

THE MIDWEST INTERNATIONAL BAND AND ORCHESTRA CLINIC

McCormick Place

Chicago, IL

Friday, December 20, 2014

3:30 PM

CONCERT BAND CAMP? IT'S THE RESIDUALS!!

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this clinic is to give band directors the tools to create and operate a band camp that occurs early in your concert band season. Much like the summer or early fall band camp, the concert band camp provides an instructional and inspirational 'kickoff' of concert season and provides a myriad of benefits, both short term and residually to the students, the director, the parents, the administrators and the community.

ORGANIZATIONAL CONCEPTS

When is the best time to have a winter camp?

- Determine your performance goals for the remainder of the school year. (Short term)
- Schedule camp a minimum of 4-6 weeks ahead of your major event if notes and rhythms are 'under their fingers'. The clinician will actually work on music, not just fundamentals. (Recommended).
- Schedule camp 6-8 weeks ahead if you plan on the clinicians working much more on notes/rhythms.

Camp staff

- Minimum:
 - Guest conductor(s)
 - 1 Brass clinician
 - 1 Woodwind clinician
 - 1 Percussion clinician
- As needed:
 - Guest conductor(s)
 - Clinicians for the less experienced sections of the band. Hire people for 'needy' sections in addition to the minimum listed above.
- Maximum:
 - Guest conductor(s)
 - Clinicians for every instrument group that you have in your band (flute, oboe etc.).

How will you fund camp?

- Band fees/dues etc.
- Collect money from each student
- Donations
- Grants
- Sponsorships

How much will you pay the staff?

- Conductors
- Master Class Instructors

How many events are you going to have during camp?

- Full rehearsal(s)
- Master classes
- Sectionals
- Recital (students and/or clinicians)
- Meals: BYOM (bring your own meal), school served, catered, 'potluck'
- Parent session with guest conductor and/or clinicians
- Final Concert

Logistics

- Do you have enough chairs and stands? Where will you borrow them if you don't?
- Do you have enough music for every student to have their own copy?
- Do you have enough percussion equipment to outfit multiple full ensembles rehearsing simultaneously?

Where?

- Does your school have the number of rooms available for the number of staff you want for master classes/section rehearsals and multiple ensembles rehearsing simultaneously?
- Are those rooms far enough apart to avoid sound bleed-over from room to room?
- Are the rooms large enough to accommodate the groups you want to put in them?
- Do you have ACCESS to those rooms for the times you need them?
- Have you completed all the required paperwork for the school system?

Who?

Guest Conductors

- University/College Band Directors
- Instrumental Music Supervisors
- High School Band Directors
- Middle/Junior High School Band Directors
- Church Orchestra/Choir Directors
- Retired or former musicians in the above areas
- Friend with a music background?

Clinicians

- University/College Applied Faculty
- Private Instructors
- High School/Middle School Band Directors
- Local Musicians (Church, Retired, Out of the 'Business')
- Friends with a music background on the instruments (Master Classes)

ORGANIZATIONAL TIMELINE

- Securing administrative and parental support
 - Beginning of the school year at the latest
- Securing financial support (parent/booster association, individual student payment, donations/sponsorship)
 - Beginning of school year at the latest
- Securing facilities
 - Beginning of school year or at least 6 months out

- Securing guest conductor(s)
 - Six months out at the latest
- Securing clinicians (master class teachers)
 - Three months out at the latest
- Securing food (BYOM, school, catered, potluck, etc.)
 - Three months out at the latest
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COMMITTEES

- Operations
- Directors and Clinicians
- Travel arrangements/transportation
- Hospitality (Meals and snacks for staff and students)
- Housing
- Food

OPERATIONAL SPECIFICS

How do I decide what activities to have?

- Instructional Activities
 - Full Rehearsals
 - Master Classes
 - Section Rehearsals
 - Parent Session
 - Final Concert
 - Recital (Staff and/or Student)
- Nourishment Activities ☺
 - School meals
 - Catered meals
 - Potluck meals
 - BYOM

Why are meals so important, besides the obvious...? Think about YOUR meals at Midwest!! Do you talk 'shop'? Make any new friends?

SHORT TERM BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENTS

- Full Rehearsals
 - Individual students become more proficient on assigned music (as many advanced concepts as possible within timeframe)
 - Ensemble becomes more proficient on assigned music (as many advanced concepts as possible within timeframe)
 - Ensemble becomes more proficient in fundamental and advanced concepts of playing WELL in an ensemble setting
 - Students have an opportunity to work with different conductor. Concepts are reinforced in different words and rehearsal techniques. This different viewpoint can be quite eye opening and refreshing.
 - Camp may be the first experience that the students have had with a college/university teacher. This can give the students a glimpse of what a higher education environment is about. It can help the student determine where to attend college/university.

- Master Classes and Sectionals
 - Students learn or reinforce knowledge and proficiency in fundamentals of playing the instrument, both individually and in ensemble performance
 - Tone production
 - Intonation
 - Technical facility (Articulation, Velocity, Rhythm)
 - Musicality
 - Students learn or reinforce knowledge and proficiency in the more advanced aspects of individual and ensemble performance
- Final Concert
 - Students gain valuable experience performing even though it may not be ‘polished’.
 - Students continue building musical concepts with a different conductor.
 - Students have an opportunity to show their parents and peers what they have accomplished during camp.
- Recital
 - Students gain invaluable experience rehearsing and performing in a chamber ensemble setting
 - Students gain invaluable experience watching and listening to adult musicians perform in a chamber ensemble setting.
 - Students are exposed to the proper etiquette for ‘formal’ concerts. It’s not a rock concert!!
- General Benefits
 - Students ‘renew’ old acquaintances (in organizations with more than one performing ensemble) that they haven’t had much contact with at school since the fall activities
 - Students also make new acquaintances with people that they didn’t know during the fall activities.
 - Students renew an ‘Esprit de Corps’ that may have faded since the fall activities.

SHORT TERM BENEFITS FOR THE ADULTS

- Parents have the opportunity to hear their children rehearse and perform in a different setting besides a ‘formal’ concert or festival/competition. This is also true with different people teaching and conducting. (More bang for their buck!)
- Parents have the opportunity to hear adult (Master Class Instructors) and their children perform in a chamber ensemble setting. For many, this will be their first exposure to this type of music. (Faculty/Student Recital)
- Parents have the opportunity to ‘renew’ old acquaintances that they haven’t had much contact with since the fall activities.
- Parents also make new acquaintances with people that they didn’t know during the fall activities.
- Parents have the opportunity to meet with the guest conductors and/or clinicians and discuss their children’s progress and future in music and education in general. (*Parent Session*)
- Parents get to sample each others’ favorite and best recipes! (*Pot Luck dinner*)
- School and district administrators have the opportunity to watch the students rehearse and perform in a nontraditional school day setting with someone besides their usual teacher(s).
- The community has another opportunity to hear their high school band perform besides at football games and see the work that these young people do in school.
- The community has an opportunity to watch the students perform in a nontraditional concert or festival setting with someone besides their usual teacher(s). *They see that there are other band activities besides providing entertainment at athletic events.*

SHORT TERM BENEFITS FOR THE DIRECTOR(S)

- Director has an opportunity to observe someone else rehearse their ensemble. New rehearsal techniques can be learned. These techniques may be adopted or rejected at the director's discretion. This knowledge may lead to drastically different concepts of rehearsal and performance for the director. Video all full rehearsals. Take copious notes and mark scores when needed.
- Director has the opportunity to HEAR their ensemble without actually rehearsing it. This perspective is something many directors never get. It is amazing what a director can hear without actually conducting the ensemble. It is very different and reveals ALL!
- Director has the opportunity to SEE their ensemble without actually rehearsing it. This also is a perspective that many directors never get. The director can see poor posture, poor embouchures, poor hand position etc., that may not be noticed in rehearsal while conducting.
- Director will hear different interpretations of the music and give them a choice of how they want the music to be performed after the guest conductor leaves.
- The director has an opportunity to interact with the students outside the traditional school day. This is a very important part of being able to communicate with the band in the rehearsal and performance setting. When the director knows the individuals in the band better, the wall that sometimes divides the director and player can disappear.

RESIDUAL BENEFITS FOR THE STUDENTS

- Students may gain a love (or more intense love) for the art form we call music. This intense focus is often the first time they have thought about what this form of communication is all about.
- Students learn musical skills that they can use the rest of their lives. The exposure to large group, chamber ensemble and possibly solo music rehearsals and performance is most important to their musical growth. This is a valuable aspect of camp, regardless of whether the student continues in music or not. It is something they use for their entire lives. It's never too late to pick up your instrument again.
- Camp can actually help a student determine what career they want to pursue. Students who are dedicated musicians will flourish while those who had thoughts of being musicians but are not totally dedicated will turn in another direction. This can save a great deal of time and money for the student and their parents.
- Students learn focus and concentration skills that they can use the rest of their lives. Rehearsals that last longer than a regular class period, plus multiple activities back-to-back strengthen the student's focus plus their mental and physical endurance during camp.
- Students will remember their experiences (positive or negative) for many years to come. These memories will be a valuable resource for them.
- Students who have college/university conductors or clinicians sometimes attend the school where the instructor teaches. They can become lifetime friends, even colleagues.
- Students learn to resolve social issues which can help them throughout their lives. Anytime someone is with the same people over a period of hours there can be conflicts. The students are put into a situation where conflict resolution skills must be used to continue work during camp.
- The tradition of having a concert camp on a regular basis (annually is preferred) becomes a building block for the band program. It is anticipated and prepared for in ways that daily rehearsals are not.

RESIDUAL BENEFITS FOR THE ADULTS

- Parents rekindle an 'Esprit de Corps' that was formed in the fall. This camaraderie is the backbone of these support organizations and offers those parents who were not active part of the activity a second chance to join in the fun!
- Parents redevelop a bond they had with other band students during the fall.
- Parents see the long term investments that they have made are paying off, not only musically but educationally and in the child's maturity and self-discipline.
- Parents become more invested in their children's school activities, including band.
- Parents can use the knowledge they learned from the *Parent Session* to help their younger children, a relative's children or a friend's children.
- School and district administrators have a better knowledge of what occurs in fine arts classes. They remember not only the intellectual efforts of the students but also the creative elements of making music. This can definitely help a situation where the administrator is faced with budget cuts. It could help them NOT react as most administrators do: make those cuts in the fine arts programs.
- The tradition of having a concert camp on a regular basis (annually) is a very positive aspect of the entire band program and builds an emphasis on concert band, not marching band or bands that play at football games. The parents will better understand the importance of learning to play the instrument first!

RESIDUAL BENEFITS FOR THE DIRECTOR(S)

- The director has more tools in the tool box to use in many different rehearsal situations. Directors find they subconsciously use some of the techniques and terminology observed in the guest conductor and the clinicians. Other ideas are directly addressed and added to the director's repertoire of rehearsal techniques over time.
- The director(s) develops a professional relationship with the guest conductor(s) and the clinicians to share ideas and talk 'shop'. The guest conductor and clinicians become a ready reference source for the director.
- The winter band camp tradition becomes an important part of the band culture. This cultivates a pride in the individual player and the ensemble. This makes a positive impact on the band program, which certainly benefits the director.
- The director is able to interact with the parents, administrators and community members in a nontraditional school setting. This offers everyone involved an opportunity to exchange information and get to know each other in a very positive way. Long term issues can be resolved and lines of communication can be established which could help alleviate future issues.

HELPFUL HINTS

- Hire early/Pay on time!
- Provide snacks for kids after rehearsals that are not followed by a meal.
- Make food and drink available to all conductors and clinicians at all times. FEED THEM WELL!!!
- Don't be afraid to experiment with the format. What works for others may not work for you. Always work towards the short term and residual benefits.
- Try to have a piano accompanist available for the recital. It needs to be someone who 'reads' well and has accompanied before. The more experience the better!! Payment options include how many performances they accompany, by the hour or simply a flat rate.
- DON'T COPY ANY CLINICIAN VERBATIM! USE WHAT WORKS FOR YOUR SITUATION, BUT DON'T FORGET THE ORIGINAL INTENT OF THE CLINIC.

CONCLUSIONS

The concert band camp is a win-win situation for all involved if the philosophical, organizational and operational aspects are properly conceived and executed. The instructional and social *PROCESSES* required of the students during camp develop work habits that will help them become successful contributors to society. The self-discipline, direction and self-motivation that is learned during this activity is invaluable to the student. The object of this clinic is to give band directors the tools to develop a band program that teaches more than just notes and rhythm. It helps teach students the beauty of our art and how to apply it to their daily lives. Concert Band Camp helps give the director(s), the students, their parents, school and government administrators what they need to improve their existing band program and lay a solid groundwork for growth in the future.

Thank you for your attendance!!

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