



Quality Control: Discovering repertoire that meets your standards

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What is Quality?

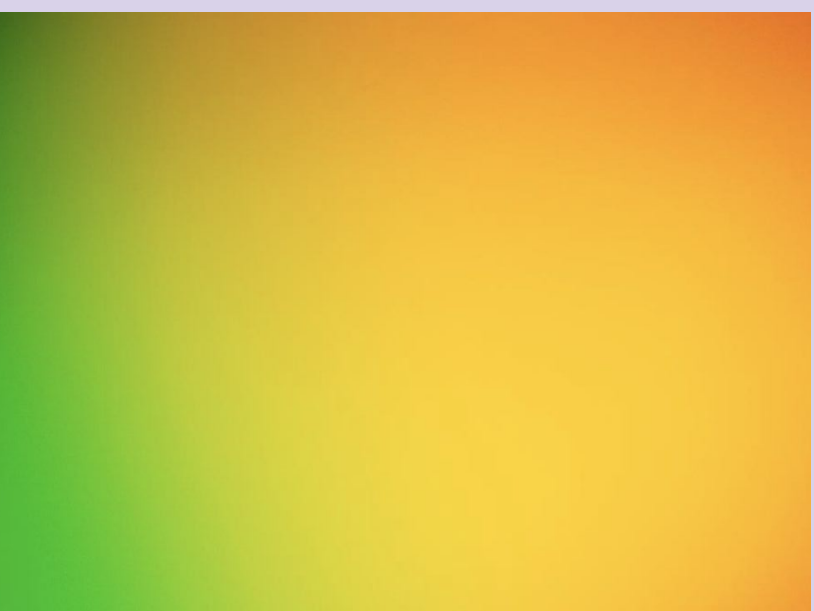


What is Quality?

- Noun - Peculiar and an essential character
- Noun (2) - An inherent feature
- Adjective - A degree of excellence
- Adjective (2) - A high degree of excellence

Evolution of the term 'Quality'

- Cicero
 - Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle
 - The Dark Ages and Beyond
 - Quality vs. Quantity
- OR
- Quality as Quantity



‘Quality’ and Wind Bands

- ABA Founded in 1925 by E. F. Goldman, CBDNA by Revelli in 1947
- From entertainment to “Serious Artistic Merit.”
- Founding principle being to foster in original literature for band
- “Major objective of CBDNA was to perform quality literature equal to other performing media.” (D. Milburn)

‘Quality’ and Wind Bands

Mark H. Hindsley, in a 1973 statement to the CBDNA, addressed that:

“disagreement existed over the relative merits of much of the original literature for band. Many original band compositions were designed for the mass market of school bands and created specifically for graded contests. The musical content of much of this music is shallow and unrewarding.”



“Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit,” Acton Ostling

An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band

Replicated and updated by Jay Gilbert (1993) and Clifford Towner (2011)

- The composition has FORM - not “a form” but form - and reflects a proper balance between repetition and contrast.
- The composition reflects SHAPE and DESIGN, and creates the impression of conscious choice and judicious arrangement on the part of the composer.
- The composition reflects CRAFT in ORCHESTRATION, demonstrating a proper balance between transparent and tutti scoring, and also between solo and group colors.
- The composition is SUFFICIENTLY UNPREDICTABLE to preclude an immediate grasp of its musical meaning.
- The route through which the composition travels in initiating its musical tendencies and probable musical goals is NOT COMPLETELY DIRECT AND OBVIOUS.

“Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit,” Acton Ostling

An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band

Replicated and updated by Jay Gilbert (1993) and Clifford Towner (2011)

(Continued)

- The composition is CONSISTENT IN ITS QUALITY throughout its length and in its various sections.
- The composition is CONSISTENT IN ITS STYLE reflecting a complete grasp of technical details, clearly conceived ideas, and avoids lapses into trivial, futile, or unsuitable passages.
- The composition REFLECTS INGENUITY in its development, given the stylistic context in which it exists.
- The composition is GENUINE IN IDIOM, and is not pretentious.
- The composition REFLECTS A MUSICAL VALIDITY which transcends factors of historical importance, or factors of pedagogical usefulness.

The New Winds of Change, Frank Battisti

- ...imaginative in development of some or all of their musical elements - melody, harmony, texture, rhythm, form, etc.
- ...select pieces that have interesting individual parts...
- ...that fit the instrumentation of the ensemble...
- ...elements of music are integrated and developed creatively and have the potential for evoking feelings and conveying expressive meaning...
- Avoid selecting pieces with excessive technical demands.
- Select pieces that encompass a variety of styles...
- ...a variety of textures ranging from thinly scored passages...to full ensemble...

Best Music for High School Band,

Dvorak/Grechesky/Ciepluch/Margolis

- Compositions must exhibit a high degree of compositional craft.
- Compositions must contain important musical constructs necessary for the development of musicianship.
- Compositions must exhibit an orchestration that, within the restrictions associated with a particular grade level, encourage musical independence both of individuals and sections.

What Else?!

- Band is still young!
- The lists have no consideration for inclusivity
- The criteria are subject to our lived experiences
- The criteria lists stand outside of our daily reality as music educators



What Else?!

- By defining a word, we limit its scope. As times change and culture shifts, definitions must do the same.
- Much of the way we define 'quality' allows for our ever-growing appreciation of music from cultures other than our own.
- Examining potential (unconscious) biases that have defined taste in quality.

What does “quality” mean to you?

Reflect on what you programmed for the 2023-24 season:

- How did you select these pieces?
- What criteria did you consider?
- Did you use any resources?
 - State lists, publisher lists, programs from colleagues or other ensembles, etc.
- Were any pieces new to you or to your library?

Explore your value system

When programming, how much do you value (or consider):

- Programmatic aspects
 - Concert theme
 - Subject of a piece
- Audience considerations
 - Engagement
 - Cultural exposure
- Needs and priorities of your ensemble members

Aesthetic Qualities

We find the potential of a piece to **spark a personal connection** and **evoke a visceral reaction** to be underappreciated and undervalued in the programming process.

A piece may have visceral musical and artistic qualities that are meaningful to an individual performer or audience member, even if they do not evoke an emotional response in us as the conductor.

This consideration is underdeveloped in our current and historical evaluation of the “quality” of a piece.

Quality Revisited

Whose perspectives on “quality” have we considered?

Whose **values** have we considered? What do they value?

Conductor | Musician | Audience
Composer?

Quality - A Case Study...

~ The Florence Price Dilemma ~



The value of what we *hear* versus what we see

Quality - A Case Study...

~ The Florence Price Dilemma ~

The value of what we *hear* versus what we see

“It is a faultless work...a work that speaks its own message with restraint and yet with passion. Mrs. Price's symphony is worthy of a place in the regular symphonic repertoire.”

Eugene Stinson, Chicago Daily News, 16 June 1933.

“...her symphony displayed high talent, both in what she did and what she omitted... She would seem to be well acquainted with the use of orchestral instrumental color... She knows how to be concise, how to avoid overloading and elaboration. The performance made a well deserved success.”

Edward Moore, Chicago Daily Tribune, 16 June 1933.

Quality - Think Like a Composer

What is valuable to the composer?

The Compositional Process - An Abbreviated Discourse

Quality - Think Like a Composer

The Compositional Process ~ Abbreviated



Getting Started and
Pre-composition
Processes



The Power of
Sketching



Developing your
ideas



Structuring and
Putting things
Together



Orchestration



Application with
Examples

Quality - Think Like a Composer

Why should this matter to you?



Quality - Think Like a Composer

Considerations

- Why am I programming/why did I program this work?
- Have I considered context/background?
Seeing the ink *around* the ink.
- What have I risked in the effort to introduce quality music?

Actionable, Practical Tips

The first and **most important step** is to...

Determine your priorities

1

—

2

—

3

—

4

REASSESS

KNOW

DEVELOP

ACTION

After taking a moment to
reassess your definition
of quality..

You will know what your
priorities are; you will be
more motivated to...

Engage in and develop
habits that directly
translate into...

Taking actionable steps
towards achieving your
programming and
educational goals

Habits to consider developing:

- Keep a notepad/running log of new repertoire
 - Reflect on these pieces
 - Find a perusal score/another recording
- Create a simple catalog of works you enjoy
- Here is a template you can copy and utilize here at Midwest and at future conferences:



More habits to consider developing...

- Expand your exposure by..
 - listening to more ensembles you don't typically listen to
 - checking various resources such as state lists, international conference performances, etc.
 - allowing the youtube/spotify/apple music algorithm to take you for a ride!

Stay **connected**

- State lists/MEA lists (look outside your own state)
- Local/National/**International** Conference Performance Lists: Midwest, MEA, SBA, WASBE lists
- Diversification of repertoire resources: AWWH, ICD, Diversifying the Stand
- Traditional search: Wind Repertory, google, etc.

Last, but not least:

**Set aside time to listen and explore;
allow that time to be sacred.**

- Set a timer and tell yourself you'll research/skim through music you don't know for 30 minutes
- If you can, set aside a week every summer where you spend an hour dedicated to listening to music in your catalog
- Continue to refine your tastes and priorities re: your own understanding of quality

Your musical “diet” - an exercise in self-awareness

Quality out (you are what you regularly consume)

- Understanding where your musical palate is *currently*.
 - List your top five favorite pieces of music. One-by-one, listen to each piece. Of the attributes within the music, which speak to you most?
 - List five pieces of music that you’ve never cared for. Which of the aforementioned attributes contribute to your distaste?

Your musical “diet” - an exercise in self-awareness

Musical attributes to consider :

- Rhythm/ Groove
- Melody
- Harmony
- Musical Form
- Instrumentation & Tone Colors

Extra-musical attributes to consider :

- Student attainability/curricular
- Programmatic/story-telling
- Emotional connection
- Nostalgia
- Aesthetic

Musical “diet” (continued)

- Spend time seeking composers & music that you are not familiar with - **especially** music that is outside of your comfort zone.
- Using the same processes from before, evaluate the music while documenting your thoughts and observations about the piece.
- Stay open-minded about the music: what qualities would make or break this piece showing up on a concert program?

Musical “diet” (continued)

- Dialogue starters:
 - *“I really enjoy the [attribute] in this piece because...”*
 - *“I should program this piece because...”*
 - *“My students would like this piece because...”*
- Ultimately, spending time becoming aware of your own tastes & inclinations towards programming will expand your palate over time

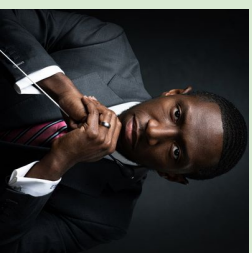
The Music That “Hooked You”



1



2



3

A) *Incantation & Dance* - John Barnes
Chance

B) *Into the Storm* - Robert W. Smith

C) *Sleep* - Eric Whitacre

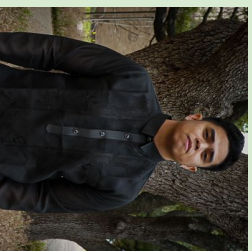
D) *Inferno* - Robert W. Smith

E) *An American Elegy* - Frank Ticheli

F) *Pevensey Castle* - Robert Sheldon



4



5



6

Organically Diversifying Our Repertoire

to·ken·ism

/ˈtōkeˌnizəm/

noun

the practice of making only a perfunctory or symbolic effort to do a particular thing, especially by recruiting a small number of people from underrepresented groups in order to give the appearance of sexual or racial equality within a workforce (or industry/profession/.

"the use of gay supporting characters is mere tokenism"

Tokenism vs. Thoughtfulness

Thoughtfulness points us **away** from the shallowness of tokenism and **towards** deeper understanding of our musical predilections, ourselves, and the people and world around us.

It substantiates our decision-making and allows us to be more available to the *stimuli* that we identify as *inspirational, motivational, and transformative*.

Learning Our “Personal Filters”

University of Miami Frost Wind Ensemble



Hugh Hodgson Concert Hall

Friday, February 17th
8 pm



Dr. Robert M. Carnochan

Bootlegger's Break

Mason Bates
* *World Premiere*

D'un soir triste

Lili Boulanger
Trans. by Jack Hontz

In This Circle

Hilá Pitlmann
Orch. by Christopher Dickey
Hilá Pitlmann, Soprano

I. Wave

II. The Art of Flying

III. Lost Breath

- Intermission -

Passages

Music by Will Healy
Lyrics by spiritchild
Dizzy Senze, Emcee
Chad Nelson, Emcee
Sydney Altbacker, Voice
Jose Ignacio, Saxophone

I. Babel On

II. Heights

III. Hovering/Fluttering

* *World Premiere*

Dionysiaques

Florent Schmitt
Ed. by Felix Hauswirth

Learning Our “Personal Filters”

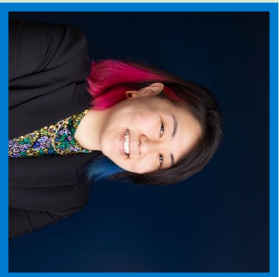
*As artists, we seek to restore our childlike perception:
a more innocent state of wonder and appreciation
not tethered to utility or survival.*

Rick Rubin, *The Creative Act: A Way of Being*

Artist-Educators Be Like...

Continual self-acceptance and self-understanding in lockstep with seeking to understand and accept others marks the posture of an empathic human being, artist, and effective educator. Examining our programming is one important way to gain access into this valuable information and knowledge.

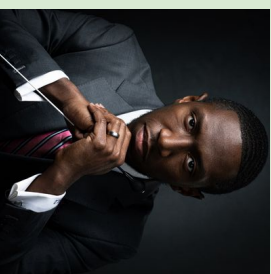
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1



2



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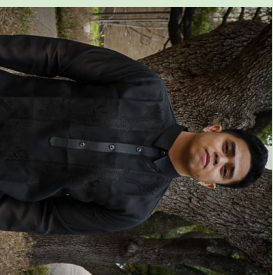
D) *Inferno* - Robert W. Smith

E) *An American Elegy* - Frank Ticheli

F) *Pevensey Castle* - Robert Sheldon



4

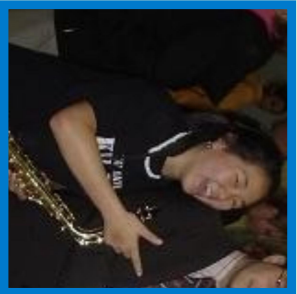


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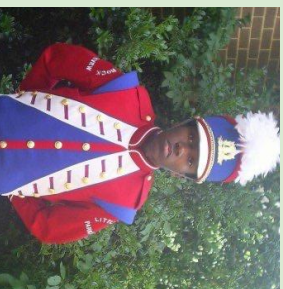
The Music That “Hooked You” (Answers)



1) B



2) A



3) D

A) *Incantation & Dance* - John Barnes
Chance

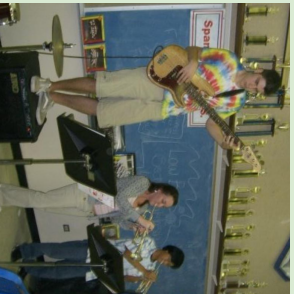
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C) *Sleep* - Eric Whitacre

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E) *An American Elegy* - Frank Tichelli

F) *Pevensey Castle* - Robert Sheldon



4) C



5) E

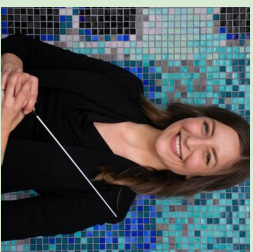


6) F

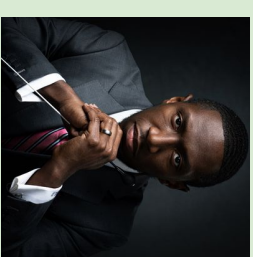
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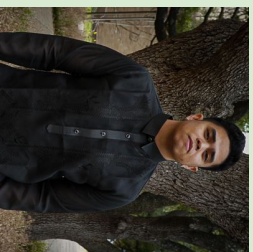
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