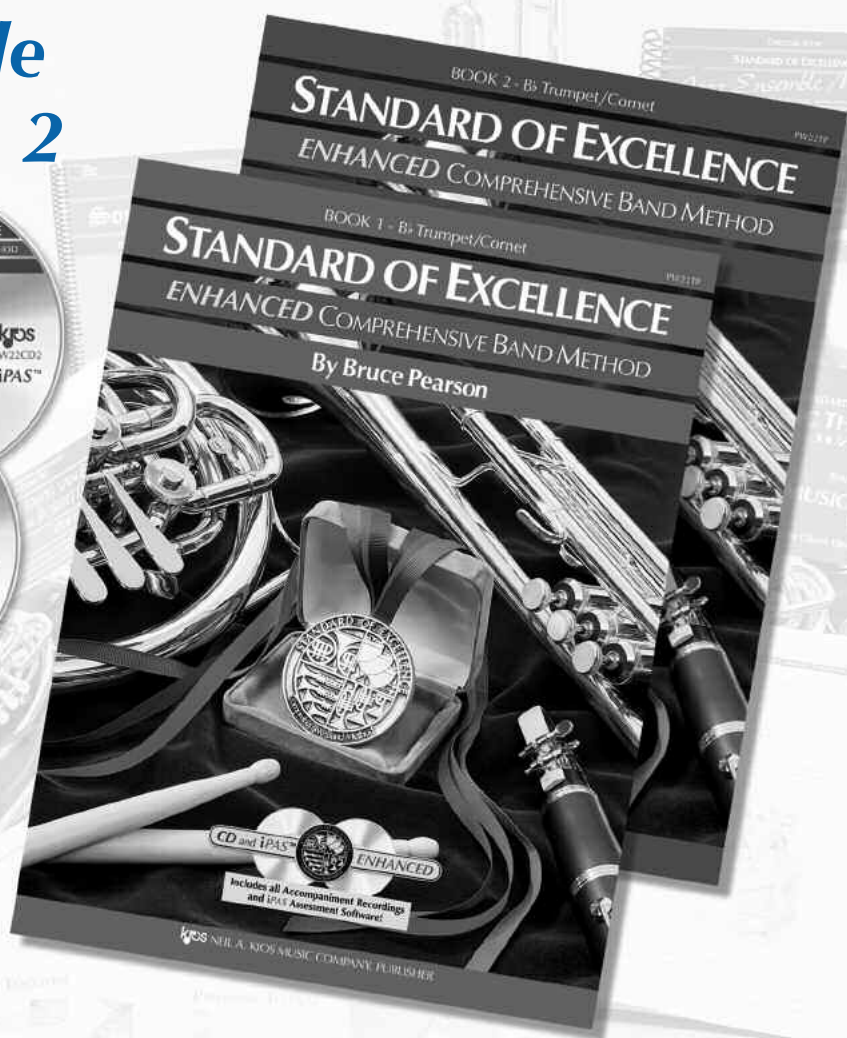
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**Conductor** – posture does matter every day, all the time for everyone...even you

- Improve the **MECHANICAL QUALITY** of all of the instruments in your inventory
- Make sure instruments are working — get them fixed
- Teach the proper handling of instruments and don't tolerate abuse or misuse
- Never allow players to blat or make other horrid sounds

### 3. Create a **PROFESSIONAL QUALITY ENVIRONMENT** for your rehearsals and concerts.

A messy rehearsal room, trash everywhere, and last week's announcements on the board do not give the message that a rehearsal is a special place and time. Clean up the environment in which you make music! Treat your rehearsals as "sacred artistic time" where the music is the reason for being. That may sound a little heavy but the closer you come to that kind of attitude the more you will get out of your rehearsals.

The truth is **IN THE SCORE** — make the music the focus of your rehearsals. Clean up and organize your "work space" — rehearsal room and your messy office. Start and end on time — classes, rehearsals, concerts. Have the "Artistic Director/Conductor" mentality.

### 4. Plan/schedule **HIGH QUALITY STUDY/PREPARATION TIME** for you!

If you are like many conductors, preparing for rehearsal (learning the score/music) ends up being last on your list of the many things that occupy your day. Change that habit immediately. Schedule your own prep time just like you do any other **REALLY** important activity, and don't be the one who doesn't take that time seriously. Block time when you know that you are at your best (midnight to 1:30 a.m. isn't normally when you are at your best).

Being well prepared for rehearsal is the first job of a conductor (knowing the "right tempo" is second). A great concert is the result of great rehearsals.

Look at the score from large sections to small — have a clear idea of the form and shape of the music (again, at any level of performance).

### 5. Make your concert/event a **HIGH QUALITY EXPERIENCE** for everyone.

Many conductors seem to only care about the music rather than all the elements that make a concert or performance a great event for everyone. Remember that an audience "hears with its eyes" — sometimes a concert can be ruined because of something that has nothing to do with the actual playing of the music.

At the performance, the audience is as important as the players and the music.

**PLANNING** is the key! Planning **IS** the key! Planning is **THE** key! Planning is the **KEY!**

Enjoy the experience and everyone else will, too. All this means is that you must think through the concert from the view point of the audience. (Did I mention that planning is the key to success?!) Develop your own check list for concerts that includes everything from concert order to parking to having the restrooms opened and clean. If people are unhappy with the environment of the concert, they will not be back to future events.

I'd like to suggest a few other things for you to think about when you are preparing for a performance:

- The band conductor should not be a stagehand and roadie! Get your students or volunteers to move stands and set things up. If you are doing this, you didn't plan very well.
- Rehearse **EVERYTHING!** This includes "surprise" awards or presentations, and **BOWS!**
- Extended warm ups and playing in front of the audience before a concert or adjudication does not help anything. If you haven't fixed it by performance time then it's too late!
- What to wear? Black is the color of **EVERYTHING** other than the shirt — it will be white!
- Announcements and introductions can kill a performance. If you are not good at this then get someone else to do it that is. And remember, introductions should always **END** with the name of the individual you are introducing.

There is a lot more to be said about these issues. But start at whatever point you are and just be consistent with your effort to improve these things. Ask for help or ideas from your colleagues. And don't be afraid to try something new.

These are some simple recommendations that will help your ensembles perform better. You don't want to do anything that gets in the way of the music so you need to keep music the focus and get rid of the distractions. Prepare well and have fun making great music.

*Dr. James M. Bankhead is Chairman of the Department of Music at the California State University, Chico — a position he has held for more than 10 years. He is involved with all aspects of the artistic, academic and administrative life of this outstanding institution. Prior to his appointment at CSU, Chico, Dr. Bankhead was Executive Director of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra and Producer at the Weidner Center for the Performing Arts. He served as Commander/Conductor of the United States Air Force Band in Washington DC 1985–1991 and Deputy Commander/Assistant Conductor of that organization from 1976–1985.*

# Musical Assessment: A Practical Example

by Tony Petricola

In the Spring 2004 issue of *Kjos Band News* I laid out the philosophical and technical aspects of musical standards. I would now like to take a closer look at how these issues play out by walking you through an actual, large-scale assessment. This process can be used to give students feedback as well as to indicate progress toward the goals you have set for your band program. I have included commentary (in italics) throughout the following to provide some tips on how to construct and run the assessment.

*In advance, you want to make clear what you expect of your students and you should also include a breakdown of the achievement standards the students will be held to. Often times, this breakdown will be drawn from your state and local standards. You will also want to include a breakdown of how you will be determining grades.*

## STANDARDS

### National Music Standards 5 – 7

#### 5. Reading and Notating Music

Proficient students should be able to sight-read, accurately and expressively, music with a level of difficulty of 2, on a scale of 1 to 6.

*This assessment can be expanded to encompass the following standards if a listening exercise is added.*

#### 6. Listening to, Analyzing, and Describing Music

Proficient students should be able to describe, using appropriate terminology, specific stylistic and structural elements in a listening example.

#### 7. Evaluating Music and Musical Performances

Proficient students should be able to evaluate the quality and effectiveness of their own and others' performances, compositions, arrangements, and improvisations by applying specific criteria appropriate for the style of music and be able to offer constructive suggestions for improvement.

*Though the above listening and evaluation exercises are encouraged, we will only be discussing the fifth standard, **Reading and Notating Music**, in this article.*

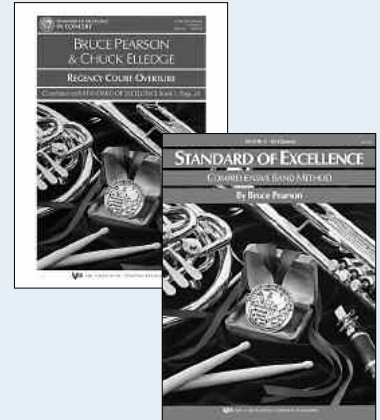
## Reading and Notating Music

### Overview

The teacher will form the students into ensembles that will perform an unfamiliar musical selection. After their initial (sight-reading) performance, analytic rubrics will be used by the teacher to measure the sight-reading performance by using various criteria: tone quality, pitch accuracy, rhythmic precision, and dynamic contrast (Fig. 1).

### Procedure

The instructor should arrange chairs, stands, and recording equipment ahead of time as appropriate. The teacher will then assemble appropriate ensembles and assign parts. Students should be allowed to look over the performance piece for one minute before playing/singing it. The teacher will assess the sight-reading using the "Ensemble



## STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE LEADS THE WAY IN ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL STANDARDS

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Sight-Reading Performance Scoring Guide”(Fig. 1). Each ensemble should complete the entire task without interruption.

If more than one teacher is needed to administer the assessment, a written script should be created to ensure the instructions are delivered in a consistent manner. It should also inform the student about key areas being assessed and give them an opportunity to view the scoring guide (Fig. 1). The script should walk the student through the assessment process and set any time limits.

*As discussed above, be sure that students have prior knowledge of the assessment criteria so that they can appropriately prepare.*

### Ensemble Sight-Reading Performance Scoring Guide

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Meets the Standard)	Level 4
<b>Tone Quality</b>	Vocal tone is generally closed and pinched, instrumental tone is consistently uncharacteristic of the instrument.	Vocal tone is more closed than open and lacks resonance. Instrumental tone varies from the characteristic sound to the point of detracting from the performance.	Vocal tone is less open and resonant, exhibiting episodes of tension and restriction. Instrumental tone varies from the characteristic sound but does not detract from the performance.	Vocal tone is open and resonant. Instrumental tone is characteristic of the instrument.
Places for improvement:				
Score:				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Meets the Standard)	Level 4
<b>Pitch</b>	Tonal production is evident, but incorrect notes consistently detract from the performance.	Incorrect notes occasionally detract from the performance.	Incorrect notes occur but do not detract from the performance.	Notes are played accurately.
Places for improvement:				
Score:				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Meets the Standard)	Level 4
<b>Rhythm</b>	Rhythm problems consistently detract from the performance.	Rhythm problems occasionally detract from the performance.	Rhythm problems occur but do not detract from the performance.	Rhythm is consistently accurate.
Places for improvement:				
Score:				
	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3 (Meets the Standard)	Level 4
<b>Dynamics</b>	Performer(s) employ little or no dynamic contrast.	Employment of dynamic contrast is in evidence, but with little impact on intended musical outcome.	Performer(s) employ dynamic contrast when indicated, although levels of contrast could be more profound.	Performer(s) employ dynamic contrast effectively to communicate intended musical outcome.
Places for improvement:				
Score:				

Fig. 1

*Students should be participants in an instrumental or vocal music program that has a regular sight-reading practice component.*

*To avoid student familiarity with the piece, original music is strongly recommended.*

*Recording the performance will help the instructor to listen more carefully to the group therefore producing a more thoughtful assessment.*

*For school-wide or district-wide assessments, be sure to have all requisite materials and equipment prepared in advance in order to ensure that the assessment maintains a degree of continuity.*

*If the assessment is to be run by more than one teacher, be sure that the verbal directions given during the assessment reinforce the summary and needed background knowledge that were spelled out to the students prior to the actual assessment (i.e. through the use of the above-mentioned script).*

### Conclusion

I hope this practical look at an actual assessment has been helpful. As I have noted, it may include other tasks and therefore measure more than one standard at a time, saving valuable teaching time in the process.

Though a product of the public’s need for accountability, assessments based on local, state and national standards can still be a benefit to music students. When students are given a list of clear expectations and the time to properly prepare, they will begin to view these periodic assessments as milestones marking their road to musical mastery.

*Tony Pietricola has been teaching music grades K– Graduate School, since 1969. His present position is at Charlotte Central School in Charlotte, VT, where he teaches grades 5 – 8. He was voted “Vermont Music Educator of the Year” for 2003–2004.*

*Tony has been part of the Vermont Arts Assessment Project, the Vermont Music Performance Benchmarking Project, coordinator for revisions in the arts standards for the Vermont Department of Education, and served as President of the Vermont Music Educators’ Association.*

*Tony performs regularly with the Vermont Jazz Ensemble.*

Looking for affordable sight-reading material?

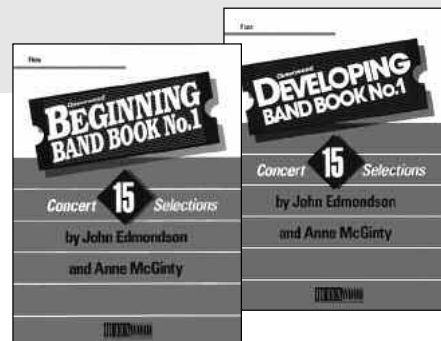


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# Matching Students To Instruments

by Bruce Pearson

One of the most exciting and important events in the life of a prospective band student is when he or she selects the instrument they are going to play. There are many factors that influence a student's decision such as the availability of an instrument, the popularity of an instrument, parental preference, peer pressure, perceived musical opportunities, and band director needs and suggestions. A half century ago, many prospective band students wanted to play the trombone like Glenn Miller or the clarinet like Benny Goodman. The flute became extremely popular in the seventies when the rock band *Jethro Tull's* lead performer, Ian Anderson, played the flute. The soprano saxophone has recently grown in favor due, in part, to Kenny G's popularity.

Popular tastes aside, it is critical that each child's musical potential and individual differences be identified and that the information be utilized in the recruiting process, the instrument selection process, and later in the teaching process. Due to the importance of the student's instrument selection, every effort should be made by the teacher to identify and communicate the student's unique characteristics to the student and his or her parents/guardians to assist them in the instrument selection process.

Besides embouchure formation, little information has been provided to the prospective band student to assist them in making their instrument selection. Informal research, gained by surveying former and current band members, has revealed that there are numerous factors and principles that will assist the student in the instrument selection process. To give each prospective student the best and most helpful information, consider the following principles:

## Principle #1

*Test for musical aptitude and develop a recruitment program based upon knowledge and understanding of the student's musical aptitude.*

Some musical aptitude tests are:

*Intermediate Measures of Musical Audiation* (Gordon, 1982)

*Measure of Musical Abilities* (Bentley, 1966)

*Musical Aptitude Profile* (Gordon, 1965)

*Seashore Measures of Musical Talents* (Seashore et al., 1960)

*Standardized Tests of Musical Intelligence* (Wing, 1961)

A description of these texts and their suitability can be found in *Measurement and Evaluation of Musical Experiences* by Boyle and Radocy, published by Schirmer Books.

While high marks on an aptitude test are an asset for any instrument, certain instruments *require* that a student receive high marks in order to be successful on that instrument.

### 1. Pitch sensitivity

**Instruments requiring a high degree of pitch sensitivity**

Oboe, bassoon, French horn, trombone, tuba, timpani

**Instruments requiring a moderate degree of pitch sensitivity**

All other wind instruments

### 2. Meter/Rhythm sensitivity

**Instruments requiring a high degree of meter/rhythm sensitivity**

Percussion and tuba

**Instruments requiring a moderate degree of meter/rhythm sensitivity**

All other wind instruments

### 3. Steadiness of beat

**Instruments requiring a high degree of beat steadiness**

Percussion and tuba

**Instruments requiring a moderate degree of beat steadiness**

All other wind instruments

## Principle #2

*Test for instrument timbre preference.* This can easily be determined by demonstrating the band instruments (out of view) and asking students to identify their favorite instrumental sounds.

## Principle #3

*Utilize academic achievement results.* There is a substantial correlation between a student's past academic achievement and successful performance on the more difficult band instruments. Academic achievement, though, should be viewed only as a secondary factor in predicting success in instrumental music. Musical aptitude is the single most important contributing factor for success in music learning.

To assist the band director in obtaining this information distribute the form found on page 538 of the **Standard of Excellence Book 1, Conductor's Score** and ask the classroom teacher to fill out the form for each student.



### Principle #4

*Evaluate and utilize the student's physical characteristics.* Some of these physical characteristics include arm and finger size, lip and teeth structure, and stature. To assist the band director in obtaining this information, see page 535 of the **Standard of Excellence Book 1, Conductor's Score**.

### Principle #5

*Evaluate and utilize student's eye-hand coordination skills.*

#### Instruments requiring high degree of eye-hand coordination

Flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon and percussion

#### Instruments requiring moderate degree of eye-hand coordination

All other wind instruments

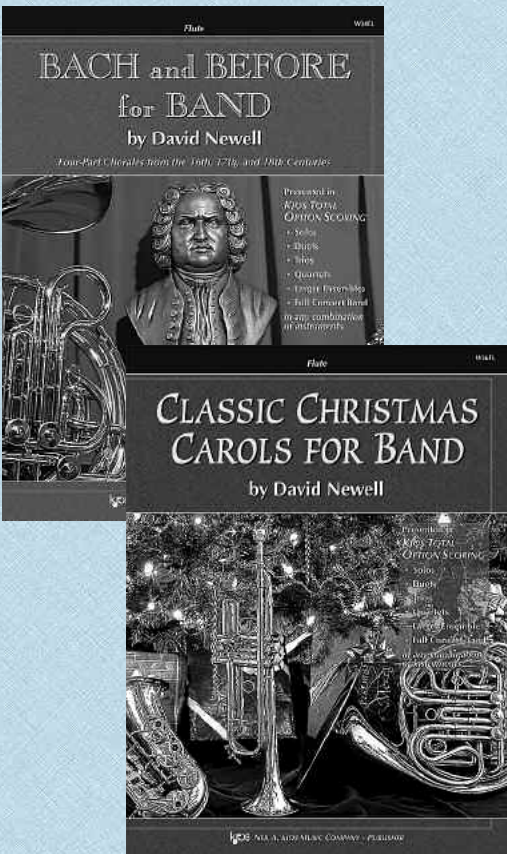
### Principle #6

*Evaluate and utilize parent/guardian support in the selection of the child's musical instrument.* To assist the band director in obtaining this information, see page 539 of the **Standard of Excellence Book 1, Conductor's Score**.

### Principle #7

*Evaluate and utilize the musical listening experiences encountered in school and at the home in the selection of a musical instrument.* To assist the band director in obtaining this information, see page 539 of the **Standard of Excellence Book 1, Conductor's Score**.

Obtaining the information identified in these principles and communicating them to the student's parents/guardians, preferably in a private meeting, will assist the student in making a wise instrument choice that will help the child to become successful, enjoy music-making, and remain a committed band member.



## BACH and BEFORE for BAND and CLASSIC CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR BAND

by David Newell

Introduce your directors to the many ways that Bach and Before for Band and Classic Christmas Carols for Band can be used to improve two of the most important skills necessary for superior performance – the ability to play in-tune and to play expressively!

Both Bach and Before for Band and Classic Christmas Carols for Band are presented in the unique “Kjos Total Option Scoring” format. In this format, each of the part books contain all four choral voice parts, written in the playable range of each instrument, allowing for unlimited flexibility in instrumentation. Not only can the chorales and Christmas carols be performed in traditional full band arrangements, but they can also be performed as solos, duets, trios, quartets, and larger ensembles in absolutely any combination of instruments. Because all four voice parts are printed in each book, the individual soprano, alto, tenor, and bass parts can also be rehearsed in unison, which will lead to significantly improved intonation.

**Available from your favorite music dealer!**



## iPAS Software Corner

There is no substitute for a live teacher interacting with a student — but wouldn't it be great to have an assistant telling your students which notes were right and helping them play in tune while making sure they hold their notes for the proper duration? You can't be with your students every time they practice, but with our iPAS software you can be sure their practice will be more productive.

Before interactive software, unless your student had a parent or older sibling that was an instrumentalist, there was no way to provide immediate feedback for a student practicing at home. The iPAS Practice and Assessment Software fills this void by evaluating a student's performance using the following set of criteria — note correctness, rhythmic and pitch accuracy and note duration. In Figure 1 below, you can see a close-up of how the software breaks this rubric into a double-graph system. The top graph shows the musical staff and will indicate correct pitch and proper duration. The bottom graph shows the quality of a student's intonation.

Another benefit of using iPAS is its ability to inspire students. Early in the development phase of the software we gave a copy to Michael, a San Diego middle-school clarinet player who had recently dropped out of band. We gave him a copy of Standard of Excellence *ENHANCED* (accompaniment recordings and the iPAS Practice and Assessment Software included). We didn't tell him how to load or use the software. We didn't tell him to get back to us with feedback. We simply gave him a copy and waited to see what would happen.

He took the book on a Friday and by the following Monday he had emailed us an iPAS test he had recorded over the weekend. With the iPAS software, you can email test lines that contain your percentage correct (see Figure 2 for a screenshot of an assessment) and a sound file (containing a recording of the

scored assessment). He had practiced the line and performed several tests until his score reached 98% (100% notes, 96% rhythm). His emailed recording of this performance ended with him exclaiming triumphantly "That was awesome!" (visit [www.kjos.com](http://www.kjos.com) to hear Michael's performance).

We talked with his mother who told us that her son took the book into the den on Friday, loaded the software, plugged in a microphone and started practicing. She said that Michael locked himself in the den all weekend. Sunday afternoon he proudly emerged and asked his parents to come listen to his recording. Michael's mother put it best — "We used to complain he never practiced, now we couldn't make him stop."

What sets the iPAS software apart? Since each recording is graded, working with the iPAS software is like playing a video game. Students strive to get the *high score*. Since they can perform achievement lines at various tempos and receive a score as many times as they like, students are encouraged to practice the passage over and over again. They begin to learn that the only way to raise the score is to play their notes at the right time, for the right duration and on the right pitch. Once their best recording and its score are saved, it can be sent via email to anyone. Since you don't need the software to receive the email — students can send their performance to a teacher or a grandparent or even to us at Kjos to have it posted on our website. The biggest surprise for us was how effectively the point score was at inspiring practice. Simply telling a student what they did wrong was not enough, they also needed a goal to strive for.

A combination of constructive criticism and inspiration, the new iPAS software is the best music education software on the market. Call us today for a free copy of Standard of Excellence *ENHANCED* and let one of your students try it and you'll see the iPAS difference.

Fig. 1

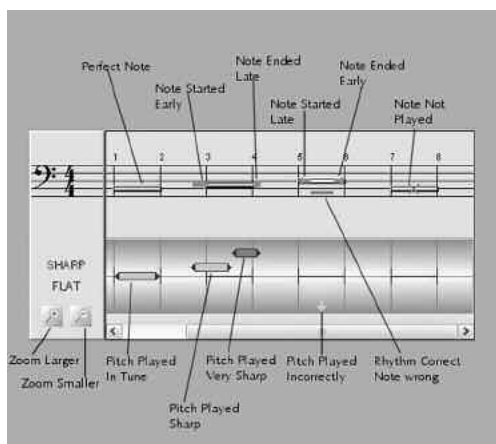
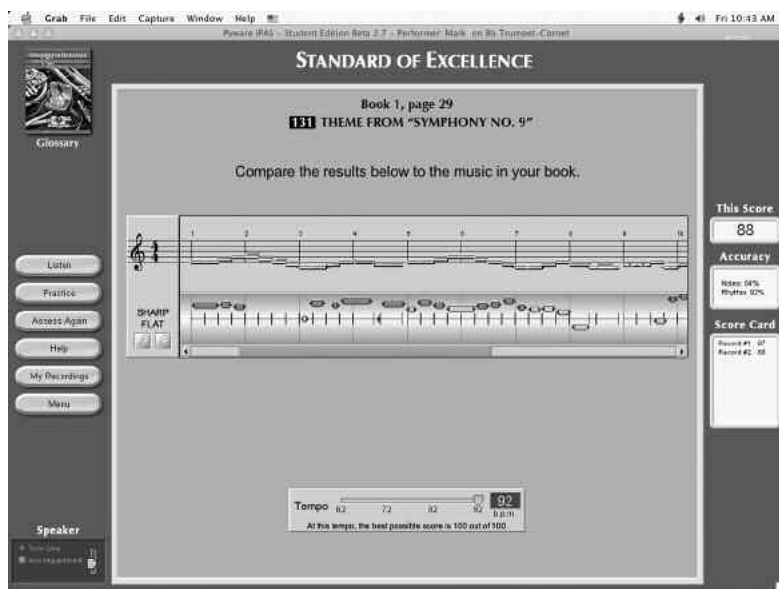


Fig. 2



## Improvisation: The Next Step

by Dean Sorenson

Student improvisers often find the use of a single scale or a single pitch set valuable in taking their first steps as jazz soloists. Being able to draw upon a finite set of pitches that remains constant over the entire solo chorus allows students to concentrate on rhythmic and melodic development without concern for theoretical knowledge or complicated harmonic progressions. An excellent example of this type of approach, and one that many directors are familiar with, is the teaching of the blues scale. Since all of the pitches in the scale sound good over the entire blues progression, the player is freed from concern about chord changes.

While this technique has many advantages for the young player, students and directors often find themselves asking “What’s next?” Boredom with a certain approach to playing is in many ways a good thing because it demonstrates a desire to grow beyond the established boundaries. Jazz musicians refer to the single scale approach as “skating” because the soloist “skates” over the top of the harmony without really digging into it. “Playing the changes” means that the solo line reflects the harmonies that are changing during the solo chorus. It is a much more mature way to approach a solo even though advanced players will “skate” sometimes. How can we help students take the next step and learn to “play the changes?” I would first like to outline the challenges on a basic level, and then offer some solutions.

The first step is to identify how the chords of a given progression are constructed. In order to do this, chord symbols must be decoded and translated into their constituent pitches so that they can be played on the student’s instrument. Since wind instruments are single line instruments and many transpose, this means arpeggiating the chords and transposing them to the appropriate key. Thus a CMA7 chord for trombones (a non-transposing instrument) would be a DMA7 chord for trumpets and tenor saxes and an AMA7 chord for alto and baritone saxes. Students should then commit these chords to memory so that they are able to draw upon them at a moment’s notice.

Each chord also has a corresponding scale that accompanies it. Once the chords are mastered, students should learn the scales that relate to each chord. This involves learning the established chord/scale relationships and properly transposing them for practice and study. As with the learning of the chords, scales should be committed to memory. Memorization of these tools allows the student to feel comfortable with both the chords and

the scales. A command of both the chordal and scalar elements which make up the solo chorus will allow students to successfully “play the changes.”

So how do we go about learning these techniques? Those of you familiar with the *Standard of Excellence Jazz Ensemble Method* are aware that both Bruce Pearson and I favor a contextual approach. That is, exercises that are practiced in the context of actual tunes. Practicing chords and scales in all 12 keys is a valid and useful way to learn, but a more effective strategy and one that will inspire younger players more is practicing chords and scales within the context of a tune. Another advantage of contextual practice is that the tunes themselves can be written in such a way as to introduce different chords and scales more gradually, allowing for more thorough understanding of each. Since *each and every* chord in a given progression must be studied and learned, the younger student will benefit most by studying tunes with a limited number of chords.

This is the approach taken in the *Standard of Excellence ADVANCED Jazz Ensemble Method*, newly published by Kjos Music. The Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method picks up where the Jazz Ensemble Method left off. The focus of the Advanced Jazz Ensemble Method is improvisational development, specifically, learning how to “play the changes.” Each tune has an open solo section that includes chord studies and scale studies that relate to the tune itself. These studies include CD accompaniments for student practice and rhythm section accompaniment grooves for ensemble practice. These Advanced Improvisation Studies introduce different chords and scales at a slow pace and utilize techniques that can be applied to ANY tune. Single scale exercises are also included for less experienced players. Having the choice of using the single scale approach while at the same time learning to play chord changes allows all students to progress at their own pace.

Future *Kjos Band News* articles will focus in more detail on particular chord and scale exercises and how to get the most out of this kind of practice. Please stay tuned!

*Dean Sorenson is a prolific and highly sought-after composer, trombonist, and clinician. He holds degrees from the University of Minnesota and the Eastman School of Music, and was recently appointed Interim Director of Jazz Studies and Performance at the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis.*

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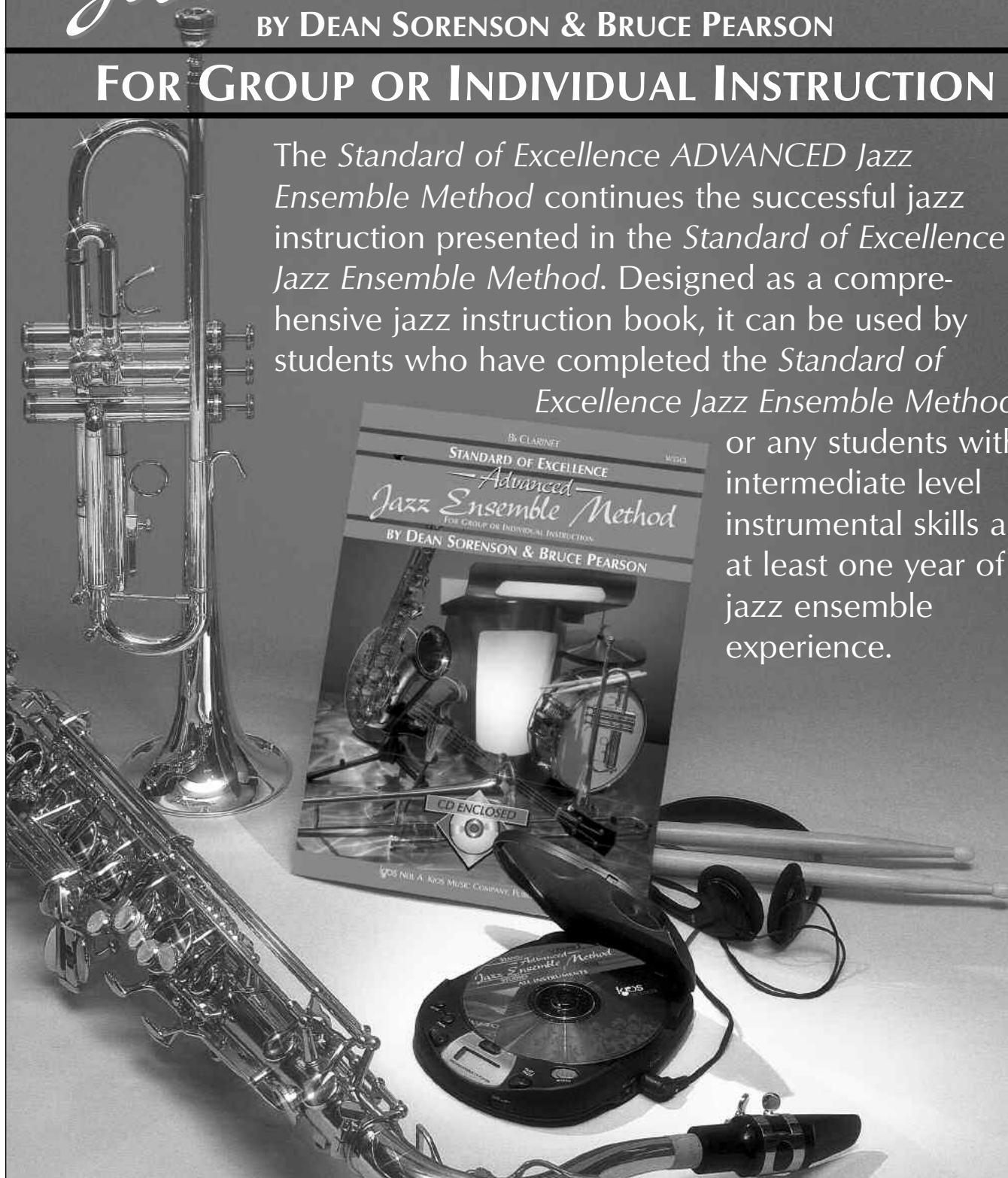
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