

Making Composition Part of the Band and Orchestra Curriculum

**Midwest Clinic
Friday, December 17, 2004
2:00pm**

John Ginocchio, Clinician

Goals of this session:

1. to encourage the use of composition in the band classroom
2. to provide ideas and resources which can be used in the band classroom or adapted to fit other music classrooms

I. Reasons for inclusion of composition in the classroom

- A. National Standards/Comprehensive Musicianship
- B. Musical maturity
 1. understanding
 2. expression
 3. communication
- C. Pride in self and group

II. Obstacles to inclusion of composition

- A. Time
 1. when/how long
 2. other responsibilities and commitments
- B. Teacher security with composition
 1. lack of personal experience
 2. use what you know
- C. Student security with composition
- D. Knowing where to start

III. Steps/Ideas to consider in planning and assigning melodic exercises

- A. Provide a framework
 1. mix and balance open and closed assignments
 - a. open assignments provide more creative freedom
 - b. closed assignments provide template for teaching specifics
 2. consider the group's experience and knowledge and plan what you want them to learn
- B. Provide a source of inspiration
 1. vary materials used
 2. vary moods of materials
 3. be prepared to discuss the material in greater depth

- C. Ask for correct notation
- D. Vary the size of groups working from individual, small group, and large group activities
- E. Provide opportunities to evaluate, discuss, and adapt exercises
 - 1. self evaluation, group evaluation, and teacher evaluations
 - 2. discuss strengths and weaknesses
 - 3. adapt according to evaluation and discussion
- F. Always look for the positive

IV. Other items that can be taught based on melodic exercises

- A. Melodic development and variation
- B. Expressive qualities
- C. Harmonic writing
- D. Orchestration
- E. Form

V. Other helpful resources to consult

- A. MENC/IMEA journals (July, 2001 Music Educators Journal, vol. 88)
- B. Why and How to Teach Music Composition: A New Horizon in Music Education. Maud Hickey, ed. MENC Pub. 2003.
- C. Sound and Structure. John Paynter. Cambridge University Press, 1992
- D. Sound and Silence: Classroom Projects in Creative Music. John Paynter and Peter Ashton. Cambridge University Press, 1970.

Conclusion

“Children need guidance and support in creating effective compositions. The teacher’s primary role is to invite the artful narrative in such ways that children can trust they will be heard and understood, that is, to let children know they have something worthwhile to say and to help them find a way to say it.” (Joyce Eastland Gromko in Why and How to Teach Music Composition: A New Horizon for Music Education)

John Ginocchio (former band director for the Adams Central Community Schools,
Doctoral student at Ball State University in conducting and music education)
contact at jfginocchio@bsu.edu