

What are we Feeding our Ensembles?

Elevating Musical Taste in order to Better Select Quality Repertoire

The Midwest Clinic — An International Band and Orchestra Conference
McCormick Place
Chicago, Illinois
Thursday, December 15, 2016
10:30 — 11:30am
Meeting Room W185

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Repertoire IS our Curriculum

For us as music educators, to say that repertoire is crucial to our program is an understatement. Simply put, the works that we choose inform our practice. Not only does repertoire form the foundation for our music programs, but it also influences what we teach regarding music history, theory, and even musicianship. Our choice of repertoire can even influence how our students view music and what they consider to be quality repertoire. Yet despite this understanding, research has shown that there are music educators who consistently select substandard works for their ensembles. Why is this? Is it due to lack of time? An inability to discern quality repertoire? A substandard level of artistic taste and merit? Or is it a combination of all of these factors? Through addressing these questions directly, this presentation will hope to provide music educators with practical tools and strategies to select and evaluate quality repertoire.

“Repertoire selection has a major impact on what students will and will not learn, and it should help their music understanding and appreciation... While it may be an overstatement to say that repertoire is the curriculum, we can all agree that well-planned repertoire creates the framework for an excellent music curriculum that fosters the musical growth of our students.”

- H. Robert Reynolds

“Repertoire IS the Curriculum,” *Music Educators Journal*, July 2000

Quality v. Suitability Factors when Selecting Repertoire

Patrick Carney polled 237 band directors from the Florida Bandmasters Association. Carney selected twelve factors and asked each director to rate (in order of importance) which factors were most important to their selection of repertoire. These factors were divided into two categories, *Quality* (related to the music itself) and *Suitability* (related to their ensembles).

List of Factors used to Select Repertoire	
Quality Factors	Suitability Factors
- Form	- Instrumentation
- Tonality	- Experience Level of the Ensemble
- Timbre/ Register of Instruments	- Amount of Rehearsal Time
- Tempo/ Meter of a Composition	- Utilitarian Concerns
- Rhythm	- Familiarity/ Preeminence with the Composer/ Composition
- Dynamics	- Outside Influences

Carney found that band directors overwhelmingly based their selection of music on *Suitability* factors (rehearsal time, instrumentation, etc.) rather than on *Quality* factors (form, tonality, etc.)...

1. Experience Level of Ensemble	Suitability
2. Instrumentation of Ensemble	Suitability
3. Amount of Rehearsal Time	Suitability
4. Timbre/ Register of Instruments	Quality
5. Familiarity/ Preeminence	Suitability
6. Outside Influences	Suitability
7. Tonality	Quality
8. Rhythm	Quality
9. Utilitarian Concerns	Suitability
10. Form of a Composition	Quality
11. Tempo/ Meter	Quality
12. Dynamics	Quality

Results were consistent despite differences in EDUCATION, TIME IN THE FIELD, and GRADE LEVELS TAUGHT!

Why do we Select Substandard Repertoire?

1. Effect of publishers
2. Lack of time
3. Need for more education in how to elevate/ develop musical taste

Defining and Cultivating your Musical Taste

“Musical taste is an elusive topic to define, as it is highly dependent on each person's individual experiences. However, while aesthetic criteria may be more easily agreed upon, the issue of person taste is the most critical component of this delicate ecosystem.”

- Craig Kirchhoff

*“Selecting Repertoire: A Matter of Conscience,” *Southwestern Musician*,
October 2010*

In order to improve and develop our musical taste, we need to become true artists in our field. A thoughtful and reflective person that through his/her own heightened artistic sense appreciates art in all of its forms. Musical Taste and its refinement is developed through exposure to great art, great music, and the people that create it.

Cultivating Musical Taste according to H. Robert Reynolds

1. Attend workshops, symposiums, conferences
2. Read the New York Times, especially the Sunday Arts section
3. Attend high quality concerts
4. Investigate repertoire that *directly* affects your field
5. Investigate repertoire that *indirectly* affects your field
6. Read
7. Learn about our profession
8. Make art an important part of your life

Being an artist in our field is more than a prescribed level of achievement. It is about continually striving to push and expand our artistic possibilities!

and... begin to seek out repertoire beyond our western art traditions!

The age-old debate... **Ice cream vs. Gelato**

We may have once thought “no-name brand” ice cream was good but do you remember the first time you had truly exceptional ice cream? Once you have tasted high quality ice cream like gelato, it means that the next time you sit down and choose between the two, you are more likely to choose the product of higher quality. The same can be said about music. The more you expose yourself to high quality art and music, the more likely you will continue to seek out and select high quality repertoire.

“We are what we consume! If one wants to be an artist conductor/ teacher — one must consume great Art!”

- Frank Battisti
Winds of Change

Developing an Aesthetic Criteria for Selecting and Evaluating Quality Repertoire

A small sample of criteria used by professionals in our field to select repertoire...

Thomas Dvorak in *Best Music for High School Band* states three criteria in his selection of quality music:

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

Ray Cramer from *Teaching Music Through Performance in Band*, vol. 1 uses seven different criteria:

Does the music have...

1. A well-conceived formal structure?
2. Creative melodies and counter lines?
3. Harmonic imagination?
4. Rhythmic vitality?
5. Contrast in all musical elements?
6. Scoring which best represents the full potential for beautiful tone and timbre?
7. An emotional impact?

Acton Ostling, in his landmark study on quality repertoire states ten criteria:

1. The composition has form and reflects a proper balance between repetition and contrast.
2. The composition reflects shape and design, and creates the impression of conscious choice and judicious arrangement on the part of the composer.
3. The composition reflects craftsmanship in orchestration, demonstrating a proper balance between transparent and *tutti* scoring, and between solo and group colors.
4. The composition is sufficiently unpredictable to preclude an immediate grasp of its musical meaning.
5. The route through which the composition travels in initiating its musical tendencies and probable musical goals is not completely direct and obvious.
6. The composition is consistent in quality throughout its length and in its various sections.
7. 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.
8. The composition reflects ingenuity in its development, given the stylistic context in which it exists.
9. The composition is genuine in idiom, and is not pretentious.
10. The composition reflects a musical validity, which transcends factors of historical importance, or factors of pedagogical usefulness.

The Quality Repertoire (QR) Rubric

A clear and concise system was needed to properly evaluate the *Quality* factors associated with the music without ignoring *Suitability* factors. The QR Rubric would utilize most common elements from various criteria, that when added together would correspond with an appropriate letter grade. The rubric would also take into consideration Suitability factors such as experience level, amount of rehearsal time, and proper instrumentation.

Quality Repertoire (QR) Rubric

Title of Composition: _____ Composer: _____

					Quality Factors
1	2	3	4	5	Does the piece have a well-constructed sense of form? Is it well constructed without being too repetitive or pedantic?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the composition melodically interesting? Is there creativity in the way melodic lines are constructed and crafted?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the music harmonically imaginative?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the music have a sense of rhythmic vitality?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the composition reflect craftsmanship in orchestration through interesting use of timbres and/or combinations of instruments?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the music provoke questions? Is it pleasantly unpredictable? Do you need to listen to the composition multiple times in order to grasp its musical meaning?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the composition emotionally fulfilling?
/35 points					

Suitability factors

1. Is the piece suitable for the experience level of my ensemble? YES / NO
2. Is the piece suitable for the instrumentation of my ensemble? YES / NO
3. Can we perform this work within the allotted time frame of the concert season? YES / NO

SHOULD THE COMPOSITION BE PERFORMED? YES / NO

Grading Scheme

A Excellent Composition	35/35- 100% 34/35- 97% 33/35- 94% 32/35- 91%	Composition is always well constructed and demonstrates creative melodic lines, imaginative harmonies, and rhythmic vitality. The composition consistently uses imaginative orchestration, is unpredictable, and emotionally fulfilling. <i>Composition should be programmed consistently. A quality piece of music that should be part of the core repertoire.</i>
B Good composition	31/35- 88% 30/35- 86% 29/35- 83% 28/35- 80%	Composition is often well constructed and frequently demonstrates creative melodic lines, imagination harmonies, and rhythmic vitality. The composition regularly uses imaginative orchestration, can be unpredictable, and emotionally fulfilling. <i>Composition should be performed often.</i>
C Satisfactory Composition	27/35- 77% 26/35- 74% 25/35- 71%	Composition is seldom well constructed and rarely demonstrates creative melodic lines, imaginative harmonies, or rhythmic vitality. The composition occasionally uses imaginative orchestration, and is often predictable and is rarely emotionally fulfilling. <i>Composition should be performed sparingly.</i>
D Poor Composition	24/35- 68% 23/35- 66% 22/35- 63% 21/35- 60%	Composition is not well constructed and demonstrates uncreative melodic lines, unimaginative harmonies and lacks rhythmic vitality. The composition constantly uses unimaginative orchestration, is predictable, and emotionally uninteresting. <i>Composition should not be performed.</i>

Closing Thoughts

Where do we go from here?

1. Attend high-quality concerts, collect the programs and take stock of not only what is being programmed but how it is organized.
2. Develop lists of core repertoire for your field AND for your own ensemble.
3. Seek out a group of friends or a trusted mentor to discuss quality repertoire and where to find it.
4. Develop relationships with composers and arrangers. Research new and emerging composers, speak with your local university or college music composition teachers, and organize commissioning consortiums.

The Importance of TIME

1. TIME to properly select and evaluate repertoire.
2. TIME and UNDERSTANDING that developing your musical taste is more a process than a destination.

“...what is real music? It is music that you personally love, that excites and interests you. That is the key issue: do you love it? If you do, your students will respond. If you do not love the music you are bringing to your students, there is no way that they will love it, and no way that they will perform with real enthusiasm or conviction...”

- David Maslanka

Some Thoughts on Choosing Music for Younger Wind Ensembles

Bibliography

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- Budiansky, Stephen and Timothy W. Foley. "The Quality of Repertoire in School Music Programs: Literature Review, Analysis, and Discussion." *Journal of the World Association for Symphonic Bands and Ensembles* 12, 2005: 17—39.
- Carney, Patrick. "Rankings and Ratings of Literature Selection Criteria Among Florida Public School Wind Band Conductors." Doctoral Dissertation, Florida State University, 2005.
- Dvorak, Thomas, Robert Grechesky, and Gary M. Ciepluch. *Best Music for High School Band: A Selective Repertoire Guide for High School Bands and Wind Ensembles*. Edited by Bob Margolis. New York: Manhattan Beach Music, 1993.
- Hoffer, Charles A. *Teaching Music in the Secondary Schools*. 5th edition. Belmont, CA: Thompson, 2001.
- Jagow, Shelley. *Developing the Complete Band Program*. Galesville, MD: Meredith Music Publications, 2007.
- Kirchhoff, Craig. "Selecting Repertoire: A Matter of Conscience." *Southwestern Musician*, October 2010: 21—24.
- Maslanka, David. "Some Thoughts on Choosing Music for Younger Wind Ensembles." davidmaslanka.com. Accessed Nov. 25, 2016.
- Miles, Richard. "Curricular Models Based on Literature Selection." *In Teaching Music Through Performance*, edited and compiled by Richard Miles, 44—56. Chicago: GIA Publications, 1997.
- Ostling, Acton J. "An Evaluation of Compositions for Wind Band According to Specific Criteria of Serious Artistic Merit." Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Iowa, 1978.
- Reynolds, H. Robert. "Repertoire IS the Curriculum." *Music Educators Journal*, July 2000: 31—33.
- Rush, Scott. *Habits of a Successful Band Director: Pitfalls and Solutions*. Chicago: GIA Publications, 2006.

Appendix 1

Quality Repertoire (QR) Rubric

Title of Composition: _____ Composer: _____

					Quality Factors
1	2	3	4	5	Does the piece have a well-constructed sense of form? Is it well constructed without being too repetitive or pedantic?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the composition melodically interesting? Is there creativity in the way melodic lines are constructed and crafted?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the music harmonically imaginative?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the music have a sense of rhythmic vitality?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the composition reflect craftsmanship in orchestration through interesting use of timbres and/or combinations of instruments?
1	2	3	4	5	Does the music provoke questions? Is it pleasantly unpredictable? Do you need to listen to the composition multiple times in order to grasp its musical meaning?
1	2	3	4	5	Is the composition emotionally fulfilling?
/35 points					

Suitability factors

1. Is the piece suitable for the experience level of my ensemble? YES / NO
2. Is the piece suitable for the instrumentation of my ensemble? YES / NO
3. Can we perform this work within the allotted time frame of the concert season? YES / NO

SHOULD THE COMPOSITION BE PERFORMED? YES / NO

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D Poor Composition	24/35- 68% 23/35- 66% 22/35- 63% 21/35- 60%	Composition is not well constructed and demonstrates uncreative melodic lines, unimaginative harmonies and lacks rhythmic vitality. The composition constantly uses unimaginative orchestration, is predictable, and emotionally uninteresting. <i>Composition should not be performed.</i>

Appendix 2

Sample of the Books on Erik's Current Bookshelf

- Coyle, Daniel. *The Talent Code*. New York: Bantam Books, 2009.
- Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly. *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.
- Garofalo, Robert J. *Improving Intonation in Band and Orchestra Performance*. Ft. Lauderdale: Meredith Music Publications, 1996
- Galdwell, Malcolm. *Outliers: The Story of Success*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.
- Hanh, Thich Nhat. *For a Future to be Possible: Buddhist Ethics for Everyday Life*. Berkley, CA: Parallax Press, 2007.
- McWilliam, Fergus. *Blow your OWN Horn!: Horn Heresies*. Oakville, Ontario: Mosaic Press, 2011.
- Francis. *The Name of God is Mercy: A Conversation with Andrea Tornielli*. trans. Oonagh Stransky. NY: Random House Publishing Group: 2016.
- Rowling, J.K. *Very Good Lives: The Fringe Benefits of Failure and the Importance of Imagination*. New York: Little, Brown and Company, 2008.
- Sims, Peter. *Little Bets: How Breakthrough Ideas Emerge from Small Discoveries*. New York: Free Press, 2011.
- Swafford, Jan. *Beethoven: Anguish and Triumph*. New York: Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2014.
- Wooten, Victor L. *The Music Lesson: A Spiritual Search for Growth Through Music*. New York: Berkley Books, 2006.

Appendix 3

Sample of what Erik is Currently Listening to on his iPod

Arcade Fire. *The Suburbs (Deluxe Version)*. Merge Records, 2011. Vinyl.

Aurora. *All My Demons Greeting Me as a Friend*. Decca, 2016. CD.

Brahms, Johannes. *Symphonies Nos. 1—4, Variations on a Theme by Haydn, Tragic Overture, Academic Festival Overture*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Barenboim. Warner Classics, 2006.

Eastman, Julius. *Unjust Malaise*. New World Records, 2005. CD.

Gabrieli, Giovanni. *Gabrieli*. National Brass Ensemble. Oberlin Music, 2015. CD.

Gorecki, Henryck. *Symphony No. 3*. London Sinfonietta, Dawn Upshaw, soprano, conducted by David Zinman. Nonesuch Records, 1992. CD.

Metric. *Synthetica*. Mom and Pop Music, 2012. CD.

Saint-Saëns, Camille. *Symphonie Nr. 3*. Chicago Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Daniel Barenboim. Deutsche Grammophon 415-847-2, 1987. CD.

Shapero, Harold. *Symphony for Classical Orchestra*. Los Angeles Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Andre Pevin. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELvYaWa4fIU>. Accessed: November 25, 2016.

Shostakovich, Dmitri. *Shostakovich Symphonies Nos. 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 15*. Leningrad Philharmonic, conducted by Mravinsky. Denon Essentials, 2008. CD.

Radiohead. *Kid A*. Parlophone, 2000. CD.

Reich, Steve. *New York Counterpoint, Eight Lines, Four Organs*. Bang on a Can. Nonesuch Records, 2000. CD.

Appendix 4

Erik's Top 10 Works for my Current Ensemble (In no particular order...)

1. Holst, 1st Suite in E-flat
2. Vaughn Williams, English Folksong Suite
3. Ellerby, Paris Sketches
4. Bernstein/Grundman, Candide Suite
5. Maslanka, Give Us This Day
6. Strauss, Allerseelen
7. Grainger, Lincolnshire Posy
8. Husa, Divertimento for Brass and Percussion
9. Colgrass, Bali
10. Whitacre, October

Erik's Top 10 Works for Wind Band (In no particular order...)

1. Maslanka, A Child's Garden of Dreams
2. Colgrass, Winds of Nagual
3. Holst, 1st Suite in E-flat
4. Grainger, Lincolnshire Posy
5. Mozart, Serenade in C minor, K.388/384a
6. Stravinsky, Symphonies of Wind Instruments
7. Husa, Music for Prague 1968
8. Bryant, Concerto for Wind Ensemble
9. Strauss, Serenade in E-flat, op. 7
10. Newman, Symphony No. 1: My Hands are a City

Appendix 5
Fresno Pacific University Bands and Ensembles Concert Repertory
Fall 2014 — present

November 19, 2014: Pacific Brass Ensemble, Erik Leung, conductor

"Just a Closer Walk"

Gabrieli- Sonata pian e forte

Desprez, arr. King- "Absalom fili mi" from Motet and Royal Fanfare

Susato, arr. Iveson- Susato Dances

Unknown- Horn ensemble

Lauridsen- O Magnum Mysterium

Holcombe- Ceremonial for Christmas Brass

Trad.- Just a Closer Walk with Thee

November 24, 2014: Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor

"Music from across the Pond"

Vaughn Williams- Flourish for Winds

Mackey- Sheltering Sky, Michael Angel, guest conductor

Grainger set-

Handel in the Strand

Ye Banks and Braes

Shepherd's Hey

Ticheli- Joy Revisited

Saul- Death be not Proud, ***world premiere***

Whitacre- October

Arnold- Prelude, Siciliano, and Rondo

April 17, 2015: Pacific Brass Ensemble and No Strings Attached Wind Quintet,

Erik Leung, conductor

"Simple Gifts"

de Meij- Ceremonial Fanfare

Pfeiffer- Pastorale, op 71

Ravel- Piece en forme de Habanera

Bjork/Leung- Overture from Dancer in the Dark

Ives/Singleton- Four Songs

Copland/Leung- "Simple Gifts" from Appalachian Spring

Hazell- The Gospel Hall

April 30, 2015: Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor

"Noisy Wheels of Joy!"

Whitacre- Noisy Wheels of Joy

Whitacre- Cloudburst, with Pacific Bells

Pfeiffer- Pastorale, op. 71

Chaminade- Concertino in D Major, op. 107 with Christa Scott, Flute

Wilson- Shortcut Home

Hinojosa- A Long Fall ***World Premiere***

Ticheli- Amazing Grace

Bernstein/Grundman- Slava! A Political Overture

June 26, 2015: Fresno Pacific University Summer Music Camp Wind Ensemble,

Erik Leung, Conductor

Vinson- Overture on a Hymn Tune

Whitacre- The Seal Lullaby

Williams- The Marches of John Williams

November 5, 2015: Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor

"Heroes and Dreamers"

Nowlin- Fanfare for the Centennial

Strauss- Allerseelen, Kevin Tinkle, guest conductor

Bryant- Suite Dreams

Holst- First Suite in E-Flat

December 5, 2015: Pacific Brass Ensemble, Erik Leung, cond.

"From the New World"

Smetana- Fanfare from Richard III

Dvorak- Largo from The New World Symphony

Husa- Divertimento for Brass and Percussion

Horowitz- Brass Polka

March 31, 2016: GRAINGER WIND FESTIVAL/ CHICAGO TOUR,

Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band with Loyola University Wind Ensemble, Erik Leung,

Rick Lowe, and Mallory Thompson, conductors

Grainger- Colonial Song

Maslanka- Give Us This Day

Massed Band Pieces, Mallory Thompson, cond.

Whitacre- Lux Aurumque

Shostakovich- Galop

April 1-2, 2016: GRAINGER WIND FESTIVAL/ CHICAGO TOUR,

Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor

"Performance at Symphony Center, Grainger Wind Festival"

Grainger- Colonial Song

Whitacre- Lux Aurumque

Maslanka- Give Us This Day

April 28, 2016: Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor

"Give Us This Day"

Blaha- Color Prelude

Whitacre- Lux Aurumque

Biedenbender- Melodious Thunk

Shostakovich- Galop

Grainger- Colonial Song

Maslanka- Give Us This Day

June 27, 2016: Fresno Pacific University Summer Music Camp, Erik Leung, conductor

Balmages- Blue Ridge Overture

Ticheli- Earth Song

Newman- 3 O'Clock Mix

November 18, 2016: Chamber Music Concert featuring Pacific Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Quartet, and “No Strings Attached” Wind Quintet
“Big Music in Small Spaces”

Pacific Brass Ensemble

Cheetham- Commemorative Fanfare

Iveson- Londonderry Air *featuring Katie Issac, Euphonium*

Henderson- The Saint’s Hallelujah

Gabrieli- Hodie Christus with Fresno Pacific University Concert Choir, Dr. Bethany Alvey, cond.

November 22, 2016: Fresno Pacific University Symphonic Band, Erik Leung, conductor
“Impressions”

Curnow- Fanfare and Flourishes, Brad Feyma, *graduate student conductor*

Boysen- Whispering of Fields Unsown, *****CBDNA co-commission*****

Set of Pieces for Alto Saxophone and Band *with Dr. Alan Durst, alto saxophone*

Reed- Ballade

Iturralde- Pequena Czarda

Woolfendon- Suite Francaise

Ellerby- Paris Sketches