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Dr. Nam

EDUC-M434

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Concert Programming Assignment

A common sentiment among ensemble music educators is that “our programming is our curriculum.” Due to the nature of our classrooms, expectations, and practices, this is true in many cases. Therefore, thoughtful consideration of our ensemble programming is paramount to a well-rounded, complete curriculum for our students. On the other hand, ensemble music educators have agency and directive to build curriculum and teachable concepts from a wide variety of sources and perspectives both within and external to our own piece programming. I prefer to frame programming as an opportunity for enrichment: how can I compile a set of music to help us serve roles like educators, performers, technicians, entertainers, and citizens? I believe this is best accomplished through a series of considerations applied holistically to the long-term student experience.

Before proceeding to specific considerations at the concert-to-concert level, I believe that programming, like many other aspects of curriculum development, is best approached from a long-term perspective. At the high school level, most ensemble music students will participate in one or more ensembles for four consecutive years (In the event that this is not the case at a particular school, the following rationale can be adapted for two- or three-year average participations). This means that music educators have a four-year window to impart a complete curriculum with all of its breadth and nuance. When approaching programming decisions for specific performances, keeping the four-year arc in mind is important to avoid repeating works

too often or not addressing an important concept often enough. At an intermediate level, programming considerations should also be applied at the academic year perspective before considering each individual performance. Since concerts are often limited by time, rehearsal availability, and overall workload, it is unlikely that a single event can encompass any music educator's entire programming and curricular philosophies. However, over the course of three to five performances across an academic year, these goals and considerations can help decide what goes where so the students end the year with a balanced, varied experience.

Moving to the concert or specific performance level, the programming process should take into account a combination of curricular, musical, and popular considerations. First and foremost, ensemble directors should program a body of repertoire that is realistically attainable by students comfortably before the performance date. Selecting music that is too difficult will make any musical or popular goals completely unrealistic, and it will place undue stress on both the students and the educator. On the other hand, repertoire that is not challenging enough also poses issues in that neither students nor directors will be pushed to new learning, a piece may reach its peak too early and become lackluster, or the ensemble's time is wasted as it could have been spent on more worthwhile endeavors. When working with a suitable challenge, students are in the best position to grow as musicians and performers, and their experiences in rehearsal will dovetail well with the pedagogical goals of the director. Musically, each performance should be a standalone entertaining product. There are many ways to approach this idea, one being the opener-ballad-challenge-closer model. This model accounts for student and audience experiences, and can be quite helpful when narrowing down potential pieces or placing them in a specific order. However, this or any other model should never get in the way of curricular considerations. Within each concert, there should also be a variety of styles, periods, tempi,

features, and even key signatures. This variety not only challenges students to develop flexible musicality, but also it provides a multifaceted snapshot of an ensemble's skills for the audience. Lastly, directors should take into account "popular" considerations. I use this label not as purely what is most well-liked by students or audiences, but as a broader humanistic set of ideals. That being said, student, audience, and director preferences all have a healthy role in programming. As musicians, we should all enjoy what music we make, and we should help our audiences enjoy it, too! Beyond current enjoyment, it is also the director's responsibility—musically and curricularly—to help students and audiences expand their artistic palates by providing new or challenging repertoire for consideration. Popular considerations also include addressing the social aspects of repertoire: culturally relevant music, composer/musician diversity, and authentic performance. For the benefit of both the students and the audience, ensemble programming should reflect the cultural, social, historical, and humanist landscapes of each community and their roles as citizens in their countries, and ultimately, the world. This is no small task, and by no means a cure-all to social issues, but I believe that it is our duty as teachers to cater to the citizen and humanist needs of our students. Programming to reflect cultural and social realities from the perspectives of race, gender, sexuality, ethnicity, culture, and many other identities is just one avenue towards that goal. Compiling a set of pieces that reaches curricular, musical, and popular goals can be a challenge, but once achieved, has the potential for the most educational, viable, and entertaining performances to showcase the work of ensemble music students.

Beyond the more philosophical considerations for programming, there are realistic aspects that often demand rather than earn director attention. While some of these ideas may seem obvious, they can be easy to forget and have the potential to significantly cheapen the

performance experience. Of primary concern is the availability of instruments and musicians available for each ensemble. If a piece that may meet all of the aforementioned criteria has a rather prevalent Eb clarinet part, and the band program does not own an Eb clarinet, or maybe there is not a student able or willing to play it, this piece is out of consideration until a suitable workaround can be designed. Similarly, if one particular section of the ensemble is consistently more or less technically talented than the rest of the ensemble, it is important to reflect that in programming. A large, strong trumpet section can make fanfares and marches an excellent performance avenue, but perhaps jagged, esoteric works should be avoided if there is a small or weak percussion section. On another note, when programming a long or multi-movement piece, follow with a shorter, easier listening piece as a sort of aural “palate cleanser” for both audiences and students. It is also very important to consider instrumentalist fatigue, particularly in the brass sections. Multiple brass-heavy pieces, particularly those in upper registers or without multi-measure rests, can wear out a brass section quickly. Community and event-based requirements also have a realistic effect on programming: works may need to be patriotic for a Veteran’s Day performance, the national anthem may be required to open a performance, or school songs may make an appearance to end programs. However, these requirements can absolutely be folded in with the curricular, musical, and popular goals and thoughtfully considered within a long-term approach to programming.

While a single assignment cannot fully encompass an exhaustive set of programming considerations, the aforementioned goals and approaches are at the philosophical center of thoughtful programming for educational ensembles. Context plays a large role in education in many senses, but considering curricular, musical, and popular goals from both long-term and concert-specific perspectives can set up students, educators, and audiences alike for success.

Roaring Rapids High School presents

A Spring Concert

April 8, 2021

7:00pm, Roaring Rapids Performing Arts Center

**** Concert Band ****

Director: Mr. Reed Ulery

Ecstatic Fanfare Steven Bryant

Steven Bryant is an American composer from Little Rock, Arkansas. As a composer of music for wind band, orchestra, electronics, chamber ensembles, and other appointments, Bryant has won numerous awards and appointments from the National Band Association and the American Bandmasters' Association. Tonight's piece, *Ecstatic Fanfare*, comes from the first movement of Bryant's notable work *Ecstatic Waters*. Bryant uses crisp rhythms, open chords, and energetic gestures to breathe life into the exciting and appropriately named *Ecstatic Fanfare*.

Celestial Seas Julie Giroux

Julie Giroux is an American composer from Fairhaven, Massachusetts, and has been a true force in a male-dominated field and has accrued many previously male only awards. She is a member of ASCAP, The Film Musicians Fund, Kappa Kappa Psi, Tau Beta Sigma and a member of the American Bandmasters Association. She is a recipient of the Distinguished Service to Music Medal Award, Emmy Awards and was the first female composer inducted into the American Bandmasters Association in 2009. *Celestial Seas* is a musical story covering the next 5 billion years as it pertains to our galaxy, the Milky Way and its eventual collision with the Andromeda Galaxy which is currently approximately 2.5 million light-years away from the Milky Way. - *Note from the composer.*

Fantasies on a Theme by Haydn Norman Dello Joio

This piece combines the musical work of Franz Joseph Haydn with the composition of Norman Dello Joio. Haydn was an Austrian composer from the Classical Era, and he lived from 1732 to 1809. The main theme of this piece was taken from one of Haydn's piano concerti, and American 20th century composer Norman Dello Joio wrote a series of short movements exploring modern approaches to the centuries-old melody. While the first and third variations add humor and excitement, the second breathes a lyrical sense into Haydn's theme. This work was commissioned by the MSBOA and dedicated to Mr. Leonard Falcone, Director of Bands at Michigan State University, upon his retirement, in recognition of devoted service to music, to education, and to his colleagues.

Slumber, My Darling Stephen Foster, Arr. Brant Karrick

Stephen Foster is considered to be one of America’s greatest songwriters. Living and working during the 19th century, Foster wrote over 200 songs and tunes to earn the nickname “the father of American music.” Known for songs “Oh, Susanna!,” “Camptown Races,” and “My Old Kentucky Home,” Foster also wrote tonight’s “Slumber, My Darling,” which is a loving lullaby sung from mother to child. Tonight’s performance is an arrangement by American composer and conductor Brant Karrick.

Attila (March) Julius Fučík

Known as “the Czech John Phillip Sousa,” Julius Fučík was born in Prague in 1872. Despite being a violinist and bassoonist, Fučík made his career in Czech and Austrian military bands where he played marches by composers from all around the world. In order to promote to higher ranks and bands, Fučík began writing his own marches, and soon had many of his works performed by ensembles across Europe and in the United States. He is best known for his march “Entry of the Gladiators,” which has been used in circuses as a “screamer march.” Tonight’s piece, *Attila*, was originally titled “Marche hongroise triomphale,” or “Hungarian Triumph March,” as a tribute to a fellow Hungarian bandmaster.

~ Ensemble Personnel ~

[Insert list of students by instrument here, asterisk section leaders/principal players]

~ Thanks and Acknowledgements ~

Many thanks to the following people and parties that contributed to the success of tonight’s performances and the long-term success of the Roaring Rapids Band Program:

- Dr. Jeremy Allen, Channelville Area School District Superintendent
- Dr. Rodney Dorsey, Channelville Area School District Chair of Arts Education
- Channelville Area School Board Members
- Dr. Eric Smedley, Roaring Rapids High School Principal
- Dr. Jason Nam, Roaring Rapids High School Performing Arts Department Chair
- Mr. Elliott Fus, RRHS Auditorium Manager
- Mr. Jacob Kessler and the RRHS Custodial Staff
- Parents and Families of the RRHS Band Community

Concert Programming Considerations and Rationale

Ecstatic Fanfare, Stephen Bryant

I chose to open the concert with *Ecstatic Fanfare* because it's an exciting, engaging piece that showcases a living American composer. The whole of *Ecstatic Waters* would have been too much for this concert, and is rather challenging, so to excerpt the fanfare from the first movement makes Steven Bryant more accessible to high school students. It is also an exciting piece to start the program, and it is not too long.

Celestial Seas, Julie Giroux

I chose to program *Celestial Seas* after the Bryant work because it contrasts in style, but is not drastically different. Julie Giroux is another living American composer, and her music is unique and engaging. She is also writing and working in a male-dominated field, and is an advocate for the LGBTQ+ community. I believe it is important to represent these traditionally oppressed demographics for my students and my audience, and this piece would provide appropriate challenge to a high school ensemble as well as engage the audience due to its unique programmatic nature.

Fantasies on a Theme by Haydn, Norman Dello Joio

I chose this piece to bring in music from other media, specifically, the Classical era piano concerto genre. Working with this piece provides opportunities to teach about form, music history, Haydn, stylistic ideas, and the ideas of composition, arranging, and transcription. In addition to its Classical roots, Dello Joio's treatment brings hallmarks of twentieth-century American style. This piece provides suitable challenge for a high school ensemble, and showcases most sections of the band in a soli setting at least once.

Slumber, My Darling, Stephen Foster, Arr. Brant Karrick

I chose this tune because of its aesthetic beauty and historical significance. As stated in the program notes, Stephen Foster is an icon of American music, and this piece is one way to introduce his work to my students and reprise it for my audience and community. This piece is also simply beautiful: I love listening and performing it, and it provides a great opportunity to showcase musicality, phrasing, tone production, blend, and sensitivity.

Attila (March), Julius Fučík

While I do not personally fall into the ideology that every band concert should have a march, I think they are nice additions with worthwhile value. Coming off of a lullaby, a march is an exciting way to close out the concert. I chose this march because Fučík is a less-performed composer here in the United States, but he wrote nearly as many marches as Filmore! This piece provides an avenue to teach about the military band tradition across the world, and especially in Eastern Europe. This is an engaging march, and the accompaniment parts are more interesting and involved than just offbeats (especially the horn parts...). It has a strong ending that will close the concert on a high note.

Logistics Plan - RRHS Concert Band on 4/8/2021

Schedule

- 5:45pm - Call time for stage crew to set up chairs, stands, podium, and set curtains/sound
 - 6:15pm - Call time for all band members in band room
 - 6:20pm - Assemble instruments, stow cases, percussion move remaining equipment to stage
 - 6:25pm - Band members seated in band room, begin individual warmup (nothing taxing)
 - 6:30pm - Ensemble warmup in band room (long tones, chorale, tempo checks)
 - 6:45pm - Transition to “places” for performance, no playing outside of band room
 - 6:50pm - All band students in places for concert (winds in backstage left hallway, percussion in stage right wings, directors downstage left legs)
 - 6:53pm - Begin filing onstage (large instruments/back row first), sit on arrival, noodle/warmup on stage
 - 6:59pm - Principal clarinet stands, ensemble quiet, 2 tuning notes: A for woodwinds (and horns), F for brass
 - 7:00pm - Director enter from stage left to begin concert
 - 7:45pm - Concert concludes, students exit stage left to return folders, pictures and congratulations
 - 7:50pm - Begin stage teardown, percussion move equipment back to band room
- *Students dismissed upon return of music folders and teardown of section area, all welcome to help stage crew in teardown and clean up*

Important Locations

- Band Room - Warmup, case/coat storage
- Backstage Left Hallway - Winds pre-concert “places”
- Stage Right Wings - Percussion pre-concert “places”
- Stage Left Wings - First aid kit, instrument repair kit, extra copies of all parts, folder return

Dress

Dress for this performance will be concert blacks. Students have the option of an all-black dress/suit, or all-black formal top and bottom. Black shoes and black socks, accessories and jewelry are welcome, but should not hinder instrument performance or fall outside the RRHS dress code. Please direct any specific dress questions to Mr. Ulery.

Equipment and Procedures

Bring the following on concert night: instrument, instrument accessories (valve oil, reeds, neckstrap, grease, sticks, mallets, mouthpiece, etc.), band folder with all concert music

All folders must be returned off stage left after the concert!