



The Midwest Clinic

International Band and Orchestra Conference

TAKING THE FEAR OUT OF THE MYSTERY

An Approach to Sightreading at
Music Performance Assessment

PRESENTER

Jon Bubbett

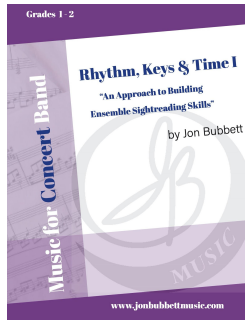
GUEST ENSEMBLE

Niles West High School Wind Ensemble
Justin Johnson, Director

DECEMBER 21, 2022
11AM

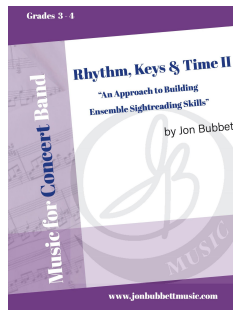
Rhythm, Keys and Time I

Grades 1 and 2



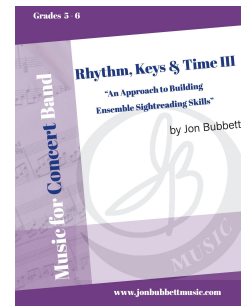
Rhythm, Keys and Time II

Grades 3 and 4



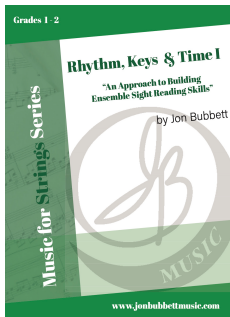
Rhythm, Keys and Time III

, Grades 5 and 6



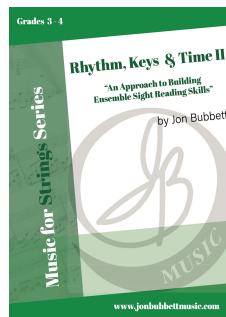
Rhythm, Keys and Time I

for Strings
Grades 1 and 2



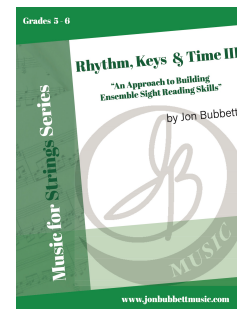
Rhythm, Keys and Time II

for Strings
Grades 3 and 4



Rhythm, Keys and Time III

for Strings
Grades 5 and 6



Taking the “**FEAR**” out of the “Mystery”

An Approach to Sight Reading at Music Performance Assessment

- **Introduction**

- I am always fearful when I am underprepared or don't know what to expect
- When you know what to prepare for, you can take the mystery out of the process
- Build confidence from having prepared! (Yours and your students)

- **What is most important?**

- Quality of sound
 - All about the fundamentals
 - Tone quality is developed ALL year, NOT just before assessment
- Musicality (hard to do without good sounds)
 - Go for the music!
- Successful sight reading is about confidence.
 - Yours AND your students
- The excitement of discovering a new piece of music

- **What to expect**

- [Band Sight Reading Criteria](#) (Revised 2022)
- Read through the sponsoring organization handbook THOROUGHLY!



- **How to Prepare**

- The “myth and mystery” of sight reading
 - Their “diet” of music played everyday, should, on balance, be more challenging than what they might expect to sight read at assessment.
 - Want students to have “seen it all before”...nothing new!
 - Always work on creating the best sounds possible.
 - Want to aim for a musical rendering, NOT just the right notes and rhythms
- All year approach
 - First Semester
 - This is skill-building!
 - Time can be your friend...or your enemy!
 - SOUND development ALL YEAR, EVERY REHEARSAL. It doesn't matter if all the rhythms, keys, and time signatures are right if the group doesn't have a characteristic sound.
 - [Rhythm, Keys, and Time](#) was developed to fill in the gaps in students' sight reading skills.



- Uses all rhythms, key signatures, and time signatures as outlined by UIL
- Learn to recognize rhythms at sight, like reading words in a book
- Rhythm recognition is skill-based and cannot be rushed
- Also available for strings.
- The goal is to read rhythms like reading words in a book
 - We use phonetics to sound out syllables when learning to read
 - We use counting systems to teach students rhythms
- Many ways to approach exercises to encourage musicality
 - Vary tempos: accelerando, rallentando, etc.
 - Vary dynamics: crescendo, decrescendo, etc.
 - Have woodwinds play a phrase
 - Have brass only play a phrase
 - Be creative and have fun!
 - Yes, you can have “musical” experiences playing scales and exercises!
 - It’s what YOU bring to the rehearsal that counts.
 - Your students will feed off of YOUR passion and YOUR enthusiasm!

■ Second Semester



- Use past years’ UIL sight-reading
 - Begin building a library of sight-reading music.
 - Available from [J.W.Pepper](#)
- Have a separate set of folders dedicated to sight-reading music
- Start at the beginning of 2nd semester
 - At least two times a week to start
 - Move to three times per week, 3 - 4 weeks out from assessment performance
- Start with lower grade levels and work to the more challenging levels.

Rhythm, Keys and Time II

Sightreading Skill Building Grades 3 & 4

Trumpet

JON BUBBETT
(ASCAP)

A

1 & 2 & 1 (& 2) & 1 (& 2) & 1 2

B

1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3 1 (2) & 3

C

1 2 3 1 & (2) & 3 & (4) & 1 & (2) & 3 & (4) & 1 & (2) & 3 & (4) &

D

1 & (2) & 3 (4) 1 2 1 2

1 & 2 & 1 e & a 2 e & a 1 & a 2 & a 1 & 2 & 1 (2) &

E

1 e & a 2 e & a 1 (e &) a 2 (e &) a 1 (e &) a 2 (e &) a

F

1 la le 2 la le 3

3 3 3 3 3 3 3 3

- **Setting Up**

- The Percussion
 - Assign parts BEFORE coming into sight reading room
 - [UIL Instrumentation](#)
 - Have the students play the SAME instrument (or as close as possible) when rehearsing sight reading.
 - Rehearse your plan!
- The Winds
 - Put more experienced musicians closer to less experienced players.
 - Your sight reading set need not be the same as your on stage set
 - Younger players learn more from the older, more experienced players than we realize!
 - Consider taking one player from 1st part and having them play 3rd part
 - Consider having your first three clarinets play 1st, the 2nd, and 3rd parts
 - Consider assigning them to the second or even the third chair on the inside of the set (not on the end of the row)
 - Make sure all subsections have a rhythmically strong player

- **Approach to sight reading**

- Your demeanor - RELAX!
 - Be professional!
 - Your students will feed off of your energy or apprehension
 - Enjoy the excitement of discovering a new piece of music!
- Students
 - Must stay engaged 100% of the time. *THIS IS THE MOST CRITICAL AND IMPORTANT FACTOR IN SIGHT-READING SUCCESS*
 - Percussionists are more visible because they are standing.
 - *Students must realize that the judge isn't looking at how the teacher is teaching but how well they are learning.*
 - Must understand that their inability to focus or become distracted removes them from the process and affects those around them. (They aren't talking to themselves)

- **Process for sight reading**

- Study Period:
 - PLAN your study time to leave room to let students “sizzle” and finger through the entire piece at least once.
 - Sizzle/finger through the piece

- The goal is for the players to “feel” like they have already played the piece WITHOUT EVER PLAYING A NOTE!
- CAUTION: DO NOT LET STUDENTS BLOW AIR THROUGH THE INSTRUMENT TO “SIZZLE”!
- It must be audible from EVERYONE!
- Younger players are learning from older players.
- In general, directors CAN count and TALK during study time. BUT NOT during the performance time
- *Go for the MUSIC, even in the “sizzle”*
- Percussion “airplay” their parts (make sure you SEE them)
- Listen for dynamic changes as they sizzle
- Look for tempo changes
 - Use quiet count offs
- Look for percussion breaks
- Be prepared to stop and quickly “rep” potential problem areas
- Look for those commonly missed notes (E concert, A concert, Db concert, etc.)
- Look for problematic keys (F, Ab concert) and key changes
- Look for problematic time signatures (cut time, 6/8)
- Look for odd or problematic rhythms (syncopation, dotted quarter eighth, and dotted eighth sixteenth combinations)
- Look for odd skips and jumps
- Look for odd phrasing (mostly too short)
- Review with the remaining time
 - Grades 1 - 3 can most likely get through the entire piece a second time as they are much shorter.
 - Grades 4 - 6
 - Longer and harder to get completely through a second time
 - Rep problems spots/transitions

- **Judge’s Perspective**

- The judge is on your side and is pulling for you and your students!
- A missed accidental on the key change once may be overlooked, but multiple missed notes are a problem. It doesn't need to be perfect, but students must be taught to correct mistakes quickly and adjust.
- Be the “musical” exception!
 - The judge WILL LOVE IT!!!!
 - Judging is not easy; a lot of uncharacteristic sounds pass through the room.
 - Your job is to make the judge go, “THANK YOU!!”

- Looking to see how well students are engaged
- Groups with engaged students will not always have a superior performance, but groups not engaged will most certainly NOT have a superior performance.

- **Sight reading performance time:**

- In general, warm-up - 1 minute (approx)
 - Review scale of opening key signature
 - Possibly review the scale of any key changes (especially going into/out of F and/or Ab concert)
 - Winds re-tune
 - Timpani tune DOUBLE CHECK THIS
- Tempos are perceived as fast or slow
- Raise non-conducting hand and drop at rehearsal marks
- “Connect” with students
 - Probably will NOT be making as much eye contact with students (either you to them or them to you)
 - Dial into the “visceral” connection between teacher and student
 - Empathic connection
 - Guides you as to how much they can handle
- THANK THE JUDGE WHEN DONE!

- **Work to make sight reading a positive event!**

- YOUR demeanor!
 - Relaxed, easy-going “You’ve got this” attitude, REDUCE TENSION
 - NOT overly strict or militaristic, CREATES TENSION
 - Have a sense of humor!
- Be prepared!
 - Start early with building rhythm skills.
 - Time can be your friend....or your enemy
- BIG PICTURE!
 - Play with great sounds
 - There is a reason “TONE” is first on the adjudication sheets.....
 - Play with great musicality
 - “Let’s see what this piece is about!”

- **Contact Information**

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