

# **WANTED: PERFECT PIECE FOR MY ORCHESTRA!**

## **Strategies for Selecting the Perfect Piece for Your Orchestra**

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## *Strategies for Selecting the Perfect Piece for Your Orchestra*

**The Midwest Clinic**  
**December 14, 2021**

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*“I think you will all agree with me when I say that selecting the right music for an orchestra is one of the most important responsibilities of the orchestra director. Selecting the right music - at the right time - involves the likes and dislikes of the teacher, the students, and the community.”*

-Merle J. Isaac

### **Session Objectives**

- How to Thoughtfully Choose Repertoire
- How to Avoid Common Repertoire Selection Issues
- How to Pedagogically Plan the Rehearsal Sequence
- How to Use Repertoire to Connect with Students
- How to Analyze a Score for Bowing Styles
- Learn from Common Mistakes

### **Diversifying Repertoire Selections**

- How well do school orchestras and the string teaching profession reflect demographics?
- Students must “see themselves” in orchestra in order to feel welcomed
- Strategies and Resources
  - Sample Composers of String Literature for Younger Groups
  - Sample Composers of String (& Full) Literature for Advanced Groups
  - Sample Publishers of String (& Full) Literature
  - Composer Diversity Database
  - *Teaching Music through Performance in Orchestra* – submitting future Volume 5 suggestions
    - Bottom of Volume 4 order page (*access via the provided QR code*)
- You AND your chosen repertoire can help students connect



### **Analyzing the Repertoire and Knowing Your Ensemble**

- Items to Consider
  - Ensemble Considerations
    - Teach the students you *ACTUALLY* have...not the students you *WANT*
    - Consider the individual / ensemble strengths & weaknesses
    - Have realistic expectations
    - Past behavior...
  - Sight-Reading Considerations
    - If you stop more than 3x – reconsider
    - Watch the “back” stands

- Music Considerations
  - Know the pitfalls for Classical era works, slow music, and solo/soli sections
  - Correct style and articulations often dramatically improve intonation
  - Intonation is the "IT"
  - Phrasing and expression . . . not optional
- Scheduling Considerations
  - Assemblies, winter weather, prom, holidays, state testing, students' lives, your life, and days that end in "y"
  - Know where you are in the school year
  - Short- and long-term objectives
- Analyze the Repertoire
  - Resources (e.g. TMPO, YouTube, NOF)
  - The Allen Model for Beginning String Instruction
    - Mastering independently and in varying combinations
      - Left-hand technique, right-hand technique, and music reading
  - What pedagogical skills are required?
  - What do my students already know? / What don't my students know?

### **Sequencing Bow Strokes**

- Applying the Allen Model to choosing a piece with appropriate bow strokes
- A sequence of bow strokes with representative pieces
  - Martele
  - Detache
    - *Simple Square Dance* - Dorothy Straub (Vol. 1, Grade 1)
  - Expanding the bow
    - *The Russian Music Box* – Soon Hee Newbold (Vol. 4, Grade 1)
  - Circles
    - *Apollo Suite* (Scherzo) - Merle J. Isaac (Vol. 1, Grade 1)
  - Slurs
    - *Cripple Creek* - Edmund Siennicki (Vol. 1, Grade 1)
    - *Apollo Suite* (Waltz) - Merle J. Isaac (Vol. 1, Grade 1)
  - String crossings
    - *Badinerie from Orchestra Suite No. 2, BWV 1067* – Bach / arr. Woolstenhulme (Vol. 4, Grade 2)
  - Hooked bowings
    - *Journey* – Karel Butz (Vol. 4, Grade 2)
  - Spiccato
    - *Can Can* - Offenbach / arr. Meyer (Vol. 1, Grade 2)

### **Curriculum, Sequencing, and Pacing**

- Curricular Guides
  - National ASTA Curriculum
  - State standards
  - Local curricular guides
    - Technical skills
    - Musical and expressive skills
- Planning
  - Calendar – day, week, month, quarter, semester, year, & years
  - Guest visits – bringing in others to provide additional learning opportunities
  - Units & special activities – aligning with repertoire
- Varying preparedness – rank each section of the music
  - (sight-reading = 1 / concert ready = 10)

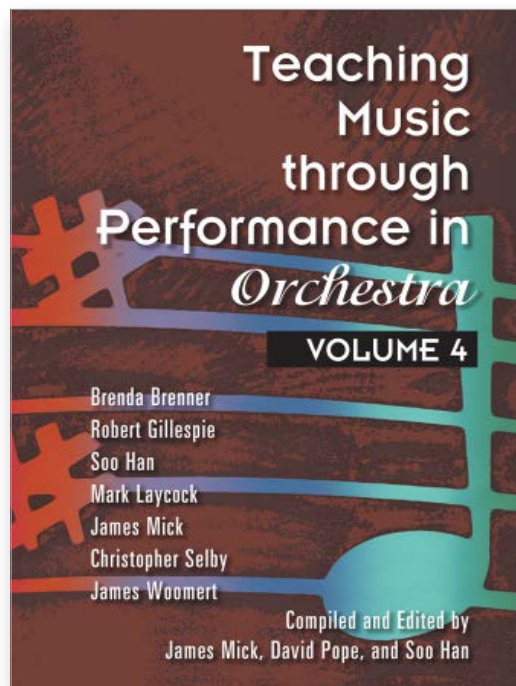
# TEACHING MUSIC THROUGH PERFORMANCE IN ORCHESTRA, VOL. 4

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AND SOO HAN

This much-anticipated fourth volume in the indispensable *Teaching Music through Performance in Orchestra* series arrives 13 years after the publication of the previous volume, with a new team of authors and editors, each at the top of the string education profession. But while the team is new, the book remains an essential resource for today's string teachers and conductors at all levels.

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