

TEACHING MUSIC

*A Field Study into the Components of Successful Primary and Secondary
Instrumental Music Programs*

William Sugg
Spring 2009

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Purpose

Instrumental music programs around the country have been developed using a variety of different resources, teaching strategies, and organizational procedures. These models of instruction have evolved for several reasons. The style of formal training of the instructor on his/her primary instrument(s) may have a large influence on his/her educational philosophies. These styles have developed differently around the world (e.g. a teacher trained as a flute player according to the “French School” of performance would teach based on a completely different musical background than one trained according to the principles of the “British School”). Related to this, teachers have organized their programs based on the specific concepts of music that they deem most important to a developing musician. For instance, some programs are designed to emphasize an immediate proficiency in performing with good intonation; others, rhythm, style, technique, or another concept. Adding to this wide spectrum of teaching philosophies is the fact that only recently has the United States government begun to regulate and standardize the music curriculum by providing detailed standards in expected musical performance from year to year.¹ Even now, those standards are

¹ Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. (1994). *National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts*. Reston, VA. Music Educators National Conference.

relatively vague, compared to other subject areas. These influences, as well as others, such as financial resources and school population or demographics, have lead to the existence of instrumental music programs that vary greatly in size, student demographics, and curriculum design. Despite these differences, highly successful programs have developed under many various philosophies, sizes, and economic environments.

This success in such diverse ways poses a certain difficulty to a student graduating and beginning to teach in a program of his or her own. There is no apparent “clear-cut” method to making an instrumental music program successful. As a result, I created this project to develop a collection of effective concert literature, educational literature, rehearsal strategies, and curricular designs drawn from successful instrumental music programs across the country, in hopes of creating a model to use as I enter into the field of Music Education.

Project Model

The field study was developed to explore successful programs at the beginning/middle school and high school levels separately. The research methods for each level of instructions are outlined as follows.

BEGINNING / MIDDLE SCHOOL

Research into young band programs was done using a combination of observation and interview of the band directors. The programs were chosen based on their proximity, as well as

the quality of musicianship of their students. Originally four schools were selected: Martin Luther King, Jr. Magnet School in Nashville, TN, (Directors, Marsha Hartwein, Rod Hill, and Ashley Jarrell); Maryville Intermediate School in Maryville, TN, (Director, George Hayden); John Sevier Middle School in Kingsport, TN (Director, Richard Brown); and Mabry Middle School in Marietta, GA (Directors, Kimberly Bruce and Jill Barnocki). The schools were contacted via phone or electronic mail and preliminary communication was established, but due to scheduling conflicts, only two of the four programs were available for observation.

The two observed programs were visited in November of 2008 as they neared the final concerts of the semester. The entire school day was monitored, which included 5th-6th grade at Maryville Intermediate and 7th-8th at MLK. Topics covered in observation included seating arrangements, instrumentation, warm-up styles, rehearsal pacing, the style of student/teacher interaction, and general rehearsal strategies. The informal interviews were approximately 30 minutes in length and covered material such as literature selection, recruitment, teaching strategies, and student motivation.

HIGH SCHOOL

High school research was conducted at the national level. As a result, individual program observations were replaced with a thorough questionnaire that was mailed to the directors throughout the country. The programs selected for the study were selected almost exclusively based on the degree of musicianship demonstrated by the students as seen by their repeated selection to perform at the most selective of national or international venues, such

as the Midwest Clinic or the Bands of America Grand National Championship. Schools were also selected in an attempt to represent programs from a variety of sizes, demographic compositions, and geographic regions. Schools selected included the following:

Adair County High School: Adair County, KY, Tim Allen, Director

Dobyns-Bennett High School: Kingsport, TN, Lafe Cook, Director

Grove City High School: Grove City, OH, George Edge, Director

Kennesaw Mountain High School: Kennesaw, GA, David Starnes, Director

Lake Braddock Secondary School: Burke, VA, Roy Holder, Director

Lassiter High School: Marietta, GA, Alfred Watkins, Director

Lawrence D. Bell High School: Hurst, TX, Jeremy Earnhart, Director

Marian Catholic High School: Chicago Heights, IL, Greg Bimm, Director

Ruben S. Ayala High School: Chino Hill, CA, Mark Stone, Director

Tarpon Springs High School: Tarpon Springs, FL, Kevin Ford, Director

Due to the length of the questionnaire and other time commitments of the directors, only about 40% of questionnaires were completed.

The questionnaires were prepared and mailed out in early September of 2008, with an expectation that they would be returned by October. Later in the semester, emails with attachments of the questionnaire were sent out to ease the process of replying. In addition, reminders were sent via electronic mail to each participating school that had not submitted a completed survey. The questionnaire covered topics regarding curricular design, scheduling, concert literature, educational literature, private lessons programs, and student motivation.

Beginning/Middle School

The two beginning/middle school programs that were included in the study were Martin Luther King, Jr. Magnet School (MLK) in Nashville, TN, and Maryville Intermediate School in Maryville, TN. These two schools have been successful in developing young musicians despite containing two distinct conglomerations of students.

MLK is an urban science, math, and engineering magnet school. The school consists of students from grades 7-12. It contains a highly diverse student population, including substantial representation of African American, Chinese, Korean, and Indian heritages, as well as Caucasian. While the population is highly diverse and urban, all the students have demonstrated a high aptitude for math and science in order to be accepted to the school.

Maryville is composed of a predominantly Caucasian middle-to upper-class student body. The Maryville system is not part of any significant metropolitan school district. Maryville Intermediate School contains grades 5 and 6.

OBSERVATIONS

The following section outlines my observations of the programs in their daily functions and any conclusions I may have made through these visits.

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.

The MLK middle school band component is comprised of a seventh grade beginning band (because seventh grade is the lowest grade at the school), a seventh grade band (composed of students who began band at a Davidson County elementary school), and an eighth grade band. The seventh grade band contains a wide variety of ability levels due to the fact that students can enter into MLK from any elementary/middle school in Davidson County, not from a designated “feeder” school. This situation also created the need for the seventh grade beginning band, which was largely started in an effort to compensate for instrumentation issues related to the lack of control they had on their entering class, such as the deficit of low brass players in the school.

The fact that the student body has a high aptitude for math was evident from the way the band classes were structured. The classes approached music from a fairly analytical point of view, meaning little talk about feeling and emotion and much about correct placement and proper technique. This was especially evident during part of their warm-up through the use of a “scale game” that emphasized clear articulation, fast fingers, and the ability to think ahead while playing. Based on my observations, the emphasis of the program was on rhythm and articulations appropriate for the skill level of the ensemble. The teaching styles of the directors seemed to focus on relating desired concepts to the science and math background of the students. They make much use of clapping and counting, particularly in the seventh grade bands, to develop rhythmical musical literacy.

Literature and educational resources seemed relatively typical for ensembles of this level. They were making use of traditional “fun” Christmas concert literature. The seventh

grade used the *TIPPS* band method book as part of their warm-up. The eighth grade used Book 3 of the *Standard of Excellence* series for technical development in their warm-up.

Student assessment was managed in a way fairly similar to a traditional academic class. This works effectively at this school due to the overly academic nature of the student body. Other motivational techniques, such as making them play in front of their peers or stressing their responsibility to the group, were not as effective as adjusting their grades.¹ Frequent playing tests over scales and literature were given for grades. Practice records (with parent sign-offs) were used as part of the students' final grades. The directors also made use of a daily grade based on "rehearsal technique" to manage student behavior.²

Overall, the environment in the middle school program at MLK was very "classroom" based. Students went to band class to work just as much as they went to English or Algebra class. The students went to class to learn how to play, just as they went to English to learn how to write. This was the status quo. It worked well for this student body; however, some of these practices may not be as effective in an environment more typical of a middle school, where the students may not be as independently motivated to work in class or maintain a high grade. I personally like the idea of structuring the curriculum this way because I think it makes the band class more credible of an idea to students, parents, teachers, and administrators *outside* of band. That being said, some of the motivational strategies will probably have to be adapted to account for a slightly different type of average student.

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, November 21, 2008.

² Ibid.

MARYVILLE INTERMEDIATE SCHOOL

The Maryville Intermediate School band consists of students in fifth and sixth grade. The students are divided into three classes of fifth graders for beginning band and three classes of sixth graders. Each class is created strictly based on scheduling requirements for the students (i.e. there are no “brass” classes or “woodwind” classes built into the schedule).¹ Despite these class divisions, each grade level has only one band, meaning all the fifth graders play in one ensemble at a concert and all sixth graders do as well. In addition, Maryville has a sixth grade “Wind Ensemble” that consists of its top players and rehearses after school. This ensemble is well-known, as it is the only sixth grade concert ensemble in the world that has been asked to play at the prestigious Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago.²

Maryville’s rehearsal technique was heavily “teacher directed.” By this I mean that the class was full of highly assertive teacher instruction. There was very little student input. The teacher provided many questions to the students, but they were almost exclusively rhetorical questions used to remind the students of what they were supposed to do.

The class was designed to appeal to a more “emotional” side of the students, rather than an analytical side. The teacher referred to it as appealing to the students’ “souls.”³ This was evident in the warm-up exercises he prepared. He made use of a variety of long tone warm-ups in which he would have students simply play long tones, and he would indicate to specific instruments to move up and down a scale and hold different pitches, creating disso-

¹ G. Hayden, personal interview, November 24, 2008.

² G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

³ Ibid.

nances and resolutions that sounded “cool” to the young ears. He would also have them play scales in rounds in the dark to add to the “mysterious” effect of the chords--all the while tricking the students into playing long tones. These were just a few exercises that demonstrated his strong emphasis on tone production and intonation for the development of the young musician. Every period began with a pitch (Concert F) in the clarinet that the entire class immediately began to match. Every child had a tuner on his or her stand, and the students were expected to hold notes in tune for extended periods of time (usually while he checks attendance).

This emphasis on tone quality and intonation is apparent in the materials the teacher uses for instruction. The literature he selects lends itself well to developing tone, intonation, and expression, rather than rhythm or technique. He makes minimal use of the method book Maryville uses, *Standard of Excellence*. The focus is largely on literature. Most rhythm is taught by using words, rather than counting syllables. This could possibly be because the younger age group of musicians learns more easily through this manner, (but I prefer taking the time to teach counting techniques to develop independent musicianship in the long run, as I will discuss later).

This program follows a different structure for assessing student performance than MLK. Frequent chair tests are given over a variety of different tasks, be it if a student plays a passage most proficiently has the most well-marked music.¹ There are no practice records used in the Maryville system, largely because of the assumption that they teach students to

¹ G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

lie.¹ Instead, they use the chair tests to hear individual student performance and give appropriate feedback as needed.

Overall, Maryville attempts to create an atmosphere where being in band is not about “working,” but about “playing.” The teacher doesn’t even use the term “practice” or “homework,” but instead refers to it as “home play.” Through the extreme emphasis on tone production and intonation, the instruction at Maryville strives to make a student sound “good” quickly so that they will find more enjoyment in practicing at home. It appears that they use the aesthetic value and intrinsic rewards of music as a means for effective rehearsals and practice. I have often heard of such a thing being the goal of music programs, especially at that level, but I have not seen or heard of a program that is so effective at actually making that goal a reality.

INTERVIEWS

The following section shows the questions asked of the directors at MLK and Maryville, their responses, and my conclusions based upon these responses.

WHAT GRADE DO YOU START? WHAT INSTRUMENTS DO YOU START?

MLK provides a beginning class for seventh grade students. This is one or two years later than most other Metropolitan Nashville schools, but seventh grade is the earliest grade that students come to the program due to the structure of the magnet school. The beginning

¹ Ibid.

band's purpose is not so much to create a lot of players, but rather to begin players on instruments that will balance the instrumentation of the students that come from all over the Metropolitan Nashville System.¹ That being said, they generally allow a student to start on whatever instrument he or she prefers, but they strongly encourage them to choose low brass instruments or trumpets.²

Maryville begins their students in fifth grade. This is not exceptionally common in East Tennessee, but the Maryville system splits up the elementary program so that students go to an elementary school for K-4, Maryville Intermediate for grades 5-6, and then move on to the middle school in grade 7.³ Because the intermediate school only has to schedule for fifth and sixth grade students, they were able to create a program that starts in fifth grade and actually meets every day for nearly an hour (rather than a traditional fifth grade "pull out" program). Rising fifth graders are diagnostically tested on instruments in the spring of fourth grade and instrument selections are recommended to them. Generally, fifth grade students can begin on flute, clarinet, trumpet, trombone, or percussion; and they can switch to different instruments in May of their fifth grade year.⁴

While both beginning situations have proven successful, I would prefer to begin students in fifth or sixth grade unless I work in a system with a situation similar to MLK. Catching students at an early age can get them involved and committed to the band program before they become too involved with other extra curricular activities. This also gives them an additional one or two years of experience to develop musically. However, I think

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

² Ibid.

³ G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

⁴ Ibid.

that one of the key reasons that the Maryville Intermediate program is so successful is that their fifth grade students have band everyday for a full period as an actual class. If one compares the amount of time a student is in band class as part of a pull out program with the amount of time in a scheduled class, I believe the difference would be notable. The effectiveness of this additional instructional time is compounded by the fact that the schedule allows the program to split the fifth grade band into three different classes. This essentially cuts the class size into thirds, which creates a much more “teachable” student-teacher ratio than if all the fifth graders were grouped into the same period. As a result of these benefits, I feel that a beginning program structured in a way similar to the Maryville system would be ideal.

CAN YOU BRIEFLY DESCRIBE THE RECRUITMENT SYSTEM?

MLK, ironically, has no recruitment system in place. They have an informal agreement with local music programs NOT to recruit for their program.¹ This is a courtesy based on the student body at MLK. MLK only accepts students who excel at science and math. Often, these are the same students that are naturally excelling on their instruments at their elementary school and seeming to show a slightly higher work ethic than other children. As a result, the MLK program naturally gets the type of students they would be recruiting, anyway. MLK takes those students away from the music programs that they would normally be zoned to attend. Because of this situation, the MLK band program promised NOT to recruit students who were not already members of the MLK student body. The agreement does not seem to have hurt the instrumental music program in any way, considering that the

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

it has over a 20% student body participation rate within the school--without recruiting anyone.¹

Maryville does not have an extravagant recruitment system, either. The director simply goes to the elementary school in the early spring of the fourth grade year and demonstrates the various instruments to the students.² Demonstration occurs early in the spring to beat recruitment for other activities, but beyond that, it is simple and straightforward.

I found it interesting that neither of these programs has a significant recruitment system. I can only conclude that part of the reason for this is that such a system is not necessary. Both programs have developed such a reputation of excellence that the students flock to join it based on that reason, alone. While this is fortunate for these programs, this was slightly impractical information. I am certain that more research is needed to make a model for a more significant recruitment program to use in another school system.

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN YOUR PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM.

The two programs have similar private lesson systems. Both give private lessons during the school day. In MLK's case, each private lesson instructor teaches up to two lessons per period. Generally, the students are pulled out of their band class once a week. However, the student has the option to schedule his or her lesson during the study hall period, as long as the teacher has a free spot available. Few lessons are taught after school. Students are moti-

¹ Ibid.

² G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

vated to take private lessons by being told that if they take them, they do not have to turn in practice records.¹ The process is nearly identical at Maryville, except that no lessons are taught during a study hall block, and overflow lessons are taught after school.² Both programs have faculty for almost every specific instrument.

This is a method of teaching private lessons that has proven effective in other systems that are not part of this study, and I think it is a good model to use in organizing a private lessons program. In application of such a program, communication between the directors and private lesson instructors is vital. It would be important that instructors are notified when large groups of students are absent from school for a particular reason. Directors would also need to know which students will be absent from class due to a lesson to plan their large group instruction appropriately.

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU UTILIZE TO FIND NEW YOUNG BAND LITERATURE?

MLK generally searches through everything they can find for young bands on J.W. Pepper's website, and Maryville looks into new works published through Grand Mesa Publishers and "That's Really Nice!" Music Publisher (TRN). Both make use of programs from the Midwest Clinic of concerts they observed.³

Interestingly, none of the sources they mentioned were ones that were atypical. These sources are ones which most music educators are aware. The difference appears to be

¹J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

²G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

³J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008 and G.Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

the degree of thoroughness in which these directors search through the sources that most band directors use. They search diligently to find good music that will work for their groups so that they can effectively differentiate instruction to various sections.

LIST FIVE PIECES/COMPOSERS THAT YOU THINK REPRESENT THE HIGHEST QUALITY LITERATURE FOR YOUNG BAND.

Composers were given. They included the following:¹

Dwight Beckham

Larry Daehn

John Edmonson

Frank Erickson

Gary Gilroy

Rob Grice

Clare Grundman

Ed Huckleby

Anne McGinty

David Newell

William Owens

Matthew Schoendorff

Robert Sheldon

Michael Sweeney

Mark Williams

Upon listening to works for young bands by these composers, their ability to create interesting musical and rhythmic lines within the constraints of a young band's performance ability

¹ Ibid.

is notable. Their young band compositions stick out among other in their ability to be used to teach musical concepts while still engaging the young musician in a “fun” piece of music to play and, more importantly, practice.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO TEACH RHYTHM?

MLK makes use of a traditional counting system of assigning counting syllables to note attacks.¹ They immediately instill this system of counting into their students. They require students to clap and count rhythms out of literature and method books constantly.

Rhythm-counting assignments are almost always the assignment given if the directors are away. Based on my observations, their goal is to create rhythmic independence as soon as possible in the students so that they can focus on developing other musical concepts.

Maryville takes a different approach to rhythm-teaching. They relate rhythms to words and phrases for the student to use as a model (such as the phrase “pineapple juice” to represent three eighth note triplets followed by a quarter note). They do not introduce a formal counting system until the students enter the middle school.² This allows the students to pick up the rhythms more quickly, so that the teacher can give additional focus to tone production and intonation. This process follows more of an “experience before theory” approach to instruction that seems to work well for the young age group.

I understand the approach that both programs take to teaching rhythm concept. However, I think the MLK approach to rhythm counting has more long term applicability

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

² G. Hayden, personal interview, November 24, 2008.

than does Maryville's. That being said, it should be understood that both systems have students counting rhythms using traditional systems by seventh and eighth grade. I think that if I began teaching the age group that Maryville Intermediate teaches, I would begin using a similar technique of word relationships but more quickly integrate counting systems into the curriculum. Philosophically, I can't associate word relationships with true rhythmic understanding. I see it as no more than a "quick fix" so that the students can "play" the rhythms immediately, and they can continue enforcing tone and intonation. I have no problem with them deciding to do that: again, their students sound fantastic and they can still count by eighth grade, but I don't think I would choose to teach rhythmic concept that way.

HOW DO YOU ADDRESS INTONATION AND AURAL DEVELOPMENT IN GENERAL?

MLK does not provide an intense focus on good intonation within their middle school groups—they simply expect it.¹ The directors insist upon good intonation with the students, and the students rise to the challenge. They provide aural development by playing imitation games with the students to get them to hear distinctions between pitch and style. The directors also play a piece of music—any kind of music—over the stereo at the beginning of each class and make the students write five meaningful sentences about what they hear in the piece. They periodically spot-check these reflections for completion and quality for a grade. Beyond these and basic tuning exercises, they enforce good intonation habits by identifying to the students that something is out of tune and refusing to go on until the students fix it themselves. Rarely do they use tuners during rehearsal.²

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

² Ibid.

Maryville uses a different approach to addressing intonation in their class. Intonation is preached as the paramount concept within the curriculum.¹ Students learn what it means to play in tune from the first day of beginning band. Every class begins with a concert F that is tuned extensively. Initially, they focus on developing good pitch with tuners on the stand. The director has an entire box of tuners for any students who forget theirs. They hold pitches in tune for extended periods of time. They play a series of long tone “games” that focus on keeping consistent intonation with the tuners on the stand. They play excerpts from the method books in a way that one or two people or sections will play the line, the others play a “drone” on the tonic of the piece. If in the course of teaching literature a student is unable to play a pitch in tune, he or she is dismissed to a practice room to play that pitch for five minutes in front of a tuner.² They also insist on good intonation, but they indicate to the students that good intonation is the most important part of being a musician.

This is yet another example of how two programs achieve success by approaching the same concept two different ways. In this case, I believe I would have better initial success by adopting a system similar to Maryville's, though not quite as intensively. The ability of Maryville students to play in tune is what makes that program stand out to the degree it does. Also, I think that the type of student in the MLK program allows the way they deal with intonation to be more effective than it may be with a more typical student population. I don't think that simply insisting upon good intonation would be enough to make other groups play in tune: more focus would need to be placed into the curriculum in the form of

¹ G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

² G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

drills and tests. This emphasis should only be included in the curriculum for a year or two and then be left to the students to address themselves in a way similar to MLK's program.

WHAT METHOD BOOKS DO YOU RECOMMEND?

MLK makes use of the *Band Expressions* series for its beginning seventh grade band, the *TIPPS* Ensemble method for the experienced seventh grade group, and *Standard of Excellence* Book 3 for the eighth grade band.¹ The beginning band makes use of their book as the primary source of musical material, which is supplemented occasionally by rhythm worksheets and a larger-scale piece at the end of the spring semester. The other two groups primarily make use of the method books as sources of warm-up material, largely to build technique and familiarity in various tonal centers.²

Maryville uses the *Standard Excellence* series, but it is not used extensively. They make use of Book 1 through “Jingle Bells” and “Ode to Joy” to teach the dotted quarter note and eighth note rhythm. Beyond that, they almost exclusively use literature as the teaching tool. The emphasis is always on teaching music, not “getting through the book.”³

I think that an ensemble will benefit from a balanced use of method books with literature towards the development of *general* musicianship. To me, method books (if used correctly) create a place to build proficiency in general music performance concepts that can then be easily transferred and *applied* to the literature selected. It would be easier to transfer the understanding and performing of musical concepts from a general source to whatever

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

² J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

³ G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

literature is selected than from one piece of literature to another, especially at this age level. Of course, an ensemble would play a concert well if *all* they did was work on five or ten minutes of literature for three months, but then the entire process will have to be repeated for the next concert. It would show a greater development of general musicianship if a group could focus on overall concepts (possibly in a method book) and then use those concepts to learn literature for a concert in half the time, even if it was not performed at quite the same level as in the other scenario. This would eventually allow the students to learn material at a faster rate because there would be less *learning* of new material and more *application* of general concepts that are already understood by the students.

WHAT TYPES OF EXERCISES DO YOU USE TO REINFORCE PROPER TONE PRODUCTION?

Both MLK and Maryville make use of basic long tone exercises to develop proper tone production. Such exercises include long tone scales, long tone scales with long rests between pitches, scales in which they rest between pitches but still keep their embouchure muscles tight while they breathe, scales in rounds, and chorales.¹

The directors at Maryville also make use of different ways to develop air flow and air support. They require the students to set their embouchures on their instruments before they breathe and actually inhale through their instruments, keeping their embouchures set the entire time. The directors then require them to hold the air in and will then cue them to begin playing with their air that has already been inhaled.² Essentially, they isolate the

¹ J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008 and G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

² G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

fundamentals of taking a deep breath and setting the embouchure from the fundamental of attacking the note. This is an unusual technique, but it has proven effective in ensuring that every breath is a deep one and that the embouchure is set--two of the most common mistakes young musicians make in playing. The directors also attach balloons to the end of the students' mouthpieces and require them to fill them by playing through the mouthpiece to develop a fast, supported air stream.¹ As stated before, they integrate long tones into regular method book study by making certain instruments hold a drone while others play the melodic line.

All of these techniques have merit. Having as many different ways to emphasize tone production as possible is vital, considering that long tones are usually the least enjoyable part of playing to a beginning musician. Variety will keep the students' interest in the task at hand, even if all the tasks focus on the same musical concepts.

HOW DO YOU MOTIVATE YOUR STUDENTS TO PRACTICE?

As stated earlier, MLK uses practice records, signed by the parents, to monitor student practice activity. MLK makes use of a relatively frequent playing test schedule to motivate students to develop good practice habits. Playing tests are given often and always for a grade that is reflected in their final average for the course. Tests are given over almost any aspect of performance, including scales, technique drills, and literature. Chairs, on occasion, are adjusted according to the grade given, but rarely are chair tests given that do not have a grade associated with them.²

¹ Ibid.

² J.A. Jarrell, personal interview, Nov. 21, 2008.

Maryville, on the other hand, creates an environment where music for its own sake is the motivation to practice. Frequent chair tests are given, but rarely for a grade. Chair tests occur almost weekly and can be given with or without prior notice. Tests can be over playing, preparation, having proper equipment, proper music marking, holding notes in tune, or practically anything else.¹ However, beyond the chair tests, Maryville has been able to establish a culture where students play and are positively reinforced by the music itself. As stated earlier, the term practice is not even really used at the intermediate school; “home play” is used instead. The idea of considering the performance of music as a type of work is avoided. The director’s ability to develop exceptionally good tone and intonation in the students makes this possible. The students find it much more enjoyable to practice if they actually sound good on their instruments while they try to practice.

These two schools have proven how to develop practice habits in their students using two completely different motivational structures. It would seem a combination of these two philosophies could prove effective. I would elect to make use of some kind of formal assessment system, both to give the students some kind of educational structure, and to provide some kind of academic credibility to teachers and administrators outside of the music program. That being said, the goal of creating an environment where students think playing music is its own reward is a goal that all music programs, at all levels, should strive to achieve.

¹ G. Hayden, personal interview, Nov. 24, 2008.

CONCLUSIONS

The observations and interviews of Martin Luther King, Jr. Magnet School, Maryville Intermediate School, and their respective directors demonstrate two exceptionally different approaches to organizing and teaching a beginning/middle school instrumental music program. These directors create success by truly understanding the type of student that they are teaching. In the case of MLK, a typical curriculum was adapted to one organized with the knowledge that the student population was dominated by students with highly analytical minds and propensities towards math and science. In the case of Maryville, the director took the time to create an instrumental music curriculum that was based on the experiential learning methods and motivational influences of fifth grade students. These directors ability to look past the norms of “what you’re supposed to do” when teaching this age group and adapt to the students they are actually teaching allows them to create young musicians with such a high degree of success.

These directors also realized that they can create higher student success by isolating a few specific musical concepts that they want to emphasize for the first year to create a basis for performance that allows the students to successfully play their instrument fairly quickly. However, these programs are designed with the understanding that the added emphasis on a smaller number of specific performance concepts creates certain initial weaknesses in other concepts or techniques that must be addressed at a later stage in the curriculum. MLK students appear to need additional instruction related to the development of characteristic tone quality as they continue into high school. Students at Maryville Inter-

mediate must learn to accurately count rhythms using a traditional system as they continue their education beyond the intermediate school.

This aforementioned focus on a smaller number of ideas at the onset of instrumental music education, rather than an attempt to develop all aspects of performance equally, is what I observe as one of the key elements of these programs' success. They choose to hand-pick a few specific aspects of performance and gear the curriculum towards advancing these concepts and techniques to an exceptional level through structure, repetition, and reinforcement for the students of this age group. The variability from program to program--between the two programs observed or among programs in general--lies in the personal philosophy of the director to determine which few concepts he or she chooses to develop quickly during early instruction and which ones he or she wants to save to develop later.

Considering this concept-focused philosophy, my model for beginning and early instrumental music instruction would initially emphasize tone production, rhythmic integrity, and development of musical line. It would reserve significant focus on intonation and discretion in articulation for the second year of instruction. I think that initial focus on producing characteristic tone will create a more immediate sense of enjoyment for the students and their participation in band. Also, working to develop characteristic tone quality will make the initial introduction to addressing good intonation much easier. Developing independence in reading rhythms correctly is worth the time and effort in the long run. I have observed too many rehearsals where a significant portion of class time is spent teaching and re-teaching rhythms to ensembles. Reading rhythms is a significant part of developing musical literacy, which is an important part of my personal educational philosophy towards developing independent musicianship. In addition, concert literature quickly begins to as-

sociate certain articulation patterns with certain rhythms. Initial focus on creating independent rhythmic understanding allows more instructional time to focus on those articulations when they begin appearing. Finally, the development of playing musical line is important enough to begin emphasizing from the very beginning. To me, line is *the* single most important musical performance concept to develop. I think that developing line--developing goal-oriented musical direction through time in performance--is the ultimate aspiration of music as an art form. Playing musical line is absolutely necessary to create the aesthetic effect that is expected of a musical performance. For this reason, I plan to emphasize its development for as long as the student continues to play under my direction.

The information from these two programs has shown to focus and prioritize the conceptual goals young musicians should master. Based on that model, an emphasis on the above concepts: tone production, rhythmic integrity, and musical line, would be a starting point for structuring a beginning/middle school instrumental music education program.

High School

The secondary instrumental education portion of the field study was achieved through a written questionnaire that was mailed to selected programs across the country. The survey consisted of fifteen questions covering various topics, including scheduling, literature selection, rehearsal techniques, and motivational strategies. Of the schools selected to participate in the study (listed on pages 5-6), four schools provided responses. The participating schools included the following:

Adair County High School: Adair County, KY, Tim Allen, Director

Lake Braddock Secondary School: Burke, VA, Roy Holder Director

Ruben S. Ayala High School: Chino Hill, CA, Mark Stone, Director

Tarpon Springs High School: Tarpon Springs, FL, Kevin Ford, Director

These schools, while only 40% of the original sample, represent a wide range of program sizes and structures, from single-ensemble programs, such as Adair County High School, to large-scale instrumental music education programs, such as Lake Braddock Secondary School. The following pages outline the responses to the questions by the participating schools, as well as any conclusions I made regarding those responses.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

The following questions regard the overall organization of the programs in question. These address program size, scheduling both before and after school, performance schedules, as well as other topics.

BRIEFLY EXPLAIN HOW YOUR BAND CLASS(ES) ARE STRUCTURED WITHIN THE SCHOOL SCHEDULE.

Adair County and Tarpons Springs made use of a block style schedule during the school day; one was basic and one was slightly more intricate. Adair county consistently schedules the one high school band class as the last of a 4-period school day for a total of 80 minutes.

This is largely due to the fact that one director teaches all the band classes in grades 5-12 in

the system. Thus, the schedule was set up so that he can effectively travel and teach at multiple locations throughout the day.¹

The program at Tarpon Springs includes two concert ensembles, a color guard, jazz ensemble, and a concert percussion ensemble that rehearse during the school day.² Tarpon Springs also makes use of a block schedule system (4 periods, 90 minutes each), but it is more intricate due to the size of the program. Tarpon Springs high school music program is similar to a magnet program; it is referred to as the Tarpon Springs High School Leadership and Music Conservatory.³ It includes a combination of instrumental music education classes with a nationally recognized youth leadership development program, in which all music students must participate. During the first semester, both concert ensembles are combined second period to focus on woodwind and brass pedagogy, concert literature, All-county/state preparations, and marching band. The emphasis begins with instrumental pedagogy and shifts to the appropriate event as its performance date approaches. Also during this time, the color guard takes a version of the leadership course. The third period consists of a semester-long freshman leadership course. The course is required of all students who participate in the Arts at Tarpon Springs and addresses the following topics:⁴

Attitude Development

Communication Skills

Positive Role Modeling

Personal Responsibility

Understanding in Self-Motivation

¹ T. Allen, personal communication, September 8, 2008.

² K. Ford, personal communication, September 8, 2008.

³ Ibid.

⁴ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

Sensitivity in Working with Peers
Responsibility Assessment
Action Plans to Achieve Group Goals

(The directors claim this leadership program is a large part of the success that the program receives. As a result, I feel more research should be done into the structure and teaching strategies of these courses and their applicability into other music programs). Fourth period of the first semester includes a percussion ensemble and jazz ensemble. During the second semester, the concert ensembles are split into ability based groups. The top ensemble (Wind Ensemble I) rehearses second period. Third period includes theory classes (I-IV AP) and winter guard rehearsal. Fourth period includes Wind Ensemble II and Concert Percussion Ensemble.¹

The remaining two high school programs do not make use of a block schedule, but instead run on a shorter period schedule. Ayala High School uses six 56-minute periods and one 90 minute “seventh period” that occurs after school. Ayala only maintains two performing groups during the fall semester: marching band and jazz band. The schedule is laid out in the following way:²

1st Period: Planning

2nd Period: All Brass

3rd Period: Jazz Ensemble

4th Period: All Woodwinds

5th Period: All Percussion

6th Period: Color Guard

“7th Period”: PE Band (Marching band after school Monday, Wednesday and Friday)

¹ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

During the second semester performance groups included two concert bands, 2 jazz ensembles, two color guards, indoor drumline, and a concert percussion ensemble. The schedule is adjusted to accommodate for the increased number of performance groups:¹

1st Period: Planning

2nd Period: Symphonic Band (Top group)

3rd Period: Jazz Ensemble (Top group)

4th Period: Concert Band

5th Period: Percussion

6th Period: Color Guard

The second jazz band rehearses before school on Monday and after school on Tuesday.²

The Lake Braddock band program includes three full concert bands plus a jazz and marching band. The response did not include specific times for periods/rehearsal, but based on the information from the school website, the schedule is highly irregular. Despite the general irregularity of the schedule, all periods did meet every day.³

This compiled research shows that these high school programs, no matter the overall organizational structure, are scheduled to have band class *every day*. This, in some cases, even applies to traditionally extracurricular ensembles like jazz band. None of these programs work on schedules where band only meets every other day. These directors have made their administrators understand the importance of daily reinforcement in performance practice. I think rehearsal everyday, even for less time, is vital in providing quality musical development because such a large part of the technique of playing an instrument is

¹ Ibid.

² M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

³ R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

learned through procedural memory. Constant drill is required to commit these techniques to procedural memory so the student can focus on other concepts.

HOW MANY CONTESTS/FESTIVALS DOES YOUR MARCHING BAND PARTICIPATE IN PER YEAR?

Tarpon Springs, Adair County, and Ayala all compete in between five and seven marching contests/festivals in a given year.¹ These competitions range from local performances, to state marching band championships/festivals, and to regional and national competitions on the Bands of America circuit. Lake Braddock's marching band, on the other hand, only competes in two marching band contests and the VA State marching festival.² They do not maintain nearly as active of a performance schedule as the other schools in the survey.

The performance schedule of each group is directly related to the structure of the curriculum during the fall semester and, more broadly, the philosophy of the program in question. The marching bands in the first group are the primary performance ensembles of those programs during the fall semester.³ The programs and shows are designed in such a way that significant time must be devoted to these ensembles. Lake Braddock, alternatively, designs its marching band program to function on a small enough level that the concert ensembles can still function in their full capacities.⁴

These differing designs result from different philosophies regarding marching band. Considering the fact that Adair County, Tarpon Springs, and Ayala all devote such a signifi-

¹ T. Allen, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

³ T. Allen, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

⁴ R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

cant amount of time to their marching bands, it would stand to reason that they are using the marching band as their primary environment for music education in the fall semester. Lake Braddock chooses not to use marching band as the primary tool for music education during the first semester of the year, but instead, uses it as a supplement to the concert band curriculum.

I personally have no significant preference to either philosophy. I think it is acceptable to plan to rehearse a marching band show through a rigorous competition schedule, providing that the literature chosen is sophisticated enough to warrant rehearsing for that length of time. If I choose to organize my marching band program to rehearse and compete that often and late into the year, I would choose literature for that show that can provide appropriate musical development through the entirety of that period. If the music can only provide musical development over a fairly short time, then I would organize the rehearsal and performance schedule to reflect the degree of rehearsal pacing that would maximize the amount that can be learned through that show design. It is not important which paradigm I design the program around as long as it maximizes the amount of student learning for the time frame in question.

HOW MANY CONCERTS/FESTIVALS DOES EACH OF YOUR CONCERT ENSEMBLES REGULARLY PERFORM FROM YEAR TO YEAR?

The results from this question were fairly consistent. Generally, the high school bands perform 3-4 school concerts per year, the local concert festival, and solo and ensemble festival.¹ Except for Adair County (due to its size), all these programs attempt to perform at least one

¹ T. Allen, R. Holder, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

large-scale national festival or contest each year. These include the Midwest Clinic, the Robert Reynolds Festival at Carnegie Hall, the International Wind Festival at the JFK Performing Arts Center, the Colorado Wind Festival. They also perform at state conventions or regional or non-local concert festivals. In the case of Ayala High School, even the top Jazz Ensemble participates in 4 festivals a year in addition to school concerts.¹

These additional concert band activities seem to be key differences that set these high schools above other programs. As a performance ensemble, the concert band is pressed to be more active than one at a typical school. The bands at these schools do more than simply perform a few after-school concerts and make an appearance at the local concert festival. I think this is a wonderful philosophy. Events such as these raise student interest in concert band performance. So often, band directors have to drag students along into concert band, and the students think it is boring because there are no trips or competitions. Making the concert band more active and giving the students the opportunity to see other programs performing significant and challenging works of music would raise student appreciation for concert band and, as a result, music as an art form. Even if I began teaching in a place where the students could not play at the level necessary to perform at these festivals, I still would try to take them to see some of the outstanding groups perform, if for no other reasons to let them see the kinds of musical achievements students at their age are capable of reaching.

¹ M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

DO YOU HAVE CONCERT BAND DURING THE MARCHING BAND SEASON?

Two schools, Adair County and Ayala High School, do not have concert band during the marching band season.¹ These programs made their decisions for a couple of different reasons. In the case of Adair County High School, it was decided that the complexity and nuance of the show's design required that the group rehearse that material as much as possible during the season to perfect the show's execution.² Ayala's reasoning for focusing on marching band over concert band is more schedule-related. During the fall, the program's schedule is organized to where classes are divided by instrument families, not ensembles. They do this mainly to focus on pedagogical techniques of each instrument family. Marching band rehearses after school. As a result of this organization, the students are never placed in a concert ensemble during the fall semester.³

The other two groups do make use of concert band literature and performances during the marching band season. Tarpon Springs attempts to make use of working on concert band literature year-round. However, for the first nine weeks they emphasize pedagogical skills to develop the individual musician before they begin working on literature.⁴ Lake Braddock has a highly emphasized concert program that begins the first day of school. The concert bands sight-read frequently during the first weeks (25-35 pieces for the lower bands

¹ T. Allen & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008

² T. Allen, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

³ M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

⁴ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

and 75-80 for the top group). They use literature to develop reading skills, style, technique, pitch control, balance, and other ensemble skills.¹

While both programs show support, the stronger programs (in my opinion) make attempts to focus on developing individual musicianship and ensemble skills through concert ensembles in addition to marching band. I think that placing students in a situation where they are not focusing on *one* set of music for a long period of time, but rather exposing themselves to more literature in a wider variety of styles and contexts is more likely to develop general musical performance concepts and techniques. The larger volume and variety of literature placed on a student in a shorter period of time forces him or her to develop musical techniques and apply them to new situations more readily than choosing one set of literature for an entire semester and allowing the student to wait to have every measure of that music taught by rote to him or her.

BRIEFLY DESCRIBE YOUR PRIVATE LESSON PROGRAM.

Three of the schools--Adair County, Ayala, and Tarpon springs--indicated that 10% or less of their student body participates in any sort of private lesson program. The few that did take lessons did so voluntarily. The students took private lessons after school, payed for them themselves, and in most cases, had to go to a different location to have them.² This was often a result of a lack of instrument teachers in the area, especially in Adair County. Tarpon

¹ R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² T. Allen, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

Springs makes attempts at remedying this problem by organizing several master classes on each instrument throughout the year.¹

Lake Braddock, on the other hand, has an extensive private lesson program for its students. Almost 100% of the top band, 50%-75% of the second band, and almost 50% of the third band take private lessons. These lessons also occur after school, but a larger number of teachers come to the campus or the surrounding area to instruct them. The students are offered incentives to take private lessons, such as being permitted to miss rehearsal to take them.²

These results are fairly surprising. In college, we hear constantly about the need for private lessons in a band program in order for it to be successful. While I still believe private lessons are an important part of a child's development in instrumental music, it is possible to create a quality musical experience for students without them. This is promising information to young directors or other directors that may be preparing to teach in an area where a large private lesson program may not be possible due to the location or the economic state of the system.

Of course, the existence of a smaller private lesson program means that there will be a larger demand on the director to have all the pedagogical knowledge necessary to provide instrument-specific information to the students all the way through the high school program. It will most likely require more study and practice by the band director to meet these needs, but luckily such resources are more readily available through technology such as the Internet in today's world. The schools with smaller private lessons programs also made their

¹ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

ability to provide this knowledge easier by organizing their schedules in a way to emphasize individual pedagogical skills. For example, in the first semester of every year, Ayala and Tarpon Springs organize all their classes according to instrument family rather than ensemble. Such an organization of students would be necessary, I think, to give quality instruction appropriate to them throughout their education.

HOW FREQUENTLY DO YOU RUN AFTER SCHOOL REHEARSAL/
SECTIONALS FOR THE CONCERT BANDS? WHAT PERCENTAGE,
IF ANY, ARE STUDENT LED?

Two of the four schools surveyed--Adair County and Ayala High Schools--generally tried to avoid concert band rehearsals after school during the spring semester.¹ Their reasoning behind this decision was fairly straightforward and typical: marching band takes up so much time after school for the students during the fall that they minimize after school involvement in the spring. This way the students have the opportunity to work or participate in other after school activities, such as sports.² These directors make it a point to carefully plan their rehearsal schedule during the fall and set challenging but achievable goals that can be attained within the in-class rehearsal time. They may occasionally have an after-school rehearsal a couple days before a major performance, but other than that, all mandatory rehearsals occur during the normal school day.

Tarpon Springs and Lake Braddock High School both included mandatory after school rehearsals for their ensembles during the spring. Tarpon Springs requires every performance group, including solo and ensemble groups, to participate in one 2-hour teacher-

¹ T. Allen & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² Ibid.

led rehearsal per week. Generally, two ensembles rehearse after school on a given day. In addition, they permit the students to have an additional student-led sectional that lasts no more than an hour in one week.¹ Lake Braddock also has one after school rehearsal per week for each of its ensembles. They rotate the schedule of which ensemble meets on which days to allow the students the ability to more freely attend other after school activities, though they are expected to skip these other activities and go to rehearsal when a conflict arises.²

I do not think requiring one after school rehearsal per week is an unreasonable request, and I would attempt to set up such a rehearsal wherever I teach. The expectation that simply because marching band was time-consuming in the fall does not mean that the concert ensembles--in my opinion the most important ensembles in the program--should suffer. Also, in many schools, percussion ensembles begin winter drumline rehearsals with a degree of intensity and frequency equal to or greater than the marching band. In comparison, requiring the wind players to have one sectional per week does not seem exceptionally demanding. Depending on the size of my program, I would probably rotate out which sections are required to come to a given after-school rehearsal based on the performance achievements of each section as assessed through some sort of playing test. Philosophically, I have difficulty reconciling so much after school rehearsal time dedicated to an auxiliary ensemble in the fall (marching band) and little or none dedicated to the primary ensembles of the program in the spring. If students are to understand that concert band is the most

¹ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

important and musically valuable aspect of their instrumental education, then the structure of the curriculum designed by the director should reflect that as much as possible.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO LITERATURE SELECTION

The following questions regard various aspects of literature selection and function within each of the surveyed programs. Questions involve, among other things, traits of quality literature, examples of quality literature at various grade levels, resources to find quality literature, and philosophies on determining when to expose ensembles to higher difficulties of literature.

GENERALLY SPEAKING, WHAT QUALITIES DO YOU LOOK FOR IN A SELECTION TO DETERMINE IF IT IS OF HIGH ENOUGH QUALITY TO WARRANT PERFORMING?

Responses to this question were fairly similar. The following list of traits is used to determine if a piece or group of pieces is appropriate to perform:¹

Instrumentation

Balance of standard material and new material

Balance of technical and lyrical material

Discussion of various composers, styles, and genres in detail

Balance of transcriptions and band works

Balance of light and serious works

¹ T. Allen, K. Ford, R. Holder, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

These programs make extensive use of sight-reading with their bands to determine the appropriate ability level of their students within each category.¹

It was interesting that none of the responses seemed overly concerned that their groups only play the “highest quality” of music--the masterworks that have stood the test of time. They are more concerned about playing a balanced combination of such music alongside other, less significant music so that their students can grow in the best way possible. I think this is a great philosophy to follow. Their highest priorities are their students, not the music. Especially with younger groups, an appropriate piece for them may include a much greater emphasis and repetition on a few musical concepts, such as a scale or rhythmic pattern. Often, higher quality music is written with the understanding that the players can already perform the necessary musical techniques and concepts with efficacy. As a result, the music may make use of a greater variety of concepts and techniques and use less repetition. This indicates that in order for younger musicians to truly develop the necessary techniques to perform the piece well, a greater amount of supplementary material (through extra drills, warm-up, playing tests, etc.) would be necessary to isolate and refine these techniques. These directors realize this and balance “educational literature” with the traditional “high quality” literature.

¹ Ibid.

ARE THERE ANY PIECES YOU TRY TO ENSURE ALL YOUR STUDENTS ARE EXPOSED TO BEFORE THEY GRADUATE? WHAT ARE THEY AND WHY ARE THEY SELECTED?

Adair County and Lake Braddock do not generally attempt to play specific pieces within each cycle of students, but they do try to expose them to all major genres of music.¹ Tarpon Springs and Ayala provided both pieces and composers they try to include in their curricula. The list of composers is as follows:²

Carter
Chance
Grainger
Grantham
Grundman
Holst
Maslanka
McBeth
Smith
Ticheli
Whitacre
Zdechlik

The list of specific pieces is as follows:³

<i>Amazing Grace</i>	Ticheli
<i>Blue Shades</i>	Ticheli

¹ T. Allen & R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

³ Ibid.

<i>Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral</i>	Wagner
<i>First Suite in Eb</i>	Holst
<i>Lincolnshire Posy</i>	Grainger
<i>Molly on the Shore</i>	Grainger
<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	Lauridsen
<i>Postcard</i>	Ticheli
<i>Rhosymedre</i>	Vaughn Williams
<i>Second Suite in F</i>	Holst
<i>Symphony in Bb</i>	Hindemith
<i>Symphony No. 2</i>	Ticheli

Many of these pieces by these composers may only be sight-read or worked on for a short time with these programs, but they still expose these great works to the students. This exposure helps keep student interest in music as an art form and helps to motivate their students to keep playing after they graduate high school.

All of these composers provide excellent literature for the modern wind band, but the only composers that were mentioned by all the responses that provided such information were Holst and Grainger. This is an area where I believe much more research would be beneficial. A study into literature preference in more public school programs across the country would provide valuable insight into the specific examples of music that promote the highest degree of musical education and enrichment for the overall student population of the country.

HOW OFTEN, IF EVER, DO YOU PERFORM LITERATURE WITH
A GUEST SOLOIST?

Adair County and Ayala do not make use of guest soloists regularly in their program.¹ Lake Braddock uses one or two student soloists every year and a guest soloist every two or three years.² Tarpon Springs performs with a guest soloist of some kind every year.³

These results were fairly surprising. Performing music with the ensemble serving an accompanying role is a great way to teach musical sensitivity to the students. They are required to be cognizant of balancing and phrasing with the soloist at all times. The original goal of this question was to create a database of appropriate literature of this nature for ensembles to use when attempting to teach this type of musical sensitivity. The programs in question must more strongly emphasize such sensitivity in other parts of the curriculum.

FOR THE GRADE LEVELS BELOW, PROVIDE AT LEAST FIVE
PIECES AND COMPOSERS THAT YOU THINK ARE EXCELLENT
EXAMPLES OF QUALITY EDUCATIONAL LITERATURE.

The following list is a compilation of the pieces provided by each response.⁴ It should be noted that grade levels are approximate. Grade levels provided by each director were based on the local grading scale of their regional or state association. For example, what may be a grade V in one location may be a grade IV or VI at another.

¹ T. Allen & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

³ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

⁴ T. Allen, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

Grade III

<i>American Sea Rhapsody</i>	Cacavas
<i>As Summer was Just Beginning</i>	Daehn
<i>Blue Ridge Overture</i>	Erickson
<i>Canto</i>	McBeth
<i>Chesford Overture</i>	Swearingen
<i>Chorale and Shaker Dance II</i>	Zdechlik
<i>Encanto</i>	Smith
<i>Imperatrix</i>	Reed
<i>Into the Storm</i>	Smith
<i>Jesu, Joy of Man's Desiring</i>	Ployhar
<i>Kentucky 1800</i>	Grundman
<i>Pyramids</i>	Tatgenhorst
<i>Rhosymedre</i>	Vaughn Williams
<i>Shenandoah</i>	Ticheli
<i>Simple Gifts</i>	Ticheli
<i>Snakes</i>	Duffy
<i>They Led My Lord Away</i>	Gordon
<i>Three Ayres for Gloucester</i>	Stuart

Grade IV

<i>A Festival Prelude</i>	Reed
<i>Adagio for Winds</i>	Del Borgo
<i>Amparita Roca</i>	Texidor
<i>Australian Up-Country Tune</i>	Grainger
<i>Cajun Folk Songs</i>	Ticheli
<i>Elegy for a Young American</i>	Lopresti
<i>Festivo</i>	Nelhybel
<i>Folk Song Suite</i>	Vaughn Williams

<i>Hebrides Suite</i>	Grundman
<i>I Am</i>	Boysen
<i>Incantations</i>	Smith
<i>Invicta</i>	Swearingen
<i>On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss</i>	Holsinger
<i>Prelude, Siciliano, and Rondo</i>	Paynter/Arnold
<i>Sleep</i>	Whitacre
<i>Three Choral Preludes</i>	Latham
<i>Ye Banks and Braes O Bonnie Dune</i>	Grainger

Grade V-VI

<i>Amazing Grace</i>	Ticheli
<i>Blue Shades</i>	Ticheli
<i>Caccia and Chorale</i>	Williams
<i>Chorale and Shaker Dance</i>	Zdechlik
<i>Dance of the Jesters</i>	Tchaikovsky
<i>Dedicatory Overture</i>	Williams
<i>Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral</i>	Wagner
<i>Emperata Overture</i>	Smith
<i>Enigma Variations</i>	Elgar
<i>First Suite in Eb</i>	Holst
<i>Give Us This Day</i>	Maslanka
<i>Incantation and Dance</i>	Chance
<i>Kaddish</i>	McBeth
<i>Lincolnshire Posy</i>	Grainger
<i>Masque</i>	McBeth
<i>Molly on the Shore</i>	Grainger
<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	Lauridsen

<i>Pageant</i>	Persichetti
<i>Postcard</i>	Ticheli
<i>Second Suite in F</i>	Holst
<i>Suite of Old American Dances</i>	Bennet
<i>Sun Dance</i>	Ticheli
<i>Symphony in Bb</i>	Hindemith
<i>Variations on a Korean Folk Song</i>	Chance

It should be noted that, while these are all exceptional pieces of music, their quality plays a secondary role to the specific needs of the ensemble in determining if they are played. Lake Braddock made it clear in their response that this question is almost impossible to answer without knowing the needs of the specific ensemble. Their list would be drastically different depending on which instruments in the ensemble were in a relatively weak stage of development.¹

WHAT RESOURCES DO YOU UTILIZE TO FIND NEW HIGH SCHOOL CONCERT BAND LITERATURE?

All programs questioned returned similar results. Sources included fairly typical answers:²

Promotional CD's
 Clinic/Convention recordings
 High school and college experience
 Friends and colleagues' recommendations
Teaching Music Through Performance in Band series
 Service band recordings
 Recommendations from alumni currently playing in collegiate ensembles

¹ R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² T. Allen, K. Ford, R. Holder & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

Ayala High School is conveniently located near a J.W. Pepper music warehouse, so the directors are able to go there and look through music with recordings and take many of them “on approval” to read with their groups.

The results of this question indicate similar answers to the middle school directors in the study. These teachers do not necessarily make use of little-known resources for literature ideas; they simply make greater and more thorough use of the resources that are commonly available. Again, they search diligently to find good music that will work for their groups so that they can effectively differentiate instruction to various sections.

ARE THERE ANY *SPECIFIC* TECHNICAL/MUSICAL TRAITS THAT YOU LOOK FOR TO INDICATE THAT THE STUDENTS ARE READY TO PREPARE A PIECE OF A GIVEN GRADE LEVEL? IF SO, WHAT ARE THEY?

For the most part, the programs did not provide any specific indications. They simply emphasized challenging the students in a sequential manner. Another large factor the type of performance for which the literature is selected. According to Adair County, for instance, selecting a transcription for Concert Festival may be inappropriate depending on the quality of the woodwind section, but it may be acceptable to play the same transcription with the same group on the Spring Concert in order to challenge their technical skills.¹

Tarpon Springs, on the other hand, did provide a specific set of guidelines to indicate if the ensemble is performing their currently selected literature well enough to warrant pur-

¹ T. Allen, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

suing music at the next level of difficulty. The director, Kevin Ford, indicates that that an ensemble must be able to to the following:¹

Understand and play the musical line with expression

Align vertical and horizontal timing

Play with an accurate pitch center

These standards must be achieved in a timely manner that allows for discussion of historical and stylistic information related to the piece, if applicable. They must also be achieved without requiring an unusually large percentage of rehearsal time. This is an excellent set of guidelines to follow in determining the performance quality of a piece of literature. It summarizes the myriad aspects of a large group performance into an easily remembered list to apply while listening to a performance.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC FULL ENSEMBLE METHOD /
TECHNIQUE BOOKS THAT YOU USE TO DEVELOP CERTAIN
MUSICAL CONCEPTS?

Seven method books were recommended. Included below is the name and author of each book and a list of which concepts the directors recommend that they are used to develop.²

Title	Author(s)	Concepts Addressed
<i>101 Rhythm Rest Patterns</i>	Yaus	Rhythm Study
<i>40 Rhythmic Studies</i>	Yaus	Rhythm in Basic Keys
<i>Concert Band Warm-ups</i>	Pearson	Pitch Scale Technique

¹ K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² T. Allen, K. Ford, & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

<i>Exercises for Ensemble Drill</i>	Fussell	Full Ensemble Studies
<i>Foundations for Superior Performance</i>	King/Williams	Chorales Articulation Styles
<i>I Recommend</i>	Ployhar	Scales and Arpeggios
<i>Symphonic Clinic</i>	Smith	Full Ensemble Studies

There was decent variety in the recommended books. These, as well as many others, can provide educational merit if used correctly. It would seem the key in making efficient use of a method book is to find method books you prefer and remember that their purpose is to develop concepts. These directors do not simply use these books to warm up; they use them to isolate certain musical concepts and highlight them to the students so that they can focus on developing those specific aspects of performance.

QUESTIONS REGARDING REHEARSAL AND MOTIVATION

The last two questions of the study refer to basic rehearsal structure and motivational strategies for promoting effective practice habits.

ON AVERAGE, WHAT PERCENTAGE OF REHEARSAL DO YOU DEVOTE TOWARD DRILLS AND EXERCISES? WHAT PERCENTAGE IS SPENT ON LITERATURE?

These results were fairly similar from program to program. Adair County spends approximately the first third of the class on drills and the last two-thirds on literature. Tarpon Springs spends at least thirty to forty-five minutes of the ninety minute period on fundamentals and then splits the remaining time between listening exercises and literature re-

hearsal. Generally, Tarpon Springs spends no more than fifty percent of the rehearsal on literature. Ayala adjusts the ratio of fundamentals to literature based on the time of year. At the beginning of the school year, nearly 100% of the rehearsal is devoted to fundamental techniques. As the year progresses, the rehearsal structure approaches the 33% fundamentals 66% literature model. Lake Braddock spends relatively more time on literature than the other programs but still devotes the beginning of the periods to developing fundamentals and sight-reading.¹

Generally, these directors understand the importance of focusing on the development of fundamental musical concepts and performance skills, rather than only learning to play individual pieces. They have the foresight to select literature that they can build to an acceptable level without sacrificing a rehearsal structure that constantly reinforces the development of those mentioned musical concepts and skills. This allows literature to be learned more quickly and effectively. They teach *concepts*, not notes and rhythms of pieces.

WHAT STRATEGIES DO YOU USE TO MOTIVATE YOUR STUDENTS TO PRACTICE?

This is a question that plagues directors all across the country. As is evident by the following responses, these programs approach student motivation in several different ways. All seem to be fairly effective, despite their different approaches.

¹ T. Allen, K. Ford, R. Holder & M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

The Ayala High School band program falls victim to a significant cultural phenomenon in the area in which the parents actually discourage practice habits in the students and instead require them to focus on the “academic” subjects of the school curriculum. During the fall semester, director Mark Stone attempts to remedy this issue by blocking “practice” time into the rehearsal curriculum. He does this by creating instrument-family classes that focus largely on developing pedagogical skills and rehearses the marching ensemble exclusively and extensively after school to develop ensemble skills and prepare for the ensemble performances. In the spring, the schedule is adjusted to form concert ensembles, and he gives playing tests to the students in a way that does not conflict with the extensive preparations the school makes for the state-mandated standardized test system.¹

Adair County High School focuses on creating a goal-oriented rehearsal and practice environment for the students. Tim Allen, the director, sets short and long-term goals for the students, and he outlines these goals for them. He gives weekly playing tests to the students in order for them to demonstrate their achievement of these goals. This allows him the ability to consistently assess the development of each individual student throughout the year.²

Lake Braddock Secondary School appeals to the sense of pride in the students. Roy Holder uses a combination of pressure and positive motivation to promote practice habits. He indicates clearly where the standard of performance is placed and provides consequences to those that do not work up to these standards (though he does not go into any great detail into the nature of those consequences). He uses chair tests as a motivational strategy as well,

¹ M. Stone, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

² T. Allen, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

but not a significant one. He also leads by example. He shows them how he works as hard as he expects them to and offers whatever help is needed, whenever it is needed.¹

Tarpon Springs uses a combination of emotional motivation, education, and regular assessment techniques to promote practice habits. Kevin Ford makes a point to demonstrate to the students his excitement about music by playing CD's, bringing in guest artists, and showing them performance DVD's. Through both his music rehearsals and leadership programs, he stresses the belief in teamwork and the individuals' responsibility to a group or ensemble. Furthermore, he attempts to provide the students with quality literature that challenges them and educates them in a way that they begin to enjoy playing the selections based on their intimate understanding of the piece, both historically and theoretically. In addition to these motivational strategies, Mr. Ford has implemented what he calls a "Master Musician" program, in which every student is responsible for preparing a new instrument-specific excerpt every two weeks that must be successfully performed for credit.²

Despite the various ways that these directors attempt to create practice habits in their students, they do achieve three general goals in their strategies. They focus on educating the whole musician through developing individual skills in the curriculum. Developing individual musicianship will promote students' confidence in their ability and will make them more likely to practice their instruments when not under the guidance of an instructor. Secondly, they require frequent and consistent demonstrations of this individual student performance. These tests provide short and long term goals for the students to raise their level of musicianship. They also create a positive learning environment filled with ex-

¹ R. Holder, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008

² K. Ford, personal communication, Sept. 8, 2008.

citement about music and music education for the students. These elements work together to make a student choose to devote time to increasing their skill level.

CONCLUSIONS

This survey has provided significant insight into the functionality of successful music programs at the high school level. The responses to these questions indicate three broad ideas under which these programs function that allow their students to stand out above those in other instrumental music programs. They emphasize a consistent structure, a positive learning environment, and a curriculum emphasizing musical concepts, rather than simply literature.

The emphasis on consistency by these programs is evident in several ways. All of the programs studied meet every day of the school year, even if the school is part of a block schedule. All four programs ensure that they follow a consistent routine in their rehearsal process. They consistently provide instrument specific feedback to the students and do not rely on private lessons faculty to do it for them. Finally, these programs provide a consistent assessment procedure to ensure individual feedback.

These directors also all create a positive work environment for the students. As previously stated, they generate excitement for music and teaching and let the students witness and feed off of that excitement. They strive to create a sense of pride in their abilities and their program. These programs ensure that the students understand how individual responsibilities contribute to the performance level of the group and relate everyone's individual

efforts and teamwork to the success of the group as a whole, constantly instilling a sense of pride in the students.

Finally, the directors in the study work hard to teach the development of musical concepts rather than individual pieces of music. They devote significant portions of their rehearsal time to work on musical fundamentals. Some of the programs even organize the students in instrument-based groups for an entire semester so that they can easily focus on pedagogical skills for the growing students. The directors make use of different method books to help focus on specific musical concepts in a way that provides variety and structure for the students.

The emphasis of these three ideas--consistency, positive learning environment, and musical concepts--are crucial in creating a curriculum that will promote a high level of individual musicianship in the student body. These ideas provide logical instruction for how a student is supposed to play and practice their instrument. They provide a timeline for how quickly they should develop (through appropriate literature and regular assessment procedures). Finally, they motivate the students to choose to achieve the performance goals set before them. If these ideas and structures are effectively put into place, then the students will have the best possible chance for success that we, as teachers, can give them.

Overall Conclusions of Project

This study provided plenty of valuable information into the components of successful primary and secondary music programs. However, there is still need for further study into several topics that were addressed in the survey. A larger source of suggested literature by suc-

successful directors would be exceptionally useful. Also, information regarding monetary support by local school systems would play a part in meeting certain needs of these successful programs.

While investigation into these topics would be beneficial, I still consider the results of this study to be a success. The purpose of the project--to develop a collection of effective concert literature, educational literature, rehearsal strategies, and curricular designs drawn from successful instrumental music programs--was achieved. The programs showed examples of how their curricula are scheduled and structured and rationales for why those class organizations are successful. The directors surveyed provided a significant collection of method books, literature, and composers of literature appropriate for ensembles at both the middle school and high school level. The directors have also given effective examples of rehearsal structures and strategies for teaching musical concepts, particularly at the middle school level. Finally, these directors have explained several different approaches to student motivation, both for regular practice habits and rehearsal preparation.

This survey has shown that successful middle school and high school programs both strive to achieve the same goals at different levels. They develop understanding and performance of general musical concepts as well as individual student motivation and performance ability. The resources they provided and utilize in their programs are used with the long-term development of the student in mind.

Resources

Allen, T. Personal Communication, September 8, 2008.

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations. (1994). *National Standards for Arts Education: What Every Young American Should Know and Be Able to Do in the Arts*. Reston, VA. Music Educators National Conference.

Ford, K. Personal Communication, September 8, 2008.

Hayden, G. Personal Interview, November 24, 2008.

Holder, R. Personal Communication, September 8, 2008.

Jarrell, J.A. Personal Interview, November 21, 2008.

Stone, M. Personal Communication, September 8, 2008.

Appendix A (High School Instrumental Music Questionnaire)

I. Scheduling

1. Briefly explain how your high school band class is structured within the scheme of the school schedule. (e.g. how many bands, full ensemble or split, how many days a week, how long, what time of day, etc.)

2. How many contests/festivals does your marching band participate in per year? This does not include football games or competitions that you host.

3. How many concerts/festivals/contests does each of your concert ensembles perform? This does not include clinics (e.g. Midwest or state music education clinics) that are not a regular part of the performance schedule from year to year.

4. Do you continue to have concert band during the marching band season? If so, do you begin concert band music during marching season or once it has concluded and why?

5. Approximately what percentage of your students take private lessons? How many of these are given during regular school hours? Briefly explain the structure of your private lessons program (e.g. are they mandatory or voluntary, on or off campus, financed by the school, etc.)

6. How frequently during the year do you run after school rehearsal/sectionals for your high school concert bands? What percentage of these, if any, are student led?

II. Literature Selection/Rehearsals

7. Generally speaking, what qualities do you look for in a concert band piece to determine if it is of high enough quality to warrant performing?

8. Are there any concert band pieces that you try to ensure every student has been exposed to before they graduate from your program? If so, what are they and why are they selected?

9. How often, if ever, do you perform concert band literature with a guest soloist?

10. For each of the grade levels below, please provide at least five high school concert band pieces and/or composers that you think are excellent examples of quality educational literature.

Grade III

Grade IV

Grade V

11. What resources do you utilize to find new high school concert band literature?

12. Are there any specific technical/musical traits that you look for in your concert bands that tell you the students in the ensembles are ready to prepare a piece of a given grade level? If so, what are they?

13. Are there any specific full ensemble method/technique books that you recommend to focus on specific musical concepts (e.g. blend, balance, intonation, rhythm, etc.)? If so, what are they and which concepts do they develop?

14. On average, what percentage of a high school concert band rehearsal do you work on drills or exercises out of technique books/self-written material (or warm-up, tune, etc.)? What percentage of an average concert band rehearsal do you focus on the literature?

15. What strategies do you use to motivate your students to practice?

Please send the completed questionnaire using the self-addressed enclosed envelope by October 1, 2008.

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

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