

# Building from the Ground Up:

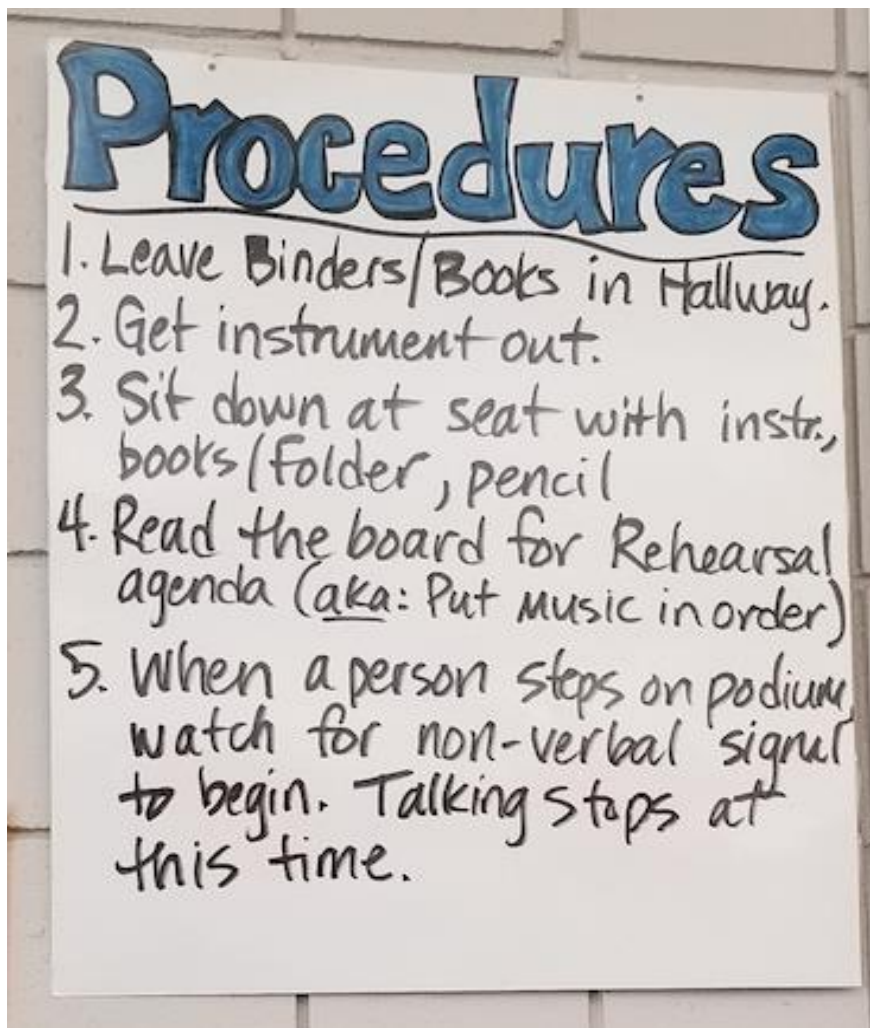
*A Successful Blueprint for Middle School Band*

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Waukee Middle School, Waukee IA

Midwest Band & Orchestra Clinic  
December 17, 2021  
8:30 am

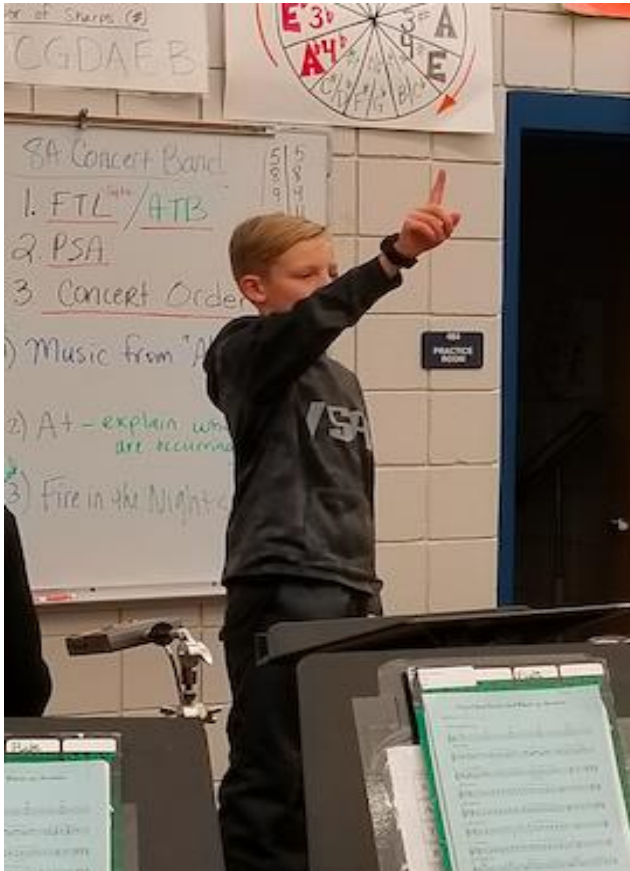
## Day One - Practicing Our Routine Before the First Note Sounds

- How to enter the band room
- Where to store books/binders/instruments/cases
- All cases marked with purple duct tape
- Where to unpack instruments/Percussion equipment (*Designated areas – parking spots - labeled for specific instruments outside of storage area*)
- How to find assigned seats
  - Color-coded name cards or sheet music labeled with student names on chairs

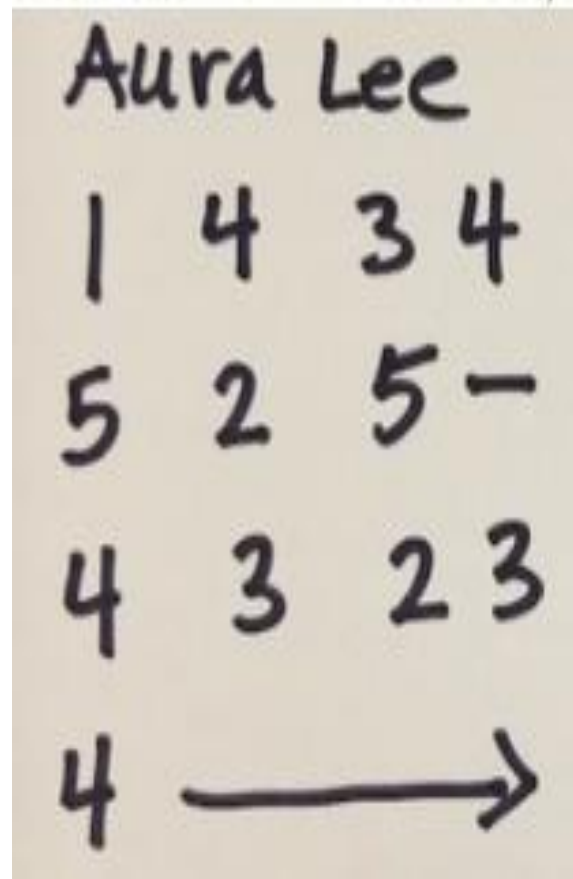


## Rehearsal structure

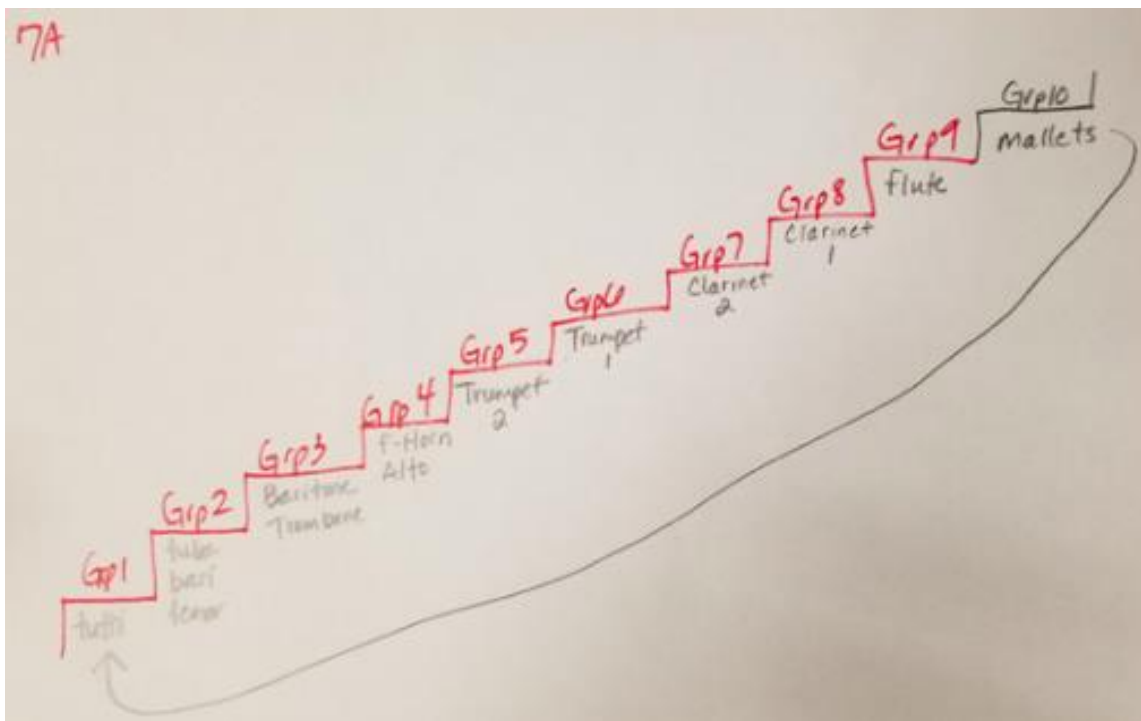
- **FTL (Follow the Leader)**
  - Student leader starts class by indicating a Bb concert pitch – (There is no playing before this time during the rehearsal)
  - Student leader guides band through a song, showing only scale degree numbers



(picture used with permission)



- **ATB (Around the Band)**, page 2 – *Fundamentals of Superior Performance*, by Jeff King and Richard Williams
  - Learning the art of breathing together to play together
  - Training young ears to balance & blend while playing unison pitches within sections and full ensemble
    - Options - incorporate long tones, rhythms, melodic passages, various time signatures
    - Level of difficulty can be differentiated to meet the needs of beginning ensembles through mastery level ensembles
  - Utilizing the “OH” vowel creating unison ensemble sound
  - Instilling steady pulse, 72 bpm
  - ATB groupings determined by instrumentation



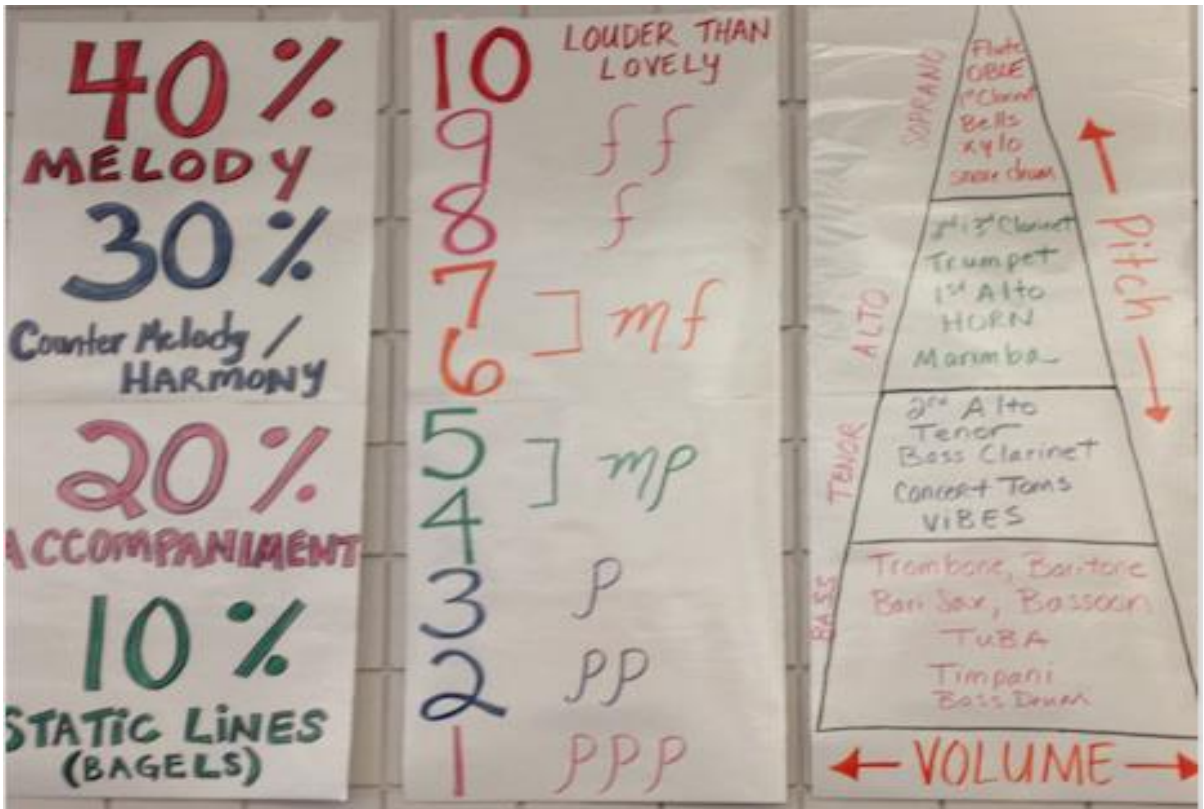
(ATB adapted)

- **Lex's** – Lung Exercises (Breathing Techniques)
  - Drop Jaw
  - Breathe in, sounding like Darth Vader
  - Out with a “TOH”
  - Pinwheels or Sizzles, long tones
  - With or without metronome
  - 4 counts in, 4 counts out X 3; 4 counts in, 8 counts out X 3
- **Function Chorale, #2 - Basic Change**, by Stephen Melillo (used with permission)
  - Pyramid of Sound – Balance and Blend
  - Dynamic Level Chart (dynamics are assigned a numeric value)
  - Changing tempos and style through conducting techniques
  - Multiple key centers utilized

# 2 "Basic Change" by Stephen Melillo

RHYTHM	-	-	J	J	-	•	-	-	J	J	-
<b>S</b>	1 <sup>(8)</sup>	1 <sup>(8)</sup>	1 <sup>(8)</sup>	7	1 <sup>(8)</sup>		5	6	6	5	5
<b>A</b>	5	6	5	5	5		3	4	4	4	3
<b>T</b>	3	4	3	2	3		1	1	1	7	1
<b>B</b>	1	4	5	5				J	J	5	
					1	1		4	3	2	1
Chords in B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup> F <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>	E <sup>b</sup> F <sup>b</sup>	B <sup>b</sup>		
Analysis	I	IV	II <sup>o</sup> V	I	I	IV	II <sup>o</sup> V <sup>o</sup>	I			

Function Chorale... by © Stephen Melillo 1985... Page 14



- **Function Chorale Concept Integrated into Repertoire**

- Implementing Function Chorale schematics into learning harmony of concert band literature. Example: m. 110 – 113, Hypnotic Fireflies, by Brian Balmages (*used with permission*).

	m.110	m.111	m.112	m.113
Flute	A <sup>(tr)</sup>	A	A	A
B.Cl.	F	A	D	F#
Horn	F	E	D	C#
Bone1	C	C	A	A
Bone2	A	A	F	F#
Baritone	C	E	A	C#
Tuba	F	A	D	F#
Vib/chimes	A	A	A	A

	m.110	m.111	m.112	m.113
S	3	3	3	3
A	5	7	1	#5
T	3	5	3	3
B	1	3	6	#1

- **Band Dominoes** – plugging in each student's sound with their neighbors' sound around the entire ensemble



Add the dynamic contrast utilizing standard dynamic abbreviations and numeric values.

Tah Te- ah-ah Te- ah-ah Te- ah Tah tah Tah Tah Toh-TOH-TOH-TOH

$mp$  (4)       $mf$  (6)       $mp$  (4)       $mf$  (7)

1+ 2+ 3+ 4+    1 + 2 + 3 + 4 +    1+ 2+ 3+4 +    1+2+ 3+4+    1+ 2 + 3+ 4+

An ROTD can also be used in the ATB format as a challenge for accuracy.

## Now...Let's Put It All In Action! (with live demonstration group)

The following demonstration will put into practice how the aforementioned rehearsal techniques are incorporated into a regular rehearsal situation. Each technique can be differentiated to the skill level of any ensemble and can easily be embedded into the music that is being rehearsed, which lends itself to synthesizing the fundamental concepts of performing within an instrumental music ensemble.

### 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Rehearsal Example

1. FTL / PSA\*
2. ATB – on Bb Concert
3. Lex's / Pinwheels (4 in 4 out)
4. Function Chorale
5. Band Dominoes
6. ROTD
7. Concert Pieces

## 7<sup>th</sup> Grade Band Rehearsal Example

1. FTL / PSA\*
2. ATB (72 bpm) *Tempo may vary according to where we are in the school year or what pieces are being rehearsed that day. Page numbers reference Foundations for Superior Performance Books.*
  - a. p.2 – ATB on Bb Concert
  - b. Lex's / Pinwheels (4 in 4 out)
  - a. p.2 – ATB with Pyramid Chords (1-3-5-1)
  - b. p.6 – “Band Yoga”
3. Function Chorale, #2 – Basic Change - *Can be used with all keys*
  - a. Repeat for Phrase Clarity (4 mm vs. 8 mm)
  - b. Build first block for balance & blend (*reference Pyramid of Sound*)
  - c. Repeat for Dynamic Contrast (level 3 to 8 back to 3)
  - d. Repeat for varying styles via conducting techniques
4. Band Dominoes
  - a. Plugging each student's sound into their neighbor's sound - *by “sneaking in” or pretending they have “band ninja” capabilities.*
5. Student Created Warm-ups
  - a. Based from established warm-up routine
  - b. Formulated from musical context
6. ROTD
  - a. Count & Clap (*repeat for rhythmic accuracy*).
  - b. Repeat on Bb Concert Note.
  - c. Play Rhythm with designated scale degrees in the key of Bb Concert.
  - d. Say the articulations, then play the articulations using designated scale degrees.
  - e. Add dynamic contrast (*standard dynamic abbreviations and numeric values*).
7. Concert Music Order - *Listed next on board & rehearsal continues on from this point*
  - a. Implementing Function Chorale schematics into learning harmony of concert band literature. Example:
  - b. m. 110 – 112, Hypnotic Fireflies, by Brian Balmages (*used with permission*)

# Many Thanks.....



## Resources:

Balmages, Brian. *Hypnotic Fireflies*. Ft. Lauderdale: FJH, 2012.

Budiansky, Mollie. *The Codebreakers*. Oskaloosa, IA: Birch Island Music Press, 2019.

Conaway, Matt. *Dreams of Victory*. Oskaloosa, IA: Birch Island Music Press, 2011.

Crandell, Mary, and Deb Dunn. *Building from the Ground Up: A Successful Blueprint for Band Programs*. Oskaloosa, IA: C.L. Barnhouse Company, 2021.

McBeth, Francis. *Effective Performance of Band Music*. San Antonio: SMC, 1972.

Melillo, Stephen. *Function Chorales*. Smithfield: Stormworks, 1980.

Williams, Richard, and Jeff King. *Foundations for Superior Performance: Warm-Ups & Technique for Band*. San Diego: Neil A. Kjos, 1997.

## NOTES: