PREPARING FOR A PERFORMANCE

STUDY GUIDE

MAKING THE CONNECTION:

- Often times many musicians and band teachers are not sure how to prepare a band for a performance. Here are some tips to help get you and your band in the correct frame of mind.

- Performance material
  - Always try and challenge a band and push them to a higher level. However, choosing material way above their level will likely yield poor results both in the performance as well as the musician’s confidence. Additionally, choosing material well below their level will limit progress and slow learning.
  - Try and choose material that finds a healthy balance between the bands strengths as well as their weaknesses.
  - Have a specific goal for the concert. Often times, directors try and play a large variety of musical styles in one concert. However, it is often a better practice to focus on one or two styles and play them well, rather than attempting too many styles and playing them below their capabilities.

- Rehearsals
  - Be organized! This is an absolute must if you wish to play challenging music at a high level.
    - Set realistic weekly goals for the band.
    - Give homework in the form of having students practice challenging sections of the music and giving them attainable goals each week.
    - Make sure the band is playing the majority of each rehearsal. Too many times, directors get caught doing an excessive amount of lecturing. While it is necessary on occasion, the more a director lectures the less the students are playing.
    - Give constructive criticism but do not overdo it. Constructive criticism is a good thing, however, giving too much can affect morale and confidence.
    - Try and give as much positive feedback as you do negative. It is important that students hear when they are doing something correctly or well.
    - Try NOT to over rehearse. Too much rehearsal can lead to complacency within the band and some of the edge and magic can easily disappear.

- Growth
  - The main goal of each concert should be growth as musicians and people. A collective coming together for the common purpose of making great music at the highest level possible.

SAMPLE HOMEWORK ASSIGNMENTS:

- What are some daily practice exercises EVERY director should use with their bands?
  - Scale exercises
    - Try and vary scale exercises so students do not get bored. Scale exercises are essential for helping students become more proficient at their instrument.
  - Listening
    - This is one of the most important exercises directors never assign. Make the students listen, even if it means taking time out of your daily schedule, it is absolutely essential.
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- There should be daily or weekly listening assignments. Have students listen to music in the style that you are working on. Also, assign students to listen to music they might not be familiar with.
  - Excerpts
    - Be specific about what you want the student to practice. The more specific, the less they have to try and discern what you would like them to do.

- Compare how organization for a concert is similar to being a manager of a business.

- Most students will not end up being professional musicians. Try and give students a positive experience with music. The more positive, the more likely they are to continue to play music, be a supportive fan, and be engaged in music activities for the rest of their lives.