

The high school curriculum

Is there a basis for selection of repertoire?

How do we select appropriate music?

- ❖ Marketing?
- ❖ Free cds?
- ❖ What other directors say?
- ❖ Certain publishing house new music reading days?
- ❖ Relevance to what students are listening to on their own?

Feldman says appropriate repertoire does the following:

- ❖ Provides the means to learn essential concepts
- ❖ Keeps the ensemble engaged, which reinforces classroom management
- ❖ Gives the ensemble a chance to perform successfully, which in turn improves motivation and morale
- ❖ Offers a vehicle to perform art. (*Quality, Significance*)

What makes literature *significant*?

- ❖ The recognition of connoisseurs (experts in this area)
 - ❖ University and Professional Directors
 - ❖ Time-honored
 - ❖ Listed on many State Lists
 - ❖ Included in books on the subject (*Teaching Music Through Performance in Band (Orchestra).*)

Ostling's criteria for quality

1. Has form (balance of repetition and contrast), reflecting conscious choice of shape and design
2. Reflects craftsmanship in orchestration, balance between transparent and tutti
3. Not overly predictable or obvious in its progression from start to finish
4. Consistent quality throughout

Ostling's criteria for quality

5. Consistent in style

6. Reflects ingenuity in its development

7. Genuine in idiom (*a march is a march*)

8. Reflects musical validity

Developing a core curriculum

- ❖ Analogous to the Gen Ed curriculum in our liberal arts university
- ❖ Use significant literature as the core - why?
 - ❖ This doesn't mean that pop and other "non-significant" literature can't be used
 - ❖ Each main unit (concert) should have a focus on significant literature
 - ❖ You will need to decide if you will integrate pop music into all concerts or have separate pops concerts
 - ❖ How do we bring audiences to the next level to appreciate "serious" and longer works of art?

Developing a core curriculum

- ❖ We have high school students for 4 years
- ❖ Avoid repeating individual pieces during this time
- ❖ Style periods are one of the best ways to develop your curriculum
 - ❖ Without this “template” you can easily fall into the habit of doing only one or two types of significant literature each year...ones that have styles that you are most familiar with or work best with your ensemble.
 - ❖ See page 142 in text for styles and techniques we can use...incorporating “Comprehensive Musicianship.”

Sample three-year high school band core curriculum

A THREE YEAR CORE CURRICULUM FOR BAND—compiled by Henry Duitman

| Style | Year 1 | Year 2 | Year 3 |
|---------------------------|--|---|---|
| Ren.- Baroque | PRELUDE & FUGUE IN d Bach/Moehlmann | THREE CHORALE PRELUDES Latham | GILES FARNABY SUITE Jacob |
| Classical | ORLANDO PALADINO OVER. Haydn/DeRubertis | OVERTURE IN F Jadin | OVERTURE FOR WINDS Mendelssohn (arr) |
| Romantic | ELSA'S PROCESSION Wagner/Calliet | PROCESSION OF THE NOBLES Rimsky-Korsakov/Leidzen | TRAUERSINFONIE Wagner/Leidzen |
| British Band | FOLK SONG SUITE Vaughan Williams | COLONIAL SONG Grainger | TOCCATA MARZIALE Vaughan Williams |
| 20th Cent. | UKRANIAN FOLK SONGS Stevens | ELEGY Chance | DANCE RHYTHMS Riegger |
| Progressive 20th Cent. | SUITE FRANCAISE Milhaud | VARIANTS ON A MEDIEVAL TUNE—Dello Joio | NEW ENG. TRIPTYCH Schumann |
| non-trad. | PASSACAGLIA & ROUNDS Karlins | SYMPHONY # 1 Bukvich | EPINICION Paulson |

Program/selection notes

PRELUDE AND FUGUE IN D MINOR BY J.S. BACH - Transcribed by Moehlmann Grade 3 Time 4:00

The "Eight Short Preludes and Fugues" of Bach have sometimes been regarded as early works or not even written by Bach. The quality of the preludes, in particular, is not even. However Grace says,

The Eight Short Preludes and Fugues are sometimes regarded as very early works, but there can be no doubt that Bach wrote them after he had been settled at Weimar for a considerable time--long enough to have gathered round him a few pupils. We may well understand that good teaching material--brief, employing two manuals, and with a definite and moderately difficult pedal-part--must have been scarce at that date. Bach's endeavour to supply the deficiency was so successful that the collection--at all events the fugal part--has taken a high place in the curriculum, and is hardly likely to be superseded. The general level of excellence in the writing proves them to belong to a period when the composer was approaching maturity. Even their simplicity and brevity indicate a fairly late date, for youthful genius is not usually inclined to be simple and unpretentious, and Bach was no exception to the rule.

It is interesting that these "teaching pieces" used by Bach can also be used as "teaching pieces" in their band version. In addition to counterpoint and rhythm, we can use these pieces to encourage a characteristically rich tone by the entire ensemble which in a way resembles that other magnificent wind instrument--the organ.

Moehlmann has done excellent work in scoring a simple, yet appealing instrumentation. Students love to play them.

Rehearsal notes

REHEARSAL NOTES

1. Tone should be rich, but not given to small expressive crescendi.
2. Fingers should move mechanically in a style similar to organ playing--concern with lifting the fingers and ending the tone.
3. Expressive rubato is needed in the prelude eighth note motion. However, it should be practiced in strictest time first.
4. Trills should be practiced with an appoggiatura and should be measured. They should also be played confidently so that they may be heard.
5. There are many low d's and c#'s for the trumpet. Students must use their slides.
6. In comparing the transcription to the original organ work, one notices that Moehlmann adds many slurs. In performance, **I** would take out many of them if the students could master a strong legato.
7. Baroque organ style in the fugue means that quarter notes should be separated slightly and should begin at full volume (avoid "wah".)
8. Eighth notes should be very legato and slightly louder.

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

Educational notes

EDUCATIONAL IDEAS

1. The prelude may be used as an effective warmup. I find that repeated hearing of a solidly tuned cadential minor chord gives the band a darker tone throughout the rehearsal.
2. The organ work is easy and the students should hear the work performed on a good organ.

3. Information about Bach and Baroque organs could and should be put on a bulletin board.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bach, Johann Sebastian. Complete preludes and fugues for organ. New York; Dover, 1985.
- Grace, Harvey. The Organ Works of Bach. London, Novello and Co., New York, H.W. Gray Co., 1922.
- Sweetkind, David. Allegro and Adagio Rhythmic Style in the Instrumental Works of J.S. Bach. (Thesis: Florida State University, 1969.)
- Umstaedt, Monica Johanna. The Early Organ Preludes, Fugues, Toccatas and Fantasias of Johann Sebastian Bach as a Culmination of Italian and German Organ Literature of the 15th to 17th centuries. (Doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University, 1980.)

Concert & rehearsal programming

- ❖ Opener - faster tempo, more tutti, not long
- ❖ Main work - longer, significant literature
- ❖ A feature work - soloist(s) etc.
- ❖ Lighter - maybe after intermission, several short works
- ❖ Closer - most powerful, not long, ends strong

Discussion Questions

- ❖ Is there, like Ostling argues, such a thing as “quality” in music or is all musical quality just “beauty in the eye of the beholder?”
- ❖ Faced with a musical choice between a piece that you think has less “aesthetic” quality but, because it relies on lots of tutti homophonic sections, your ensemble could play it well, and one that is a “better” selection artistically, but some of your ensemble members would struggle with solo parts, which would you select and why?
- ❖ Is it important for you as director to like (love) every piece that you program?