



Kjos Band News

NEWS AND INFORMATION FOR BAND EDUCATORS

What Is Good Leadership?

By Bruce Pearson

Leadership is the discipline...

Order your life, priorities, vision, and purpose. Learn to say “no” and let some things go in order to do the best at that which is most important. Don’t let the urgent steal from the important!

of deliberately exercising influence...

Leaders lead; as a band director you have been given the responsibility and authority to lead your ensemble to the best possible music education.

within a group...

Lead from among, not over. Remember that you are both a servant and a leader. Always have the welfare of your students at the forefront of your decision-making process.

to move toward goals...

Have a clearly established vision of where you are taking your group educationally. This vision should be broken into clearly defined, attainable, and measurable goals.

of beneficial permanence...

When establishing goals for your ensemble, they should be ones of lasting value. These may include, for your students, a lifetime of music-making (vocational or avocational), preparing your students to be consumers of good music (i.e. concert goers or purchasers of good recordings), or supporters of the arts, including their own future children.

that fulfill the group’s real needs.

Keep in mind that there is a difference between a group’s wants and their needs. This principle is most clearly manifested by the selection of our repertoire. It is the responsibility of the band director to select music of the highest quality that the ensemble can perform.

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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by Bruce Pearson & Barrie Gott



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Taking Care of Business: Rehearsal Preparation for Directors and Students

By Dean Sorenson

Rehearsal time for our ensembles must compete with many distractions, both musical and non-musical. It seems that there is never enough rehearsal time to accomplish what we wish to accomplish. As directors we spend large amounts of time preparing and organizing in order to make the most efficient use of the precious time we have with our ensembles. All that prep work is not a one-way street, however. As important as it is for the director to prepare, it is equally if not more important for the players to prepare. This article will explore how we can help teach this important concept. A firm understanding of the importance of preparation is critical not only for the sound of the ensemble, but also for the future growth of our student musicians.

It starts at the top, and students will model the leadership that they see every day. This means that for our suggestions to have any meaning we must walk the walk and demonstrate preparedness on a regular and highly visible basis. An excellent example of this is to begin the rehearsal promptly. This idea can be challenging, as demand for our attention seems to rise exponentially as the start time becomes closer. A good level of personal discipline may be necessary here. If a firm start time is established and strictly adhered to, students will get the message that they must find another time to speak with you. Even better, they may figure out how to solve some problems themselves!

Be very well organized at the podium. Know what you wish to accomplish at each rehearsal and stay focused. Post the rehearsal order on the board so students know what pieces will be worked on. Writing out a rehearsal plan is an excellent means of keeping yourself on task. If time constraints do not allow for this, at least spend some time before rehearsal looking over the scores and mentally thinking about what must be accomplished. "Winging it" in rehearsal is something that we have all done, and is sometimes a necessary evil, but avoid making it a habit. Our students can tell if we are not prepared, and if it

happens only occasionally, they will give us the benefit of the doubt. Consistently walking into rehearsal "cold" is a sure way to stunt the growth of any program, and provides a very poor model of leadership for students.

The final piece of the "preparedness puzzle" comes at the end of the rehearsal. If a rehearsal is scheduled to end at 3:00, then finish at 3:00. If you routinely find yourself requiring overtime from the students, then perhaps your rehearsal plans need to be reconsidered. Ending on time - and making necessary allowances for students to pack their instruments properly, put things away, and get to their next class or appointment - is simply common courtesy and will be greatly appreciated by the ensemble.

But enough about us; what about them? We do our students a great disservice if we limit our expectations for them. We should expect no less from our students than we expect from ourselves. If we need to begin promptly and come to rehearsal prepared to make the best music we possibly can, then so do they. Instruments must be out and ready to play by the time rehearsal starts, including instruments that are more involved in preparation such as larger woodwinds or percussion. Students must have their music and other equipment, such as pencils or mutes, ready for use. Students should know to check the posted rehearsal plan to ensure they have what they need.

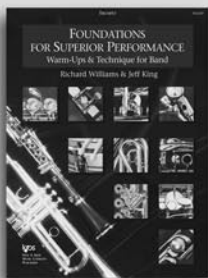
The most effective means of student preparation, however, is personal practice. It seems so obvious, but there is no way that our students or our ensembles are going to achieve at the highest level if the students do not put in the time themselves. Creating an expectation for personal practice is critical, but what are some effective strategies for making this happen?

We must create a situation where personal practice is a high priority for our students. Just like us, they face serious demands on their time, and an understanding of this reality is very important. Work done by students must have purpose and the

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by Richard Williams and Jeff King



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*- Robert E. Carter
 Elementary Instrumental Specialist
 Plymouth, Connecticut*



STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE LEADS THE WAY IN ADDRESSING THE NATIONAL STANDARDS

Since its release with **Book 1** in 1993, **Standard of Excellence** has led the way in addressing the National Standards for Music Education. While using the “draft standards,” the **Standard of Excellence Comprehensive Band Method** was carefully and meticulously designed and written so that, upon completion of **Standard of Excellence, Book 3**, all Grade 5–8 National Standards are addressed and exceeded. You may obtain a copy of a handout that shows which activities address each of the Standards by calling or writing the Neil A. Kjos Music Company. In addition to the method book, the **Standard of Excellence IN CONCERT** series presents exceptional arrangements, transcriptions, and original concert and festival pieces. Each of the over sixty pieces currently available provides valuable activities that will help students meet, address, and achieve the National Standards. In fact, when considering the method book and correlated pieces, **Standard of Excellence** is the only curriculum that addresses the National Standards with both components.

results must be recognized. A program of testing and assessment is a necessary component to your curriculum. This can happen on both an individual and an ensemble level, and there are many ways to accomplish it. Some activities require more administrative effort than others. It is important that the direction chosen is a good fit for the particular program and grade level. Always keep in mind that the testing is a *means to an end*, with the end being a better individual player and a better ensemble, not just a better grade.

Individual assessment goes by many names - juries, playtests, or challenges to name a few. This is certainly the most direct way for students to get feedback but it also places enormous demands on your time. Computer-based assessment can be of great value here, especially at the younger levels. Programs such as Pyware’s iPAS, which is included with the **Standard of Excellence ENHANCED Band Method**, allow students to practice and be tested at home and then print or email the results to you. The individual student gets immediate feedback and everyone involved, including parents, can monitor progress.

In the ensemble rehearsal, assessment and feedback are still very important, but should be handled differently. Making a statement such as, “Practice that at home” carries no meaning unless there is some follow-up. Assign a particular passage with a very clear and fair deadline for it to be properly prepared, and plan your future rehearsals accordingly. For example, if the trumpets have a tricky passage, you may tell them that in a week’s time you will return to that piece, and you will expect progress to be made. At the rehearsal one week later, make certain that piece is in your rehearsal plan, and that the trumpets are held accountable for that passage. They will get the recognition and feedback they need, and you will be able to assess their progress. Activities such as this are likely not “formalized” into the grade book, but will go a long way towards fostering an environment of expectation.

Often it is the performances that are looked upon as the achievements of a given year, but we spend far more time in rehearsal, and therefore have many more opportunities to influence our students in that environment. It is critical for us to take full advantage of this important time.

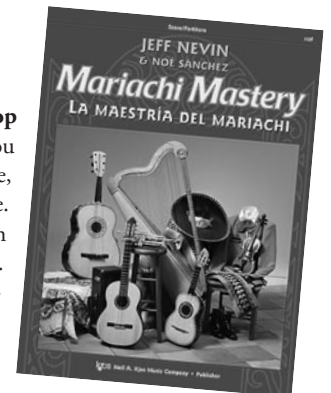
Dean Sorenson is a prolific and highly sought-after composer, trombonist, and clinician. He holds degrees from the University of Minnesota and the Eastman School of Music, and is Director of Jazz Studies and Performance at the University of Minnesota-Minneapolis.

MARIACHI MASTERY - SCORE & RESOURCE GUIDE

By Jeff Nevin & Noé Sánchez

The First and Only One of Its Kind!

This comprehensive resource is exactly what you need to develop a successful mariachi program in your school! Whether you already have a mariachi program, or are just thinking of starting one, *Mariachi Mastery* will be an enlightening and invaluable resource. Entirely bilingual, the *Score & Resource Guide* is packed with helpful hints and detailed explanations for all musical exercises. Also included are worksheets and answer keys, historical information, guides on teaching the individual mariachi instruments, and informative articles, such as “The National Standards of Music Education as Applied to Mariachi Music.”



With **flexible instrumentation** and careful scoring, *Mariachi Mastery* allows you to simultaneously teach violin, trumpet, guitarrón, armonía, viola, cello, bass and/or harp students all together in one room. Each instrument book has exercises and performance tips specifically written for that instrument, and all of the books work together seamlessly so that you can successfully guide your students’ musical advancement while learning to perform mariachi music in the authentic style.

Rhythmic Dictation in Band

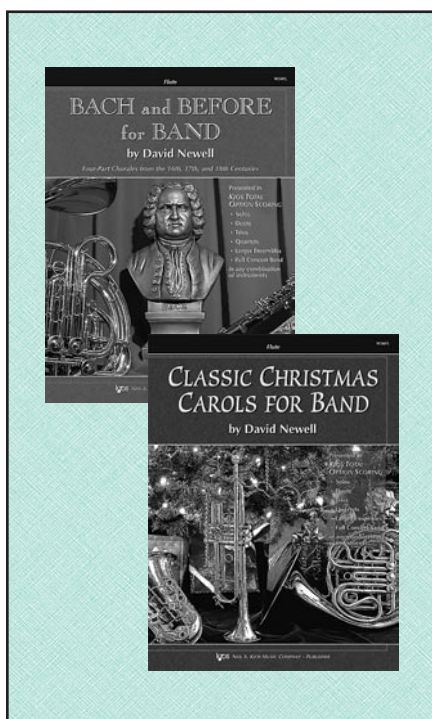
by David Newell

In the Fall 2006 issue of *Kjos Band News*, we talked about the idea of doing more than just teaching our students to *read* and *perform* rhythms. It was suggested that we could actually, in the long run, save a tremendous amount of rehearsal time by taking the time necessary to promote *Rhythmic Literacy*. Rhythmic literacy was defined as the ability to both *read and write* the language of rhythmic notation. The article suggested that having students compose their own rhythms is one of the surest ways to assess their understanding of the fundamentals of rhythm. In this issue we add the suggestion that students also should be exposed to **rhythmic dictation**. Persons who are judged to be literate in any language have the ability to transcribe the spoken word into written form. Stated simply, they can write down what they hear someone saying. Persons who are rhythmically literate can do the same thing. They can accurately transcribe rhythmic sounds into musical symbols. Many professionally trained musicians first experience this skill in college. However, it is important to realize that rhythmic dictation is not something that only college-age persons are capable of doing. The very youngest of students can demonstrate great skill in the taking of rhythmic dictation, if they are introduced to the process through a well-planned, sequential program. Such students can certainly be certified as rhythmically literate.

A program of rhythmic dictation needs to be started early in the education of our students. One of the most likely reasons many college music majors experience difficulty with rhythmic dictation is that they are never encouraged to try it until they

arrive on campus. Elementary age students should be exposed to the process of writing down sounded rhythms as soon as they are successfully reading rhythms that consist of notes having two different durations. Students who are reading rhythms that consist of half notes and quarter notes in $\frac{2}{4}$, for example, are ready to be introduced to rhythmic dictation. Once again, this does take a small amount of class time, but it yields tremendous rewards.

When introducing rhythmic dictation, it is important that everything possible be done to ensure student success. Students relish the feelings of satisfaction and self-esteem that accompany success. Students who are successful with their first attempts at rhythmic dictation will come to enjoy it. It stands to reason, therefore, that the early attempts at rhythmic dictation should not be graded. Students should feel absolutely no pressure. These first attempts should simply be classroom exercises that are followed immediately by the teacher demonstrating the correct responses on the chalkboard. The first rhythms for dictation should be taken directly from the materials that the students are experiencing in class. Students should be told the time signature and the number of measures that the rhythm will be before they hear it. The rhythms need to be either sung on a neutral syllable or played on an instrument. The full duration of a half note in $\frac{2}{4}$ time must be heard by the students and must resemble the sound of the half notes that they sing or play. The sustained duration inherent in a two-count note cannot be discerned in a clapped rhythm. A clapped half note in $\frac{2}{4}$ time sounds much more like a quarter note followed by a quarter



BACH and BEFORE for BAND and CLASSIC CHRISTMAS CAROLS FOR BAND by David Newell

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.

Improve two of the most important skills necessary for superior performance – the ability to play in-tune and to play expressively!

rest than it does a half note. The tempo must be given and the example repeated several times.

To help ensure initial success, a “Rhythmic Dictation Shorthand,” in which the students basically make a *pictograph* of the rhythm, can be introduced. In this process, students are encouraged to let their pencils “draw a picture of the sounds” first, and then translate their pictures into notation. “Let your pencil play the rhythm on your paper.”

As we intone:



The students draw:



They then demonstrate their understanding of half notes and quarter notes in $\frac{2}{4}$ time by putting the correct kinds of notes and the barlines into their line drawing.



This process introduces rhythmic notation in a way that is easy for young students to understand, because it affords them the luxury of first being able to concentrate totally on the rhythm’s sound. They simply have their pencils play the rhythm on their paper without their having to think about notation. Then, in a separate act of concentration, they demonstrate their understanding of note proportions by transcribing their dashes into standard notation.

As the students mature musically and begin to have rhythmic dictation examples with “fast notes” in them (sixteenths in $\frac{4}{4}$, eighths in $\frac{2}{2}$, and so on), the fast notes are drawn close together as dots.

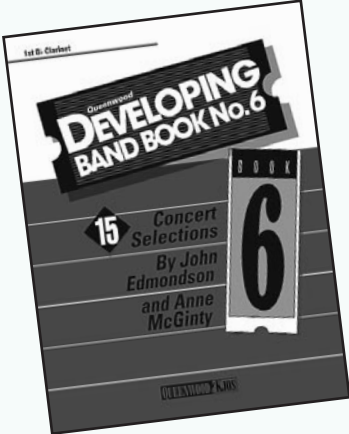
As we intone:



The students record the following “sounds” on their papers:



They then translate their dots and dashes into notation. Over time, students eventually wean themselves from these pictographs and proceed directly to the notation.



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Rhythmic Dictation: Summary

Rhythmic dictation is one of the surest ways that we can know that our students are rhythmically literate. Eventually, rhythmic dictation should become a regular part of all graded quizzes and exams. Developing students who are skillful at rhythmic dictation is not difficult if it is started early in their educations and if it is done on a fairly regular basis. The most difficult part of this for us is convincing ourselves that we can afford to take the required minutes away from the rehearsal aspects of the class period. This is an important concern, considering that students come to our classes to play their instruments. That's why they joined band. We need to plan rhythmic dictation exercises very carefully, so that they take as small a percentage of the class time as possible. An episode of rhythmic dictation can be effectively done in less than five minutes if paper is handed out as students enter the room, and so forth.

The rewards of this planning ahead should be apparent.

Students who can successfully take rhythmic dictation will not only become excellent rhythm readers, but they will be far more likely to be able to solve their own rhythm problems. Over the years that these students are in their school musical ensembles, this will save untold rehearsal time. Both their present and future teachers will be able to spend a greater percentage of their class time teaching *MUSIC*, rather than teaching parts. They know that the students have been given the tools necessary to solve many of the problems they will face on their own. The time spent on rhythmic dictation is an investment that pays for itself many times over!

David Newell has taught instrumental music for thirty years in the public schools of Berea, Ohio. In 1979 he received the Martha Holden Jennings Foundation's "Master Teacher" Award for Excellence in the Classroom. He also received the Alumni Achievement Award from Baldwin-Wallace College in 1987.

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TEACHER EDITION COMING THIS SUMMER . . .

Fine-Tuning Your Horn Section

Selected Basics to Start and Maintain A Great Horn Section

By Verle Ormsby, Jr.

The horn is one of those instruments that, for the most part, will have band directors scratching their collective heads. The sound goes behind the player, it is played with the left hand and the right hand is supposed to do something in the bell, and what is that fraction about upper and lower lip mouthpiece placement! This article will answer four oft-asked questions and provide simple solutions. The mystery, and head scratching, will soon fade into the background.

The first question is what directors should look for when selecting students to play the horn. Any student beginning on the horn should have a good sense of pitch and rhythm. The F horn can be pretty slippery in the upper range but will be handled very well with good pitch recognition. Establish “reference tones,” such as middle C and second line G, then add third space C. Getting horn students to recognize these pitches early will allow them to find other pitches on the horn quickly.

Look for students who are also on the tall side. The wrap of the F horn is pretty big. Taller students will be able to hold the instruments more easily and to place the bell on the right leg in a comfortable manner. Height is not necessary, but makes things easier. Also, left handed students would be ideal but many, if not most, horn players tend to be right handed.

The second question is how to hold the horn. Very simply, hold the horn with the bell on the right leg and angle the body of the horn at a 45 degree angle across the front of the student. Students should be looking over their fingers at their music. Also, related to this is the placing of the right hand in the bell. How far do the students put their hand in the bell? A simple and very effective method is to have students hold their right hand out, as if shaking hands, but keep the thumb down. Now have them put their hand in the bell, feeling the bell on the back of their hand, and slide their hand in until the top of the thumb touches the inside of the bell. Some hands will go in quite far while others may not. The thumb will tell the player how far to put their hands in the bell and a good open hand position will result in a solid tone that will project very easily.

The third question concerns mouthpiece placement on the embouchure. Again, a very simple approach. Have students put the rim on the edge of the red of the bottom lip and raise the mouthpiece up, as if taking a drink of water. This should place the mouthpiece on the lip with more of the upper lip in the mouthpiece. Having more upper lip vibrating within the mouthpiece is what is needed for a good, solid horn tone. And now, with the mouthpiece in place, make sure that they have firm corners of their embouchure, back teeth apart, about the width of the first joint of their finger if placed between the teeth, and have them feel the air coming from the very center

of their lip. The word “too” will help this idea. Now they should take in air and blow the air in such a way as if they were blowing this column of air straight out from the lip. They should always think of the air, as well as the sound, going straight out from the lips. This will help students to play with a more centered and focused sound.

The fourth question concerns tuning the horn. Have students look at the valve slides on the front of the horn. A good “pull” would be for the first valve slide to be pulled out about one inch, the second slide about one half inch, and the third slide about one third inch. These are slide pulls recommended by mouthpiece and instrument maker Schilke, from Chicago. These pulls will work also for the double horn on the B-flat side of the horn. As for tuning slides, a single horn tuning slide may be pulled out anywhere from an inch to an inch and a half. For the double horn, the main B-flat tuning slide may be pulled out an inch or more, and the F side about an inch. The B-flat side of the horn usually tends to be sharp, so have students match pitches between the two sides of their double horn in order to bring both sides in tune with each other. If, after pulling the slides out to these positions, the pitch is still sharp, check the hand position in the bell. The hand may not be in far enough. If flat, make sure that the hand is not cupped or is not in too far. Once the horn is tuned, let the right hand in the bell “fine tune” pitches as needed.

In conclusion, all band and orchestra directors are encouraged to find good, dependable, and knowledgeable horn players in their area. Check local colleges and universities for names, phone numbers and e-mail addresses of these horn players so that you may develop an open dialogue with them about any of your horn concerns. Questions about mouthpieces, horns, etc., have not been mentioned in the article, but questions about these and others you may have will certainly be answered through this established dialogue. Now, get your horn students started on the right foot and be ready to enjoy a good horn section.

Dr. Verle Ormsby, Jr. is Senior Lecturer of Horn Studies at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire where he teaches applied horn, conducts the Noon-time Corner Horners Horn Ensemble, and performs with the faculty brass quintet and the Wisconsin Wind Quintet. Dr. Ormsby has performed with orchestras in Georgia, Florida, Indiana, Missouri, Arkansas, and Wisconsin. He is a Wisconsin Master Adjudicator, a Conn-Selmer Horn Clinician, and long time member of the International Horn Society.

Auxiliary Percussion – Smaller Instruments: Part 2

by Dave Hagedorn

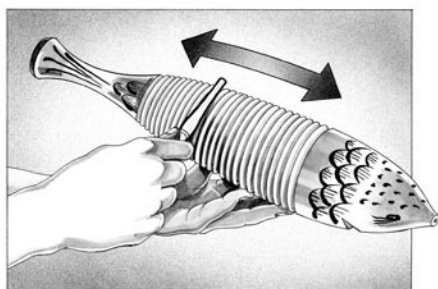
Auxiliary percussion instruments add much to the timbre of an ensemble and authenticity and character of specific musical styles. To achieve the correct and unique sound of these instruments, proper technique is required. This article will address the playing techniques for the cowbell, a-go-go bells, guiro, castanets, and wood block.

Cowbells come in many different sizes. The most commonly used size would be a medium cowbell about six inches long. To play the cowbell, place it in the palm of your hand so the open end is near your little finger. By holding it in this way, one can vary the sound by muting it as you grab it with your hand.

Strike the bell on the open end with the shoulder of the stick to produce a penetrating sound. Some manufacturers even provide a plastic surface on the open end so the bell will not dent as easily. If you have a mounted cowbell on a stand that has too much resonance, place a strip of duct tape around the open end, or put some tape inside the mouth of the bell. Another way to dampen the sound is to apply moleskin (found in foot care sections of stores) to the inside of the cowbell's mouth.

A-go-go bells are a pair of small cowbells that are primarily used in Brazilian music. Hold the a-go-go bells so they are parallel to the ground when you hit them, and strike them on the open mouth of each bell.

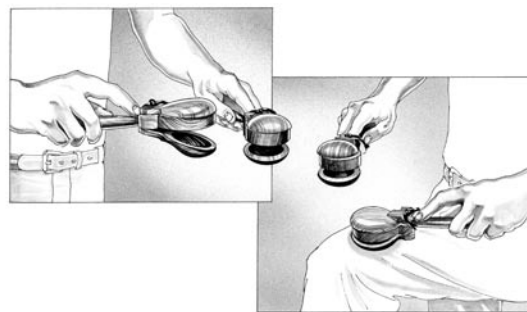
The **guiro**, originally made out of a gourd, is a wooden instrument that has a serrated surface. Guiros come with a scraper. If the scraper is misplaced, a thin triangle beater is a good substitute. Hold the guiro so the body is parallel to the ground and make the scrape away from your body.



The typical rhythmic pattern played on this instrument involves a scrape played for the length of a quarter note, and two taps played as eighth notes. Make sure to connect the scrape to the first tap so the sound is sustained. Once proficient, a more advanced technique is to hold the guiro upright

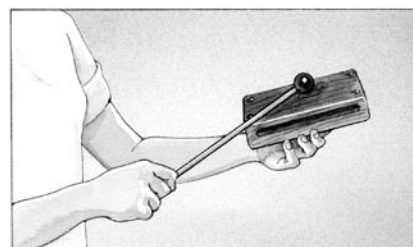
and push it the opposite way from which you are scraping for more sound.

The **castanets** are originally from Spain and are usually wooden discs that look somewhat like shells. Wooden castanets are superior in sound to plastic castanets, although the plastic ones are more durable. Originally, each pair of castanets was held in the palm of the hand, but now, for band and orchestral playing, they are mounted on handles. Play the castanets on your thigh and use a “snare drum stick” grip to hold them.



If playing a part that requires you to move quickly from castanets to another instrument, one can purchase a “castanet machine” that will allow mounting the handles so you don't have to hold the instrument. Be sure the machine is placed on a padded surface to avoid producing unwanted sounds.

Wood blocks come in many different sizes and shapes. Some of the best ones are made of mahogany, though today, you can also purchase ones made of plastic. Plastic wood blocks are very durable. The difference between the sound made by a wooden wood block and a plastic one is indistinguishable from a distance. There are two basic wood block sounds. One is a thin sound, produced by striking the block with a drum stick, and the other is a more resonant sound that comes from striking it with a hard rubber mallet. Be sure to point the open slot toward the audience for better sound projection.



Learning the playing techniques of these auxiliary percussion instruments will enhance the timbre of any band or orchestra.

Dave Hagedorn is a professional percussionist in the Twin Cities of Minneapolis and St. Paul. He is the percussion instructor at St. Olaf College in Northfield, Minnesota.

In Praise of the Chorale

by Bruce Pearson

Most band directors recognize the importance of using a chorale in their rehearsals and performances. The chorale, in fact, may be one of the most useful pieces of music a band plays for it provides so many benefits and opportunities. Chorales are versatile and can be used as a performance piece, an effective tool for teaching expressive playing, great material for developing good tone and intonation, and music for the development of good articulation and rhythmic accuracy.

A good chorale can be a perfect addition to a concert for it focuses the students' attention on the details required to perform a chorale well. Since every instrument contributes to the overall sound of the band, the chorale allows those "inner voices" to be heard with clarity. The chorale also provides a wonderful opportunity to perform "music of the masters" and gives historical consideration and perspective to the development of music. The selection of a good chorale is critical. A chorale book that provides limitless teaching opportunities and possibilities is **Bach and Before for Band** by David Newell. This book includes nineteen four-part chorales from the 16th, 17th, and 18th centuries. These chorales can be played as solos, duets, trios, quartets, larger ensembles and full concert band in any combination of instruments.

Not only is a chorale a fine addition to a concert program, it is also the choice of many teachers to teach expressive playing. Ensembles cannot play expressively until the required technique is mastered. Chorales allow ensembles with limited technique to learn to play expressively.

Another benefit of playing chorales is that it encourages the development of good intonation and tone quality. Two important prerequisites for good intonation are having all students producing a full, rich, resonant characteristic sound on their instruments, and the development of their "musical ears." To help develop their musical ears, have students sing their parts. Remember that chorales are vocal music that is meant to be sung. It would be difficult to find material better suited for teaching instrumentalists to sing and audiate than a chorale. Singing is, in fact, one of the most important activities we can do in our instrumental music classes.

After the students have successfully learned to sing their parts, have the woodwind players play the chorale on their instruments while the brass players "buzz" their parts. This will help the students to understand that the brass instrument is simply an amplifier of the "lip buzzing."

Perhaps new to some directors is how the chorale can be used effectively to develop students' articulation skills and rhythmic accuracy. First, have the ensemble play a chorale similar to the one below:

The image shows a musical score for a chorale exercise. It consists of three staves. The first staff is for Clarinets (1), the second for Clarinets (2), and the third for Bass Clarinet. The music is in common time (C) and consists of five measures. The first staff is labeled (S.), the second (A.), and the third (B.).

As soon as the students master this chorale have them divide every beat into sixteenth notes like the exercise below:

The image shows a rhythmic exercise in common time (C). It starts with a quarter note, followed by eighth notes, then sixteenth notes, and finally a continuous stream of sixteenth notes. Each note has an accent (>) above it.

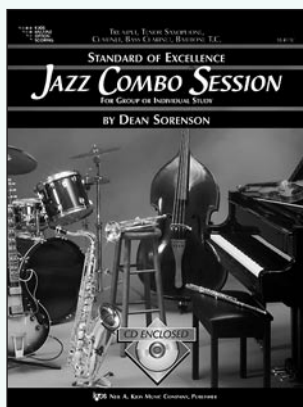
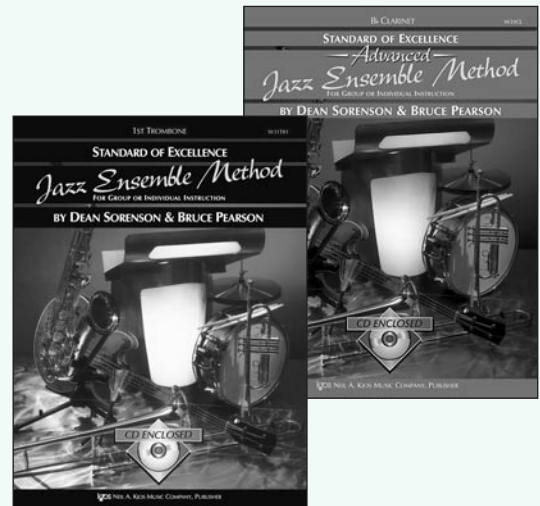
By making the previously mentioned exercises part of your rehearsal routine, the ensemble will play more expressively, with a better tone and intonation, articulate better, and play with greater rhythmic accuracy.

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