

Bandworld

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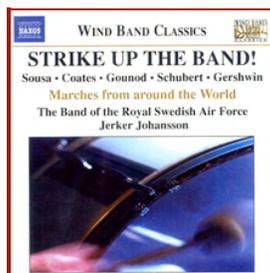


BW 2007*The Future of the Bandworld***MusiClips**

by Ira Novoselsky

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**March of the Toys**

by Herbert/Nestico

Album Title: **STRIKE UP THE BAND!**
 Recording: **Band of the Royal Swedish Air Force**
Jerker Johansson, director
 Publisher: **Naxos 8.557545**

Strike Up the Band! is a fascinating collection of marches that will delight the listener. In addition to several traditional marches, some rarities are featured along with some familiar orchestral marches in most interesting transcriptions. With so many settings of the title work to choose from, the Warren Barker adaptation of Strike Up the Band adds a fresh touch to this recording. Another unexpected surprise is Herbert's March of the Toys as viewed by Sammy Nestico, certainly a new wrinkle on an old favorite. Don't pass up this disc as just another march recording; there is so much to savor in this collection.

**If Thou Be Near (excerpt)**

by Bach/Rundel

Album Title: **SINFONISCHE BLÄSERMUSIK 2**
 Recording: **The Brandenburg Police Band**
Peter Vierneisel, conductor
Jan Hendrik Rubel, cello
Falk Maertens, trumpet
Nicole Kern, clarinet
 Publisher: **Rundel MVS-053**

-Peter Vierneisel, conductor

Don't let the name mislead you, the Brandenburg Police Band is one of Germany's finest professional bands and you'll definitely be convinced when you listen to this recording. The program is all transcriptions but the arrangers' craftsmanship is certainly impressive. Kol Nidrei (Bruch) is a welcome addition to the growing list of cello & wind ensemble works, clarinetists will enjoy a new setting of Concertino Op.26, and the Arutiunian Trumpet Concerto is always a favorite. Wagner's Die Meistersinger Prelude, Handel's Dead March from Saul, and Bach's If Thou Be Near are also included on this magnificent recording. Rundel also publishes these fine transcriptions. A true gem!!

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by Ira Novoselsky

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**Fortune Plango (excerpt)**

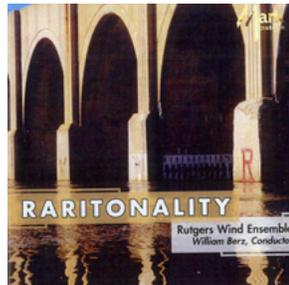
by Carl Orff/Krance

Album Title: ORFF: CARMINA BURANA SUITE

Recording: Peabody Conservatory Wind Ensemble-Harlan D. Parker, conductor

Publisher: Naxos 8.570242

The commercial release of this excellent Peabody Conservatory recording is a welcome addition to the Naxos Wind Band Classics series. John Krance's pure instrumental setting of the Carmina Burana Suite serves as the recording's powerful opening work. H. Owen Reed's beloved La Fiesta Mexicana is given a sparkling performance to conclude the program. The delightful Serenade for Wind Instruments Op. 40 (Bird/Schuller) is the centerpiece; this chamber work provides ideal contrast for the listener. I am impressed with the high quality of this recording and it certainly merits your attention.

**Raritonality (excerpt)**

by Mark Zuckerman

Album Title: RARITONALITY

Recording: Rutgers Wind Ensemble-William Berz, conductor

Publisher: Mark Masters 6199-MCD

Mark Zuckerman's engaging salute to Rutgers University is the title work of this superb recording by the Rutgers Wind Ensemble. In Dr. Berz's ongoing performances of music by H. Owen Reed & Roger Nixon, Dr. Berz offers his own adaptation of Reed's Symphonic Dance retitled Frolicking Winds with Nixon represented by Centennial Fanfare-March. Among the other treasures on Raritonality are works of Gorb, Hovhaness, Newman, Habor, Sampson and the imaginative, picturesque Islas y Montanas in composer Shelley Hanson's own windstration. A very highly recommended recording throughout by Rutgers.

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20 Years Ago in Bandworld

Circular Breathing

by Ashley Alexander

This article appeared in the March-April 1987 issue (Vol. 2, #4, p. 5) after working with Ashley at the Saskatchewan Summer School of the Arts in the 1970s and encouraging him to codify his method of teaching circular breathing.

Preparation and Buzzing

Circular breathing is no trick. It's a skill you can master.

As I play my double trombone and euphonium, I am continually reminded of how much air it actually requires to produce a quality sound. There is no short-cut to proper breathing. Good breathing habits are absolutely necessary to the contemporary brass and woodwind player of today. There are times, however, when good breathing is just not enough.

The conductor holds the last chord longer than he ever has before.

Or—the room is consuming your sound and all volume levels must be raised.

Or—the tempo is slower than normal and you are not going to complete the phrase.

Or—you just did not get a good breath as you started the phrase.

All of these can spell disaster for your perfect performance.

The Solution: Circular Breathing

It is difficult for a wind player to comprehend that YOU CAN BREATHE AND CONTINUE TO PLAY. This skill is not as unusual as you might imagine. I can think of a dozen great players I have seen use this skill in the past few years. Here's the way I teach and perform this skill:

1. Fill your cheeks with air until they are fully extended. While compressing this air, you can breathe through your nose. (Try it several times.)
2. Make a small air release through your embouchure and squeeze the air out of your cheeks drawing in air through your nose.
3. Take a good breath. Hold a tone on your instrument until you are approximately half out of air. Let your cheeks fill without stopping the tone. (Practice this step several times using a medium high pitch to start with.)
4. Block your throat and compress your cheeks to produce a tone. Quickly draw a small breath through your nose.
5. Add back the normal diaphragm-supported air very easily so your tone will not stop or blast but will continue as before the breath. (This is the hardest part.)

Practice developing this special skill a step at a time. Do not be discouraged if it does not work perfectly the first week or two. Continued practice will make this skill available to you as another tool usable by a well-trained performing musician. [It will probably take hundreds of tries. I practiced it all the way home from Saskatchewan while driving in 1976 and had the ability to apply it fairly well to clarinet when I got home. Definitely don't get discouraged! Max McKee]

The Matteson-Phillips Tubajazz Consort [in which Ashley played euphonium] is a perfect example of a performance situation in which proper breathing will just not be enough. We are asked to play euphoniums like a jazz trumpet section. The air needed is unbelievable. While circular breathing will not replace proper breathing habits, it can assist us (and you in your own situation) toward a quality performance.

This is a skill you can master. Try it. You'll like it!

20 years ago in Bandworld

Winter Wheat

by George Cavender

Vol 2, #2, p.9 (Nov-Dec 1986)

The following story is true. A little research can lead you to where, how and when it happened. Editor.

I believe there is something about the “North Country” which helps generate some of the great, true Band Stories of all time. Perhaps it’s the long winter evenings, sitting around the stove trying to keep warm and having a lot of time to ponder the “truths” of life.

In our story, the names of the universities have been changed to protect the lives of the “innocent.” It seems that ABC University made a long and tedious bus trip (You remember those, don’t you?) to XYZ University located in the “North Country.”

Both bands got along well socially and put on a serious “battle of the bands” during pre-game and half-time activities. As a part of their pre-game show, ABC University spelled out their school letters in gigantic capital letters and were warmly applauded by members of the XYZ University band.

What the members of the XYZ band did not know was that every member of the ABC band had a rather large bag of winter wheat tied to their ankles, under their uniform trousers. Opening this bag was triggered by a string which was attached to their belts. As they stood in their “ABC” formation, they triggered the bags and the band made sure to shuffle around and stamped the wheat firmly into the turf as they stood there.

By spring a gigantic “ABC” magically sprouted above the normal stadium grass and remained there all summer and fall as a reminder of the last visit of the ABC University Band!

Send us your favorites.

20 Years Ago in Bandworld

What they must know!

by Tim Lautzenheiser

Student leaders are a necessity if we expect to have quality organizations. The day of the director "doing it all" is simply a part of history. Although many people are adding extra staff members to their program, it is still important that the students take on many of the responsibilities which are part of a quality group. (The "education" which comes from this is a real bonus to these "leaders" as they take on the various responsibilities of life).

Often our enthusiasm about getting the "extra help" combined with the eager student's desire to hold a leadership position, creates a situation of unknowing which results in confusion and disarray. Much time is then spent "sorting through" the problems caused by poor communication, hurt feelings, overstepped boundaries, bruised egos, irate peer groups, false accusations, etc. Is it all worth it? Wouldn't it just be easier to forget all this student leadership and do it yourself?

Although the temptation is often there to give up on this seemingly endless backlash of problems, we might want to take a closer look at our preparation of these young people for these given tasks. So often, student leaders are often chosen via: who plays the best, who has seniority, the popularity vote, Mother is the booster president, and so on. All of these reasons certainly have validity; however, the purpose of leader is to lead...and if the selected leaders do not have this ability (attribute), then the effort is fruitless. In fact, it is non-productive from every aspect causing digression instead of progression.

So many of these problems can be avoided if the student leaders have some guidelines in their direction. We have all experienced the student leader who simply is not motivated or assertive in handling the responsibilities, and conversely, there are those who are so aggressive they bulldoze everyone.....including us. There are those who are "afraid of hurting their friends' feelings," and those who "have no sense of diplomacy." There is no RIGHT or WRONG way.....no strict rules we can give them since every situation demands a different set of rules. But we can help them with some general DO'S and DON'TS. It will give them a head-start in accomplishing their goals, and it will help you avoid the frustration of always re-doing what was not done well as a result of misinterpretation.

First of all, when students choose to take leadership roles, they must understand that this means giving up some privileges. They are now expected to DELIVER on all the assumed rules of the organization:

- BE ON TIME (Now,they are early)
- BE PROFESSIONAL (They are now role models)
- HAVE A POSITIVE ATTITUDE (Their attitude is reflected in all of their followers)
- MAINTAIN A HIGH STANDARD OF EXCELLENCE (As they go, so goes their group.)

In most cases, they will give up some of their popularity in their efforts. Jealousy runs rampant, and there are always those who think they can do the job better, or should have been the one selected, etc. This is part of leadership and to let them think it is all going to be fame and glory is simply a gross misrepresentation of what lies ahead.

Leadership is a lot of hard work and the privilege of doing the work is often the only reward there is to expect more is certain disappointment.

With this in mind, it would seem advantageous to prepare these students mentally for what lies ahead. We must give them the tools to deal with their peers, adults, friends, and even us. When one becomes a student leader, the communication level adjusts. There is a higher level of expectation and a degree of greater confidentiality. If expectations are not met or the confidentiality is violated, the trust level needed to develop a good leadership style is destroyed.

Here are some guidelines involving the personality traits desirable in a quality leader. It can serve as a check-list for your existing leaders and a good prerequisite list in developing the future leaders.

CHARACTERISTICS OF QUALITY LEADERS

1. **HIGH ENERGY LEVEL** – Since leaders are often asked to "go the extra mile," it is important that they have a high level of energy to maintain a busy schedule, can handle last minute duties, and will be the hardest workers in their groups. The followers rarely will out-work the leader. The leader sets the pace!
2. **KNOW HOW TO LISTEN** – Such an important "secret to success!" Not only is this important in taking instructions, but it is **MANDATORY** in working with others. Listeners are few in number and we all appreciate someone who "has time for us." A great rule for leaders: Keep your mouth shut and your brain open!
3. **EXUDE SELF CONFIDENCE** – A role model is three to four times more of a teacher than a teacher. If the leader is to gain the respect of his/her followers, then self-confidence is a must. None of us want to follow anyone who lacks confidence. We want secure, reassured leaders paving the way for us.
4. **HIGH LEVEL OF INTEGRITY** – Leaders understand the ultimate importance of **TRUTH**. They will always use complete honesty as the basis for any and all of their choices. Any deviation of this will, ultimately, damage the group.
5. **SENSITIVE TO OTHERS** – Truly great leaders operate from a position of **We-Us** rather than the popular **I-Me** concept. They are an integral part of their group. They constantly avoid a posture of "being over" the other people, but rather are putting themselves in the followers position and accommodating their needs. They "sense the mood" of the group, as well as the individuals, and this atmosphere is of constant concern in their leadership capacity.
6. **WILLING TO FAIL** – Yes, they admit to being human. They are quick to admit their mistakes and equally as quick to correct them. They never push the blame on

- any unsuspecting scape-goat, but realize there is more strength in truth than in looking right at another's expense.
7. SENSE OF HUMOR. Although there has to be a discipline focus on the goal, it is often necessary to "lighten-up" and allow the followers a chance to relax, laugh, and then get back in action. humor and silliness are not the same. Humor supports forward motion while silliness restricts it.
 8. EXEMPLIFY OPTIMISM – They do not react with undo trauma to problems, but realize within every problem lies an opportunity for growth and forward progress. They welcome problems as a chance to test their leadership and gain self-improvement.
 9. AVOID COMPARISON GAMES – They realize that most comparison stems from insecurity. Their goal is not to be better than someone else but to be the best they can, thus allowing their group to be the best it can. Competition turns into cooperation and all "competitive spirit" is used to improve the situation for everyone.
 10. CARING AND SHARING – They will never hurt intentionally even though they understand there will be times when individual wishes will be overlooked in favor of their group's welfare. They understand that part of leadership is "taking some of the heat" from those unpopular decisions and they accept this responsibility with strength and dignity. Their sense of caring is ultimate and their willingness to share every ounce of talent and ability is top priority in their actions.

IS THAT ALL? Of course not, but it is a healthy beginning to outstanding leadership. If these 10 attributes were a certainty for all of our student leaders, the rest of the task-at-hand would be simple. We have created a framework for THE BEST, and any leader, worth his or her salt will want to be the best. Isn't that why they wanted to be leaders in the first place?!

Student leaders are such an important part of any FIRST CLASS organization. Our position offers us a rare opportunity to create a "living lab" for special young people who are willing to go "above and beyond the call of duty." Let's get them started on the right foot (or left foot for marching bands!)

Take the lead in teaching them what it is all about!!!

My Rehearsal is a Riot! Part 2

William Fry & William Prescott
Vol 12, #3, p. 29 (Jan-Feb 1997)

Setting Goals and Developing Winning Attitudes (and how it all affects discipline)

SETTING GOALS helps to develop a winning attitude and winning attitudes foster excellence. And excellence leaves little room for poor discipline.

Goals that produce self-motivation in turn produce winners, so set your standards high. When you set high expectations for your students, you dare them to match up.

One way of setting high expectations is to always be preparing for something. If your group is always preparing for some performance, you eliminate many discipline problems.

So, do what musicians are supposed to do: PERFORM! Football shows, marching competitions, Christmas concerts, concert festivals, school assemblies, pep bands, concerts for the community, a concert tour (in or out of state), solo and ensemble festivals, small ensemble public performances (churches, local civic clubs, etc.) Perform! perform!

Don't be afraid of competition (unless you personally can't handle critiques). The benefits are in the growth gained, in the preparation and the actual competitive performance. Every competition represents a chance to improve through evaluation. And that's being a winner. And winning groups don't have many discipline problems.

Competition is in every facet of American life. It's the American way, if used properly. It's a great incentive and great training for adult life: Competition within the section for chair placement, competition for offices and honors, competitions with other bands or orchestras.

Rules and How to Make Them Accepted and Productive

- Rules are limits which show the teacher cares. Keep rules to a minimum.
- You should have a band or orchestra Handbook, in which you spell out the major, pertinent rules and regulations.
- Make them short and concise.
- Make them reasonable and fair.
- Overlook what is not important. Failure to know what IS important is a major cause of teacher failure in discipline.
- Make sure your students know what to expect.
- Discipline is fair if each individual is treated as an individual and each person gets what they deserve.
- Avoid issues, if possible.

- Act on crises immediately.
- When poor conduct is willful, take immediate action, don't wait.
- Apologize for your mistakes (even music directors make 'em). Don't be afraid to admit making mistakes.
- Don't give a choice if you don't MEAN choice.
- Don't ask "WHY?" a person broke a rule.

A Sad Tale About Rules Defeating Their Purpose

An (Un-named) High School Band went on a four-day concert tour to Florida, where they were to participate in a concert festival and a marching contest and have fun and sun on the beaches. The Director's letter (booklet) of instructions included three pages of rules- every little thing the Director could think of, touching all the possible bases. One student quipped, "there's a rule for everything, even going to the bathroom." As a result, most rules were ignored, the discipline was atrocious and word got back to the principal of the high school, who proscribed future band trips until all present members had graduated. MAKE RULES SHORT, CONCISE, REASONABLE AND FAIR. AND THEN ENFORCE THEM.

Let's talk about you, the teacher, and your ability to inspire others

AUTHORITY IS GIVEN by the student because of respect for you, the teacher. And that respect is earned through quality teaching, through mastery of your subject and through your personality.

Everything about you must inspire respect, from your personal attitudes to your knowledge of music and instruments, to your fairness, to the students' recognition of your desire to make each one of them think there is something in them.

Make everyone feel important, appreciated and needed. When you want to get somebody to do something, ask yourself, "How can I make him/her want to do it?"

If you want to inspire people, give them a challenge, make them excel.

If you must find fault, begin with praise and honest appreciation. Call attention to mistakes indirectly, if possible. Use encouragement. Make the error or fault seem easy to correct.

Ask questions or make suggestions rather than give orders: "Will you do _____?"

"May I suggest _____" "Wouldn't it be a good idea to do _____?"

Winning

"Winning" is a goal that improves performance and lowers discipline problems. But it will be counter-productive unless you define it properly for your students.

Winning is not necessarily getting first place, or getting the winner's trophy, or being judged best of class or sweepstakes winner, or getting the highest score at competitive festivals.

PROMOTE THE IDEA that winning is doing your best, trying your hardest, giving it your all, striving to be the best, achieving to the limit of your ability, never letting your fellow members down by slackness, being self-disciplined, regardless of the score at the competition!

What kind of an message do you think the director sent when he threw the second place trophy in a trash can? Or the director who tore up the judges' comment sheets in front of his band? Or the director who blamed the judges for the less-than-superior rating?

PROMOTE THE IDEA that we (the band) are our own competition-to perform at our highest level! The student and the ensemble that honestly say, "That is A WINNER!!!"

Maxims on Winning

Championships (winning) are won or lost in practice. Acronym for Won Or Lost In Practice: WOLIP, pronounced "WALLOP." Make this a part of their consciousness. Put "WALLOP" on your blackboard. Put it in your handbook. Use the word WALLOP often in conjunction with your rehearsals.

Bands and orchestras that teach Zero tolerance for mistakes are usually winners. And winners have many fewer discipline problems than losers. Teach responsibility and accountability, to oneself, to the school, to the group, to each other, to music. Winning is doing your best.

Well-trained student leaders can be a great help to you in establishing and maintaining good discipline, morale and enthusiasm.

Student leadership, that has been democratically selected and properly trained in the tenets of leadership can help establish a code of conduct that will reflect a high degree of self-discipline, such as:

- Courtesy to each other
- Courtesy to the director
- Obedience to all rehearsal rules
- Always being on time: "Early is on time; on time is late!"
-

Responsibility, for the personal care of uniforms and equipment and instruments. The selection of student leaders should be a chapter in your handbook. Once they have been selected, use them! Give each officer a sphere of responsibility and train your group in following and obeying their officers.

A Testimonial to the Values and Discipline Taught in Outstanding Music Groups

This letter, from a parent, is reprinted from a Band Booster Club Newsletter.

"Our deep thanks to Mr. _____ and the _____ Band!

We took Steve to college yesterday. The night before, we sat down and asked ourselves the usual questions parents ask, and the answers surprised us. Let us share some of them with you.

Q. Can Steve handle his money and budget wisely?

A. Yes, he learned to do it on Band trips.

Q. Can he get along with people?

A. Yes, he learned to do this as a Band member and as a Band officer.

Q. Can he handle responsibility, on his own?

A. Yes, because in the Band, it's shape up or ship out.

Q. Can he follow instructions? Obey orders? Respect authority?

A. Yes, because Mr. _____ taught that discipline is the backbone of every winner.

Q. Can he stick to his own standards and moral values?

A. Yes, on Band trips and activities, he could and did.

So, you see, Mr. _____, when you thought you were merely teaching our son to play an instrument and march a drill and perform in concert, you were actually preparing him to go out into the world on his own.

We thank you for doing a great job for us. Now, Rebecca will be leaving for college in two years. Will Band prepare her? We know it will!"

Rules for a Low-Achieving Band or Orchestra

1. Let them think they don't have to work hard in your class.
2. Never demand that they practice at home; that makes you a meanie.
3. Never put pressure on them; it might hurt their egos.
4. Never demand accountability, so they will think that is the way the world is going to treat them.
5. Never demand good rehearsal or performance discipline; a few parents (who don't demand discipline at home) might resent it.
6. AND YOU-don't be willing to spend many extra hours, studying, preparing, coaching.
- 7.

Anecdote: The great William Revelli, former Director of Bands at the University of Michigan, a legend in his own time, came to town to conduct the All-State Band. At the end of the day's rehearsal, 3 p.m., he asked to be driven to local high schools so he could meet the band directors. By 4 p.m. he had visited five local high schools and found FOUR bandrooms deserted, closed for the day. "How can they possible have a good band program when they aren't willing to work more than just class hours?" He was disgusted.

DO YOU TALK TOO MUCH?????

In promulgating your esoteric cogitations or articulating your superficial sentimentalities, or you amicable, philosophical or psychological observations, beware of platitudinous ponderosity. Let your communications possess a clarified conciseness, a compacted comprehensibility and a coalescent consistency. Let your extemporaneous decanting and unpremeditated explanations have intelligibility and veracious vivacity without overzealous bombast. Eschew all conglomerations of garrulity, jejune babblement and affectations. Sedulously avoid all polysyllabic profundity, pompous prolixity, psittaceous vivacity, jocosity and prevarication.

In other words, make it clear, brief, crisp, and truthful!

IF, AFTER ALL ELSE HAS FAILED (gentle reminders in rehearsals, a meeting with the student, investigation into the family situation or other social causes, a meeting with the principal and parents and student), the BAD APPLE STILL PERSISTS, then by all means prune the bad apple from the group before he/she spoils the whole barrel. Let us hope this unfortunate situation very, VERY seldom occurs.

7. BASSOON REED SELECTION

Providing your new bassoon student with the best possible reeds is almost as important as making sure you have ordered the buses for the upcoming band trip. You finally have a student or two willing to switch and give it a try - now say “thank you” by providing reeds that will help establish good response, articulation, and intonation from day one.

Custom hand made reeds are not necessary (or likely available in your community) at the beginning stages of bassoon playing. For beginners, focus on the readily available commercial reeds. These are the reeds your music store representative brings out to you every week.

The brands of bassoon reeds your local music store would carry might include: **Jones**, **Emerald**, **LaVoz**, **Renard (Fox)**, **Selmer** and **Brillhart (Plastic - made by Selmer)**.



FIG. 7.1 - VARIOUS COMMERCIAL BASSOON REEDS

As you look for a good reed source for your school and students , consider the following:

- **Check your local music store first.** They will want to help you and should be willing to stock a specific brand if you are sending your students to them.
- **Larger regional music stores.** A larger store may have a broader selection. These stores may also offer a quantity discount.



- **Mail order catalogs.** Every band director in the U.S. receives six or more of these each year. These are large, national stores with large inventories and often big discounts.
- **The Internet.** Some of the best bassoon reeds are available only via the internet. Usually from smaller shops, most often owned/operated by professional bassoonists. The world wide web allows these smaller bassoon retailers access to a national and even international market instantly. Try doing a *Google*TM search using the phrase: “Bassoon Reed.”
- **Your Colleagues!** A quick phone call to a band director colleague who has quality bassoon students may be all you need to do. Most will gladly share their reed sources and consider your call a compliment.

Always remember, buying your reeds in person is much better than ordering by mail, online, etc. It allows you to hand select and visually inspect each reed. Online or mail order purchases are usually “take what you get.” Check with the retailer regarding their reed return policy before ordering.

The following photos illustrate some of the variables you may encounter when personally inspecting and selecting commercial bassoon reeds:



FIG. 7.2 - REED TIP EXAMPLES

As you inspect reeds at the music store, it must be said that many reeds may fail one or more of the above visual tests and still play OK. With experience and feedback from your students, you will begin to understand the basic characteristics of a well made bassoon reed and be able to dramatically increase the quality of the reeds you provide to your students. A few seconds per reed at the store will be all that is needed to decide whether to keep or reject any reed.

If a reed passes your “tip check” inspection, here are a few more points to check:

- **First and second wires.** Make sure both exposed wires are properly positioned and fairly tight to the cane. Reject any reed with loose wires - your beginning students will not know how to fix this.
- **Butt end of reed must be round.** Inspect the roundness of the reed end. It should be close to perfectly circular. Any reed not circular should be rejected as it will not form an air tight seal against the bocal.



- **Square tip with no cracks or chips.** It is not always safe to assume that machine made commercial reeds are cut square at the tip or are free from nicks, chips, or cracks. Holding the reed up to a light will clearly show any imperfections in the tip.
- **General construction.** The reed must look “well built.” The string should be tightly wrapped with both ends tied off cleanly. All of the string should be covered in glue to hold it in place. Check the edges of the reed as well. Any gaps on the sides will cause a very poor response.
- **Reed strength or “hardness.”** All commercial bassoon reeds are marked with a relative strength or hardness. These markings are approximations. As a general rule, purchase reeds labeled medium or medium hard for your beginning students. Anything softer just doesn’t give the player enough resistance to produce a good sound in all registers with a variety of articulation styles. Reeds marked “hard” generally require more time adjusting than you might be willing to give.
- **Plastic reeds.** Don’t even think about it... Do you start an alto sax player on a plastic reed? Clarinet player? You wouldn’t even consider it. My experience with plastic reeds has been absolutely awful. The plastic reeds made today are too “free blowing,” usually play flat, do not flex with embouchure firmness changes, and cannot be adjusted with a reed knife or file. Plus... they are often double the price of a natural cane reed.

Ream every reed! What is reaming? Reaming is the term for scraping cane out of the inside of the reed, making the opening larger.

It is important for the new reed to fit onto the bocal with a solid, air tight seal. The reed should slide onto the bocal about 1/2 inch. Reaming your new reeds should take you less than a minute for each reed.

The key is a sharp reamer. You can purchase one at any bassoon reed supply shop. There are many brands and styles of reamers. Choose one with multiple blades that spiral from the tip to the handle. Expect to pay \$80 or more for a good one.

Twist the reamer as you apply pressure inside the reed. Check the fit on the bocal often. I ream reeds when dry - it seems to work fine and keeps the reamer from rusting.

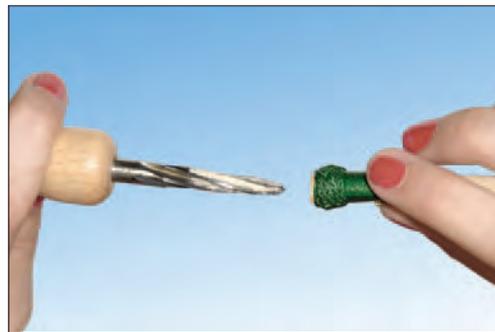


FIG. 7.3 - REAMING YOUR NEW REED

8. REED ADJUSTMENTS

A thorough discussion of adjusting bassoon reeds is beyond the scope of this handbook. Some have described it as a “scientific process” taking years to master, others look at it as an “arts & crafts” project. My experience is that it is somewhere in between... leaning more towards the “scientific process” when I’m feeling like I just can’t get anything to work.



FIG. 8.1 - A PROFESSIONAL BASSOONIST'S "REED TABLE"

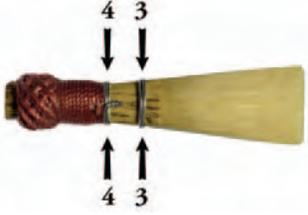
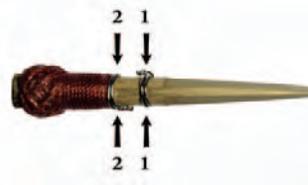
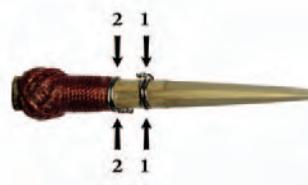
Your young bassoon students will want to play right away. They will accept the tone and articulation response of their very first reed. It is your responsibility to make sure that their first experience making a sound on the bassoon is positive and something on which to build. Rarely does a student even think about adjusting the reed for better response, tone, intonation, etc.

Most commercial reeds will make a basic sound on the bassoon. If you used the reed selection guidelines from chapter 7, chances are the reeds you selected will need only minor adjustments at this level of playing. The rest of this chapter will highlight some easy to moderate adjustments that can improve all three areas of a new reed (tone, response, tuning). These adjustments are not the end all for bassoon reeds, but only a summarization of the similar and/or consistent techniques offered by countless teachers and performers over the years. Use them as a starting point in your search for the “perfect reed” for your students.

Start by soaking the reed in water for 2-4 minutes. Check the tip opening after the reed is good and wet - this is the shape the reed will take when played. The following table is a collection



of commonly accepted reed issues and their fixes. Use this table to help you put the finishing touches on your new reeds or your older reeds that need a “tune-up.”

Weakness	Solution	Diagram
1. Tip opening too closed	Using needle nosed pliers, squeeze the first wire on the sides (location 3).	
2. Tip opening too open	Using needle nosed pliers, squeeze the first wire on the top and bottom (location 1).	
3. Weak low notes #1	Using needle nosed pliers, squeeze the second wire on the sides (location 2). If tip becomes too open, see weakness #2 above.	
4. Weak low notes #2	Lightly remove (scrape) cane from the rear of the blades, testing often.	
5. Reed too hard	Lightly remove cane from the center, rear of the blades.	
6. Tone too bright	Lightly remove cane from the rail area, testing often.	



7. Generally hard attacks	Remove cane from the very tip. Avoid the center, testing often.	
8. Plays flat, too easy to blow	Cut tiniest amount from tip, keep tip square, testing often.	
9. Plays sharp	Lightly remove cane from shaded area. Test often, pitch will drop fast. Tone will brighten up fast.	
10. Difficult to articulate clean, light staccato	Lightly remove cane from front corners. Test often, can become buzzy and bright very quickly.	

Final thoughts on adjustments to the reed

- Always soak the reed in clean water before adjusting.
- Adjusting the wires with the pliers is reversible - scraping too much cane is not!
- Play test often. Sometimes the smallest bit of cane removed is all that is needed.
- Dip the reed in water before you play test. This will keep it moist and remove any particles that don't blow away.
- Practice scraping on old, worn-out reeds. It's a good idea to have your students keep their old reeds for practicing scraping the various areas on the reed.

Appendix D (p. 33) contains a listing of some of the best books available for additional information regarding bassoon reed adjustments and reed making. Most of these books are geared towards the more experienced player and can get quite technical in a hurry. But, they offer information and techniques that are much more specific than is discussed in this handbook.



9. HALF - HOLE TECHNIQUE

Most beginning bassoon books, especially band method books, offer little if any explanation of the half-hole technique. There are only three notes that require it in the basic range of the bassoon.

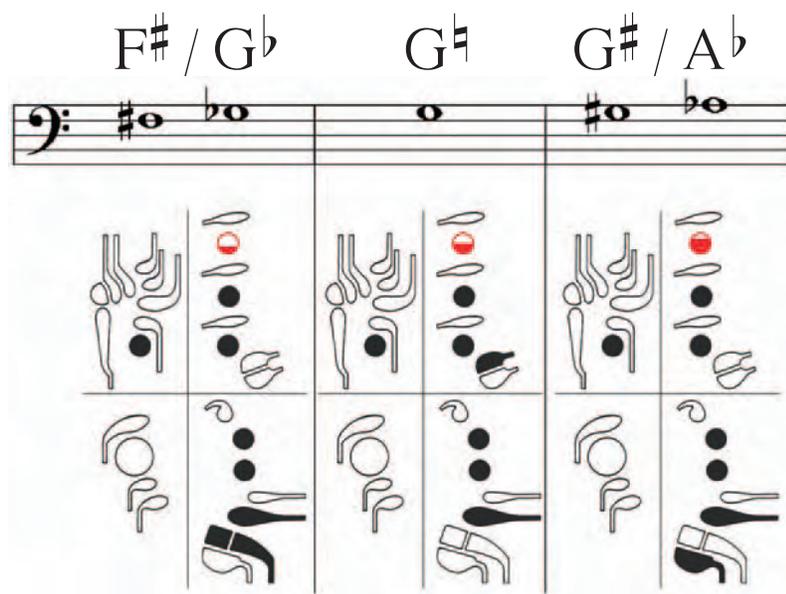


FIG. 9.1 - HALF - HOLE NOTES

When playing these notes you must teach the student to rock their knuckle towards their second finger, rolling the soft pad of the finger tip to expose the tone hole. The finger should NEVER slide or lift off of the instrument.



The term “half-hole” is technically misleading when referring to the amount of the open tone hole exposed when the finger is rolled. The note G should be learned as having a half-hole opening that is closest to actually half open. The student will definitely notice a different level of response for the note G if the half-hole is too closed or open. Only careful practice will build a confident “feel” for where the G will speak the best.

If the opening for G is considered “normal”, the student should open slightly larger than normal for F[#]/G^b and slightly smaller for G[#]/A^b. Again, careful listening to the note’s response and consistency of attack will determine the actual size of the opening. With time and attention to detail this technique will become automatic.

Fig. 9.2 below is an example of the first finger covering the E tone hole followed by the relative openings of all three half-hole notes. Reminder: these examples should serve as a starting point – use the sound of the tone, response, tuning, and quality of attack to determine the actual opening of the half-hole. It will vary slightly with different embouchure, vocal, reed and instrument combinations.



FIG. 9.2 - LEFT HAND FIRST FINGER COVERING E HOLE

FIG. 9.3 - FINGER POSITIONS FOR HALF - HOLE NOTES:
F[#] / G^b G[#] G[#] / A^b



10. THE “FLICK” KEY NOTES

All too often, young bassoon students (and their band directors) overlook a necessary part of good bassoon performance... using the “flick” or “flicker” keys to slur properly from low or high register notes to the notes on the staff below. Most contemporary band method books and “complete” fingering charts omit the concept entirely.

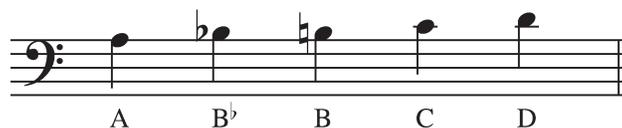


FIG. 10.1 - NOTES REQUIRING THE USE OF “FLICK” KEY TECHNIQUE

Omitting the flick keys when slurring to the notes above will result in a forced, uncontrolled, and often out of tune start to the sound. Compare this to a young flute player that forces the higher octave by just blowing harder without flexing the embouchure. In both situations, the result is an undesirable and out of tune sound. Proper flicking technique will allow the young bassoonist total control of the response and accuracy of the affected notes.

All of the flick keys are activated with the left hand thumb. The appropriate flick key serves as a temporary octave key that is allowed to close before the note ends. Follow these summarized steps that Daryl Durran, Penn State University, describes to learning proper flick key technique:

1. Play low “A” in normal manner (whisper key closed).
2. Continue playing low “A”, but lift the whisper key and position thumb above the “A” key.
3. Lightly depress “A” flick key, holding key open as you increase air speed and change voicing from “oe” to “ou” as you make the octave (or interval) leap.
4. Release the “A” flick key when note is established, returning it over the whisper key.



The following diagram illustrates the flick keys and for which notes they are used:

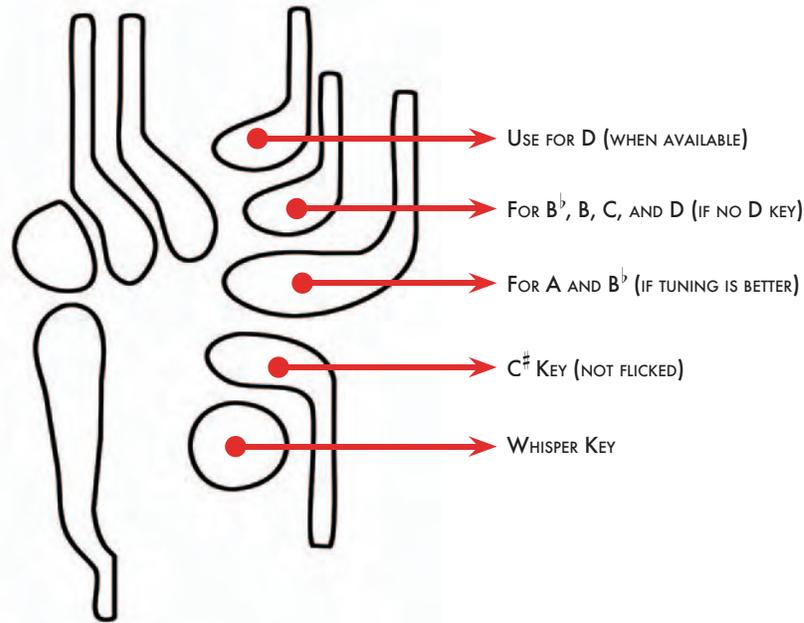


FIG. 10.2 - LEFT HAND THUMB FLICK KEYS AND THE NOTES THEY AFFECT

As with the other woodwind instruments, slurring up to a higher register note also requires a slight firming of the embouchure and slightly stronger air support at the instant you want the higher note to speak. It is best to let your ears be the judge regarding actual embouchure and breath changes as each note will vary slightly – and will vary even more as the student uses different reeds, etc. NOTE: C# does not use the flick technique as the C# key is often required to improve tone, intonation, and response.

Here is an example of exercises designed to help students incorporate “flicking” into their performance practice.

FIG. 10.3 - FLICK KEY EXERCISE EXAMPLE

Teaching Woodwinds by William Dietz, p. 56-57, © 1998 Schirmer, provides several valuable exercises for further study of the flicking technique.



11. CARE AND MAINTENANCE

Caring for a bassoon is essential to keep the instrument in top playing condition. Problems sometimes start when the band director fails to teach the new bassoon student daily and periodic maintenance procedures. It is startling how many school owned bassoons end up in need of major repair after only 6 - 9 months of use. By following these simple tips, your bassoons will maintain their best playing condition for every performance.

Daily care:

1. Remove the bocal and blow out any moisture.
2. Put the bell and bass joint in the case – they don't get wet from breath moisture or saliva.
3. Remove the tenor joint and swab it out 2 or 3 times.



FIG. 11.2 - SWABBING BOOT JOINT

4. Dump any moisture out of the boot from the smaller bore hole – it is usually lined to resist moisture.



FIG. 11.1 - SWABBING TENOR JOINT

5. Swab the boot joint with a bassoon only weighted pull-through swab. Insert the weight into the larger hole, rotate the boot so the weight comes out the smaller hole and pull through. Repeat 2 or 3 times. DO NOT insert the swab into the smaller hole first... you will be pulling all of the moisture into the unlined section of the bore.

6. Provide a silver polishing cloth for daily wiping of the keys. A gentle rub should remove any fingerprints and keep the silver shiny.



7. NEVER store paper/music/books inside the case. You will bend the keys and rods when you close the case.

Monthly care:

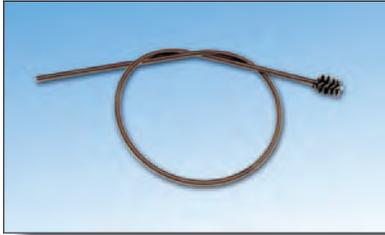


FIG. 11.3 - BOCAL CLEANING BRUSH

1. Clean out the bocal with a “bocal brush” and luke-warm soapy water. Be careful not to damage the reed end with the metal spring. Also polish bocal with a silver polish cloth to restore original shine.

2. Clean out the whisper key tone hole opening. DO NOT use a paper clip – it is too easy to damage the opening size. Use a toothpick or stiff broom bristle to remove any debris that may build up or get lodged from the bocal brush.

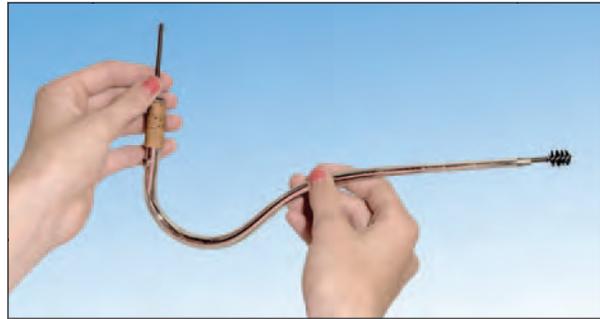


FIG. 11.4 - CAREFULLY CLEANING THE BOCAL



FIG. 11.5 - DUSTING THE BOOT JOINT

3. Using a small, clean, paintbrush, dust around and under the keys to remove any buildup on the wood or springs.

4. Oil the posts and rods with a needle oiler. You can purchase a needle oiler at almost any quality double reed retailer.



FIG. 11.6 - OILING A ROD AND POST JOINT



5. Clean the joint tenons:



FIG. 11.7 - STRING AND CORK TENON EXAMPLES

a. **Cork tenons** - clean by rubbing with a soft cloth to remove any old/excess cork grease. Check the receiving tubes as well. Apply new cork grease and rub it in by rotating the tenon in your hand until it warms up from the friction. This will allow the cork grease to penetrate more completely. Wipe off excess grease when done.

b. **String tenons** – clean by rubbing with a soft cloth to remove any dirt/debris. Check the receiver tubes as well. Apply canners wax to the string tenons by rubbing with the grain of the wrapped string. Remove any excess and test fit for smoothness.

6. Vacuum out the case using a soft end vacuum attachment. This eliminates the buildup of dust/dirt in the support areas that hold the instrument securely. If not cleaned, these particles can leave scratches and wear marks on the keys and finish of the wood.

Did you know... the serial number of almost every bassoon is engraved or stamped on the metal U-joint assembly hidden under the boot cap?

The boot cap is not made to be removed frequently, but it will come off. be careful not to drop it or bend it in any way as it stays put via a friction fit only.

Sometimes the serial number is also written on the wood tenons of each joint as well.



FIG. 11.8 - RENARD BASSOON BOOT JOINT WITH CAP REMOVED.



Music Selection Through Grading: 3-3 1/2

Quincy Hilliard

Vol 4, #4, p.33 (Mar-Apr 1989)

The third level of musical mastery is the beginning of a mature growth period for the student and director. Upon reaching this level, the student should have completed all of the basic music fundamentals such as rhythm counting, the chromatic and major scales, good tone production, and proper breathing techniques. The director, on the other hand, has reached a level in which he begins to interpret music and not just teach music fundamentals. The foundation for a mature musical growth begins when the student starts to interpret musical styles and becomes more aware of intonation and its effect on the band.

Emphasis on different articulations, stylistic traits, dynamic control, intonation, and phrasing are the major areas of concern. The third level of development deals with the finer points of musicianship. This level of musicianship also includes the abstract level of thinking that concerns itself with interpretation. During this stage of development, the director's ability to teach and interpret different musical styles is tested. In essence, the key phrase is to "make music." By selecting the correct music the director will be able to encourage musical awareness through interpretation and listening. Music should be chosen with the idea that style, articulation, and phrasing are major areas of concentration. The teaching or performance fundamentals of level three are listed below.

I. Performance Fundamentals

- A. Keys & Scales (Most Common) F, B-flat, E-flat, A-flat, (D-flat, C)
- B. Articulation
 - 1. Tenuto
 - 2. Accents
 - 3. Legato Tonguing
- C. Note Values and Rests
 - 1. All Values in Duple Rhythms
 - 2. Simple Compound Meter
- D. Rhythms
 - 1. Basic Duple Rhythms
 - 2. Irregular Rhythms (Syncopation)
 - 3. Basic Triple Rhythms
- E. Meters
 - 1. 2/4, 3/4, 4/4, 6/8, ϕ
 - 2. Simple Duple Meter Changes
- F. Dynamics-pp, p, mp, f, ff (Crescendos & Diminuendos)
- G. Tempo
 - 1. 1. Allegro = 108-168
 - 2. 2. Andante = 60-96
 - 3. Occasional Changes of Tempo
 - 4. Ritardando and Rallentando
- H. Intermediate Phrasing (Concentration on Endings)

I. Style

1. March
2. Chorale
3. Legato
4. Compositions with Mixed Styles

II. Musical Selection Consideration

A. Scoring

1. Solo-Choosing music that has solos for the clarinet, flute, sax, trumpet, baritone, and possibly the trombone are acceptable. Recognizing the outstanding musicians in your group and rewarding them with a solo can go a long way in building their confidence.
2. Woodwind Section Alone-Selecting music which exposes the woodwind section will aid in building good balance and intonation throughout the section.
3. Brass Section Alone-Selecting music which exposes the brass section can also aid in building a good balance and instrumentation.
4. Two Horn Parts-The horn part may or may not be doubled, but must be cued in lightly scored areas.
5. Limited Technical Work for the Third Clarinet, Third Trumpet, and Third Trombone. Since these instruments are the weaker sections of the band, it would be a good idea to avoid works that are too demanding technically.
6. Avoid Exposed Oboe and Bassoon Writing-Unless you have good players, it is to your advantage to avoid exposed writing for these instruments.

B. Range

1. Limited to General Scale Material-If students have learned their scales, choose music (with regard to range) that revolves around each instruments' scale material.
2. Avoid Extreme Registers (Low and High) on All Instruments-Music with excessive use of either register will cause intonation and balance problems for young players.

C. Use of Percussion Instruments

1. Pitched-Bells, Chimes, Xylophone
2. Timpani
3. Non-Pitch-Students should be familiar with all common non-pitch instruments. Keep in mind the availability of these instruments when selecting music
4. Special Effects-Use of percussion instruments to produce special effects provides excellent teaching material for the percussion section.

D. Musical Form

1. Overture
2. March
3. Chorale
4. Suites
5. Theme and Variation
6. Prelude

7. Programmatic works-These works are excellent for teaching because of their extra-musical ideas.
 - A. Instrumentation-Is the instrumentation of the band of such that all parts in the piece can be covered?
 - B. Length of Composition-The normal length of a composition in this level is from 3 1/2 to 6 minutes.

III. Intangibles

- A. Music From Other Lands-Good music encompasses all cultures. The director must select music that will give the student a multitude of cultural diversity.
- B. Students' Reaction-Music that is exciting and enjoyable to the student will motivate him to practice. Gathering their opinions about pieces they like will aid in selecting pieces that the student will enjoy playing.
- C. Director's Musicianship-If you have had a chance to read the two previous articles, you will observe that the director must develop musically just as he expects the students to do so. His skills for interpretation of musical styles becomes a necessity at this level.
 - Musical Interpretation-knowing how to interpret Marcato and Andante sections in overtures and knowing how to properly interpret a march are all essential.
 - Improving Director Skills-The director can improve his skills through clinics by composers and conductors that deal with musical styles and interpretation. Also sharpen his skills by listening to different interpretations of a given work and talking with other directors. Clinics on rehearsal techniques for woodwind, brass, and percussion are an absolute necessity.
 - Simple Stylistic Evaluation-In some cases, it becomes necessary for a director to interpret the music through his own musical skills rather than rely on what is written. A poco rit. or accel. inserted into slow passages are, at times, a welcome relief. Remember, music is blueprint that should not be read but interpreted.
- D. Musical Value
 - Teaching Concepts-Selecting Music that will encourage the students to listen and begin to interpret a variety of musical styles.
 - Test the Director's Interpretational Skills-The music must be a challenge if the director is to experience any musical growth.
- E. Diagnose and Treat the Problems of your Group. Work on the major problems in intonation, blend, balance, articulation, attacks, releases, style, and character.
 - In adjudicating, the author has found that a majority of the bands at this level experience problems of blend and balance, intonation, and articulation/phrasing. By listening to recordings

of your group, you will be able to pinpoint problems and seek suggestions on how to correct them.

C Minor Chorale

The score is for a C Minor Chorale in 4/4 time, featuring four staves of instruments. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The first system (measures 1-5) includes:

- Flute, Oboe Melodic Perc**: Melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.
- Clarinet 1 & 2 Trumpet 1 & 2**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p legato*.
- Horn Alto Sax, Al. Cl.**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p legato*.
- Bsn, Tbn 1&2 T. Sax, B. Cl. Tuba**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p legato*.

Measure 6 is marked with a '6' and includes:

- Flute**: Melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.
- Clarinet/Trumpet**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p*, with instruction **+ Tpts**.
- Horn/Alto Sax**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p*, with instruction **- Cls**.
- Bassoon/Tuba**: Harmonic accompaniment, *p*.

The second system (measures 7-11) includes:

- Flute**: Melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.
- Clarinet/Trumpet**: Harmonic accompaniment, *mf*, with instruction **+ Cls**.
- Horn/Alto Sax**: Harmonic accompaniment, *mf*.
- Bassoon/Tuba**: Harmonic accompaniment, *mf*.

The third system (measures 12-15) includes:

- Flute**: Melodic line with notes G4, A4, Bb4, C5, Bb4, A4, G4.
- Clarinet/Trumpet**: Harmonic accompaniment, *f*, with crescendo markings from *mf* to *p*.
- Horn/Alto Sax**: Harmonic accompaniment, *f*, with crescendo markings from *mf* to *p*.
- Bassoon/Tuba**: Harmonic accompaniment, *f*, with crescendo markings from *mf* to *p*.

Flute

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Flute part of C Minor Chorale. The score consists of three staves of music in C minor, 4/4 time. The first staff starts at measure 1 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a legato marking. The second staff starts at measure 6. The third staff starts at measure 11 and includes a crescendo from mezzo-forte (*mf*) to piano (*p*). The notes are: 1: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5; 6: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5; 11: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5.

Oboe

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Oboe part of C Minor Chorale. The score consists of three staves of music in C minor, 4/4 time. The first staff starts at measure 1 with a piano (*p*) dynamic and a legato marking. The second staff starts at measure 6. The third staff starts at measure 11 and includes a crescendo from mezzo-forte (*mf*) to piano (*p*). The notes are: 1: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5; 6: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5; 11: C4, D4, E4, F4, G4, A4, Bb4, C5.

Bassoon

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Bassoon in C minor, 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a *p* dynamic and a *legato* marking. The second staff has a *p* dynamic. The third staff features dynamics of *mf*, *f*, *mf*, and *p* with a decrescendo hairpin.

Clarinet 1

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Clarinet 1 in C minor, 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a *p* dynamic and a *legato* marking. The second staff has a *mf* dynamic. The third staff features dynamics of *mf*, *f*, *mf*, and *p* with a decrescendo hairpin.

Clarinet 2

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

p legato *mf*

mf *f* *mf* *p*

Bass Clarinet

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

p legato *mf*

mf *f* *mf* *p*

A. Sax & A. Clarinet

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for A. Sax & A. Clarinet, C Minor Chorale. The score consists of three staves of music in common time (C). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (half). The second staff continues with: C5 (half), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). The third staff continues with: F4 (half), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). Dynamics include *p legato*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and a crescendo from *mf* to *p*.

T. Sax & T.C. Baritone

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for T. Sax & T.C. Baritone, C Minor Chorale. The score consists of three staves of music in common time (C). The first staff begins with a treble clef and a common time signature. The notes are: G4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), Bb4 (quarter), C5 (half). The second staff continues with: C5 (half), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). The third staff continues with: F4 (half), E4 (quarter), D4 (quarter), C4 (half), Bb4 (quarter), A4 (quarter), G4 (quarter), F4 (half). Dynamics include *p legato*, *mf*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, and a crescendo from *mf* to *p*.

Bari Saxophone

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Bari Saxophone in C minor, 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with dynamics *p legato* and *mf*. The second staff continues the melody with dynamics *p*. The third staff concludes the piece with dynamics *mf*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*, featuring a crescendo hairpin.

Trumpet 1

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Musical score for Trumpet 1 in C minor, 4/4 time. The score consists of three staves. The first staff begins with a treble clef, a common time signature, and a key signature of one flat. It contains a melodic line with dynamics *p legato*. The second staff continues the melody with dynamics *p*. The third staff concludes the piece with dynamics *mf*, *f*, *mf*, and *p*, featuring a crescendo hairpin.

Trumpet 2

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

p legato

p

mf f mf p

Horn

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

p legato mf

p

mf f mf p

Tbn./B.C. Bar./Tuba

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Three staves of music in bass clef, 2/4 time, C minor. The first staff begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, and a half note G2. Dynamics include *p legato* and *mf*. The second staff has a half note G2, a quarter rest, and a half note G2. Dynamics include *p*. The third staff begins with a half note G2, followed by quarter notes F2, E2, D2, C2, and a half note G2. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and a decrescendo from *mf* to *p*.

Melodic Percussion

C Minor Chorale

Quincy Hilliard

Three staves of music in treble clef, 2/4 time, C minor. The first staff begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F4, E4, D4, C4, and a half note G4. Dynamics include *p legato* and *mf*. The second staff has a half note G4, a quarter rest, and a half note G4. The third staff begins with a half note G4, followed by quarter notes F4, E4, D4, C4, and a half note G4. Dynamics include *mf*, *f*, and a decrescendo from *mf* to *p*.

A Brief History of the ABA, Part 2

John Locke

Vol 12, #2, p.8 (Oct-Dec 1996)

The overall direction of the ABA was roughly formed at a meeting in Chicago on October 25, 1928. Grabel, Harding, and Stannard discussed many issues including the importance of key bandmasters, possible locations and times for the first formal meeting, the beginnings of the constitution (which would be written by Grabel) and the procedures and qualifications for membership.

New York was approved as the first meeting place and the charter members assembled there on July 5, 1929. These members included Edwin Franko Goldman; Charles Benter, Director of the United States Navy Band, Washington, D.C.; J.J. Gagnier, Director of His Majesties Grenadier Guards Band, Montreal, Canada; Victor J. Grabel, Conductor of the Chicago Concert Band; Albert Austin Harding, Director of Bands at the University of Illinois; Richard B. Hayward, Director of the Toronto Concert Band, Toronto, Canada; Charles O'Neill, Director of the Royal 22nd Regiment Band, Quebec, Canada; Arthur Pryor, Director of Arthur Pryor's Band, New York, NY; and Frank Simon, Director of the ARMCO Band, Middletown, Ohio.

The records and minutes of this important meeting did not survive, but its events are retraced from a brief New York Herald Tribune article, along with educated speculation as to the events which occurred. Grabel's draft of the ABA Constitution and by-laws were adopted, as was the official statement of the objectives of the ABA. Among the objectives were the desire for a universal band instrumentation, a higher standard of artistic excellence, and the need to induce prominent composers of all countries to write for the band. At the end of the Constitution, Grabel listed John Philip Sousa as Honorary Life President and the following officers were elected at this initial 1929 meeting: Goldman, President; O'Neill, Vice President; Grabel, Secretary; and Harding, Treasurer. Simon, Clarke, and Hayward were elected Directors and Pryor was elected Chairman of the Membership Committee.

The first annual convention was held March 13-16, 1930 in Middletown, Ohio, the home-base of charter member Frank Simon and the ARMCO Band. By the second annual convention in 1931, the ABA had begun to move out of its organizational stages and into a decade of activism. World War II brought a redirection of focus for the entire country and caused the 1942 convention to be cancelled. During this difficult period, the ABA Newsletter was begun and served as the essential link which held the group together over the next six years. Due to the war, there were no conventions during this time and it is the original editor, Lynn Sams, who has been credited with keeping the interest in ABA alive.

The organization met again in 1947 in Elkhart, Indiana, with members eager to push the association forward in new directions. This convention marked the revival of ABA which has continued to meet annually to this day. Since its founding, ABA conventions

have been a continuation of the ongoing process of growth and change necessary in holding to the principle for which it was founded. It is important to note, however, that the history of this association does not lie in its meetings, but in its membership, both as individuals and as a group.

The history lies in the accomplishments and in the legacy left to generations of future bandmasters which include:

- John Philip Sousa's enshrinement in the Hall of Fame of Great Americans through the leadership of Honorary Life Member Raymond F. Dvorak.
- The establishment of the Journal of Band Research through the leadership of past president Dr. Paul V. Yoder.
- The founding of the American School Band Directors Association by American Bandmasters Association member Mr. Dale Harris.
- The founding of the College Band Directors National Association by past president Dr. William D. Revelli.
- The founding of the National Band Association by past president Dr. Al G. Wright.
- The founding of the National Band Association Hall of Fame for Distinguished Conductors by Dr. William D. Revelli, president of the National Band Association and founding president Dr. Al G. Wright.
- Establishment of the American Bandmasters Association Research Center at the University of Maryland, under the leadership of Dr. Paul V. Yoder.
- The founding of the Phi Beta Mu, International Bandmasters Fraternity by past president Colonel Earl D. Irons.
- The establishment of the American Bandmasters Association/Ostwald Band Composition Contest by ABA associate members Ernest and Adolph Ostwald.
- The establishment in 1962 of the Edwin Franko Goldman Memorial Citation to recognize persons outside the ABA who have rendered conspicuous service in the interest of bands and band music.
- The founding of the North American Band Directors Coordinating Council by American Bandmasters member Dr. Forrest McAllister.
- The creation of the John Philip Sousa Foundation by Colonel George Howard.
- The inception of the American Bandmasters Association Foundation under the leadership of past president Dr. Harry Begian.

- The accomplishments of the ABA in concert band instrumentation.
- The encouragement and recognition of new music and composers both in and out of the American Bandmasters Association, beginning with the commissions of Dr. Edwin Franko Goldman.
- The more than half a century of dedication to the betterment of bands in every possible way.
- The encouragement of the development of the Japanese Band Directors Association through the efforts of past president Dr. Paul V. Yoder and associate member Walter Volkwein; and the nurturing of Japanese Band Directors Association through American Bandmasters Association/Japanese Band Directors Association joint meetings.
- And, many other outstanding individual achievements.

The vital mission of the ABA, as envisioned by Dr. Edwin Franko Goldman some sixty-seven years ago, is carried out today by a distinguished and committed group of band leaders and associates. At present, the 1995 roster of the ABA includes two honorary life members, six honorary members, two honorary associate members, 262 members, and 69 associate members, for a total of 341 members.

BW 2007*The Future of the Bandworld*

Bandworld View

Editorial

Let's Dump the Bb Version!

by M. Max McKee

Let me re-launch this ongoing argument by asking, "How many times have you as a band director been in the audience and tried to sing the Star Spangled Banner when the band is playing in Bb?"

Unless you just remembered that you practically severed a vocal chord in the mid-strain, "Not very often" or perhaps "Never" would be your response.

After I retired from the daily ranks of band directing in 1994, I attended literally hundreds of games, American Bandmasters Association conventions, and countless other events where I became a "singer." Now, there is a complete joke because almost no one can actually sing the melody to our National Anthem without (1) screaming their head off in the high range or (2) shifting octaves for the mid-strain. Almost invariably I switch to a bass line (which I like), but am probably the only living human being in the football stadium singing any form of harmony! (One bass and 2000 screaming sopranos...male and female...a balanced choir does not make.)

What I don't understand is: Why in the devil does anyone use the Bb version of the National Anthem? The Ab version is in a darker, richer key, makes the band sound better and people in the audience might even try singing it for a change.

What I'm hoping here is that you are a dyed-in-the-wool Bb fan (because the trumpet fanfares are easy?) and will start yelling back. Somehow we need to bring this out into the open and see if we can't get Americans really singing the Star Spangled Banner when they know with certainty that they won't be getting a hernia trying to do so.

In addition, we'll eliminate those (not so) funny stories about the two bands performing the SSB without a rehearsal and playing in parallel major seconds. (See "[A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to a Band Rehearsal #6](#)" in the April-June 2007 issue of Bandworld Magazine.)

There are so many good reasons to move to Ab where some wonderful arrangements in 4/4 also exist. Please join me in being grumpy with directors who still insist on playing it in Bb. (Must be trumpet players.)

Go on. Yell. I'm ready.

(Ashland, Oregon 12/30/2006)


BW 2007
The American Bandmasters Association


A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to a Band Rehearsal! #5

by M. Max McKee

[Previous FUNNY](#)
[Next FUNNY](#)

Soon after I arrived in Pullman, Washington (where I worked on a BA in Music Ed, a BM in Performance and a MA in Clarinet from 1960-1967), I realized what a special environment I had chosen. Randall Spicer (long-time master teacher in Colorado high schools and Director of Bands at Washington State University from 1953-1977) not only became my college band director but also my clarinet teacher and mentor for the next 42 years.



Randall Spicer (1999)

Spice (as family and close friends always called him) soon became my father-in-law; I married his daughter, Nelwyn, in February 1962. Throughout my undergraduate years he taught me literally hundreds and hundreds of important teaching techniques and performance concepts (many of which didn't become obvious to me for about 15 years!) that allowed me to win every solo contest or audition that I entered between 1960 and 1965.

Many of his great ideas ended up in the printed version of *Bandworld* (1985-2004) and little-by-little are reappearing in online issues (2004 to the present). As a subscriber you can find many of them in the [BW Archive](#). In essence, thousands of high school students, college undergrads and American Band College masters candidates were under his spell which focused almost exclusively on (1) balance and blend and (2) tone quality.

We all heard it 1000 times and it was reinforced daily through his unflinching use of #19 out of the **TREASURY OF SCALES** at each and every rehearsal. It became so important to me when I became a teacher, I wrote a different version of #19 that included other "problems." It is now available in all 12 keys in our [WARM-UPS THAT WORK](#) books (which Spice named, by the way).



Randall & Lucille (1937)


 Max, Spice, Lucille,
Nell & Scott in 1987

What was always remarkable about Randall Spicer's bands is that, though he seldom had many highly accomplished players, there was an excitement in the way he interpreted the music and in the sound that he was able to achieve. Many times, people would say, "I didn't realize you used violins in your band." He never did, but the richness of sound and his string-like approach to tone, balance, and blend contributed to always beautiful lines. No wonder his Boulder High School Band was recognized as one of America's top 50 concert bands in the 1980s.

[Stars & Bars
WSU Band 1966](#)

Spice passed away in 2002 but his legacy carries on through his many students and my own persistence with the American Band College program continually fostering his concepts.

In 1966 (as his graduate assistant), he let me conduct the band in this performance of Stars and Bars.

Next time: Funny stories during the WSU years