

# **The Midwest Clinic**

**An International Band and Orchestra Conference**

Teaching Musicianship Through Compositions for the  
Beginning Band (that is NOT performing at  
Midwest in the near future!)

**Drew Shanefield, Clinician**

The Gold Room at the Congress Plaza  
Friday, December 19, 2008  
1:00-2:00 p.m.

Co-Sponsored by:

**Northeastern Music Publications, Inc.**

<http://www.nemusicpub.com/>

*conference location*

booths 5-7 in the Continental Ballroom

**Neil A. Kjos Music Company**

<http://www.kjos.com>

*conference location*

booths 408-420 Southeast Exhibit Hall

**Clinic Synopsis:** Allow your beginning band repertoire to be the vehicle for time efficient and musically effective teaching methods for your young ensemble. Teach students the elements of musicianship through skillful repertoire selection. Faced with reduced instruction time, budget considerations and students who are spread ever-so-thinly, what one chooses to put on the music stand can make or break your program.

**Target Audience:** Beginning instrumental music teachers, elementary and beginning band directors, educators of young instrumentalists challenged by limited lesson time, limited facilities, mixed large group beginning instruction.

**A Note From the Clinician:** This session is borne out of real life experience. Like many, I teach all band instruments. As a beginning instrumental teacher and conductor of beginning bands with limited time, less than stellar facilities, mixed instrumentation lessons for beginners, I feel the crunch for time, the need to advocate and justify the program just to keep it afloat. I need to be effective, engaging and also teach the art form that I love. This is, in some ways, how I began to compose my own beginning level repertoire. I needed music that put the right parts in the right players' hands immediately. Still do. What I have found is that by allowing the music to speak for itself through the students, success has become contagious. Much, if not all, of the music I compose first goes into the hands of my beginners. Thus, the young instrumentalists are stewards of the program itself.

Please feel to drop a line my way as I suspect time will be short this week. Thank you,  
Drew Shanefield  
drew@drewshanefield.com

**Outline:**

A. A Realistic Look

1. The challenge of limited and reduced lesson time, a economic reflection
2. The pull-out lesson challenge
3. Mixed group instruction
4. Band is one of many things our students are involved in

B. The Decisions We Face

1. Depth and breadth of instruction
2. The need to keep your program afloat
3. The repertoire we choose and its impact on the program

C. Skills considerations for young band; finding compositions that support your instruction.

1. Flute – characteristic tone, manual dexterity, breath support and range development concurrent with your instruction
2. Oboe - characteristic tone, mastery of fingerings, range challenges in the band setting
3. Clarinets - characteristic tone, pinky and side key instruction, getting over the break, low range. Appropriate repertoire to match emerging skills

4. Alto saxophone - characteristic tone, developing a classical mindset
5. When and how do you make room and time for beginning bass clarinet, tenor saxophone, baritone saxophone, bassoon? Are you starting elementary school students or middle school students?
6. Trumpet - characteristic tone, developing range, flexibility, articulation method
7. French Horn - characteristic tone, pitch accuracy, range and key signature challenges relative to the rest of the band. Are the demands concurrent with your instruction?
8. Trombones – characteristic tone, intonation and slide position accuracy, articulation mastery
9. Baritone - characteristic tone, understanding their role in the ensemble
10. Tuba - characteristic tone, range consideration, articulation mastery, breath support challenges
11. Percussion – “drummer” mentality, emerging skills on drums and keyboard percussion that are reflected in repertoire

#### D. The Ensemble/Instrumentation Challenge

1. Developing mature and full clarinet and trombone choirs
2. Appropriate students on appropriate instruments
3. Ratio of flutes, oboes and clarinets
4. Saxophone popularity
5. Did you forget about bassoon, bass clarinet, baritone saxophone? What’s your plan?
6. Trumpet population control
7. Best fit French horn players and keeping them
8. The presence of the low brass choirs in beginning band
9. Percussion consideration – population control, quantity and quality

#### E. Consider how repertoire can promote technical development and musicianship

1. Long tones in appropriate tonalities and keys
2. Ascending and descending intervallic studies
3. Articulation in a variety of note shapes
4. Manual dexterity and range of demands asked of musicians
5. Dynamics and basic expression
6. Ensemble skills development

Musical Example – **“Chorale-Duet”** No. 144 from Standard of Excellence Book 1, published by the Neil A. Kjos Music Company

#### F. Have you considered

1. Challenging and rewarding students at all skill levels
2. The “yesss” factor of the students?
3. How repertoire affects retention?
4. All the stakeholders that will experience your repertoire?
5. Your professional satisfaction in being immersed in the repertoire you have selected?

## **Are All Grade One's (and others...) Created Equal?**

A recent 2008-2009 print music publication listed the following quantity of titles in their fall catalog. These numbers do not include the titles were only listed in the on-line catalog. These titles include new releases, editor's picks, recent releases of the past few years and compositions that are included annually.

60 titles for "Beginning Band"  
140 titles listed as "Very Easy"  
247 titles listed as "Easy"  
255 titles listed as "Medium-Easy"

This listing does not include the many, many titles that did not carry over from last year's catalog and the new publications that simply didn't make the publication listing. Wow. Additionally, you may have been a recipient of the on-line/print/audio catalogs of individual publishing companies. That's a lot of repertoire.

And the write-ups, they all sound so impressive. "A must have!"  
How to start...A daunting task.

What do I really need to know about this piece?

- 1 – Flute range
- 2 – Oboe doubled or independent, watch out for range extremes
- 3 – Clarinet part division; going above the break; hovering around the break. Third line B flats or B naturals?! Concert B flat is not always the most manageable key?
- 4 – Alto sax appropriately scored with the characteristic saxophone sound in mind? Often doubled with horn or part independence?
- 5 – French Horn range, too high? Does the horn have a characteristic role to play? Consider the following concert keys: E flat major, F major, G minor
- 6 – Trumpet part division; does it suit my educational goals? Melody only?
- 7 – Low brass/Low winds appropriately scored in range and with the characteristic quality of the instruments considered? Mass doubling and/or part independence?
- 8 – Percussion skills requirements are met? Tonal and non-pitched opportunities for all students?

## **Are All Beginning Instrumentalists Created Equal?**

Ages and grades range for beginning instrumental instruction in schools. Some start as early as third grade (ages 8-9). There are many that start in 6<sup>th</sup> grade (ages 11-12). Consider the developmental, social, and physical differences between these two sets of beginners! Some students receive one lesson per week and some receive daily instruction. Once again, quite a difference.

*Therefore, a suitable Grade One for third and fourth graders may be vastly different than a suitable Grade One for sixth and seventh graders.  
Alas, our ability to choose repertoire wisely can have deep meaning.*

## **Recruiting and Balanced Instrumentation**

I really work hard to get the right instruments to the right kids. This comes from gauging their interest, interviewing/play testing instruments, calling upon feedback from classroom and general music colleagues. We even go so far as to administer musical aptitude and timbre preference tests to help in the selection. This is an important step.

Generally speaking, flute population continues to be very high. I need to watch the proportion of flutes to clarinets. Can I get twice as many clarinets as flutes? Sure hope so, at least for starters. If I can get one or two skilled oboes out of 100, that's great!

Sax popularity. Jazz is huge is out school. I direct the HS jazz ensemble and elementary school parents ask me how their 8 year old can get into the jazz band when they get in the MS and HS! Kids love the sax. It is so cool to them. I tell the parents the best way for their kid to get into the jazz band...start trombone and don't quit!

Low reeds, bass reeds. What a challenge. Bassoons and bass clarinets are tricky to start beginners on. Wait a bit if necessary, especially if you start elementary grade kids. Let them develop some skills, manual dexterity on soprano clarinet, and allow them to grow a bit. (Grade one music for bassoon can be tricky, as B flat major is not the simplest key.) Do you have excellent instruments for these excellent young musicians? Are you a competent bassoonist, oboist? Do you know all of their fingerings?

Trumpet population – such a popular instrument and for good reason. It is ok to keep these numbers high, as long as you have a plan for them. I.e., do you have the proper music to fit their skill levels, especially as skills develop and separate beginners from intermediates? Have you ever thought that perhaps a good musician with a struggling trumpet embouchure could be a successful candidate for baritone horn or tuba?

French horns – quality is job one! Getting the proper student on the horn is so important. How is their tonal aptitude? Do they sing well? Start your horns in a group with other horns; try to avoid a single horn with a mix of others. At first, keep them away from the starting trumpets, as trumpets' quick success can be a drag for new hornists. Play them in the concert keys of F major and E flat major. Let them be the feature of one of your pieces. Does your band method account for this challenge?

Low brass. Treasure them. Keep them engaged. Make sure they have music that is “cool” for them. Save the “endangered species” in your band. Are they playing on great instruments, or are they on “seasoned” instruments that look like they've been around for years – and have that smell! Don't think kids don't notice (as well as their parents).

Percussionist versus drummer. How will you keep this controlled? Have you considered starting your percussionists off with the pad/bell kit? Think of the music you are giving them. Is it engaging? Is it what they want to play? Try to meet their interests, not squash them. Most of the youngsters are playing video drum set on Rock Band!

*Indeed the right music can do much to teach, challenge, reward.*

## The “YESSSSS” Factor

I often refer to the “yesssss” factor when talking about beginning band. This phenomena occurs when a director calls to rehearse such-and-such a piece and the kids whisper “yesssss!” (often with a fist pump). Which are their “yesssss” pieces and make sure you have a few programmed for each concert. Are you selecting at least one composition that is intended to be fun for the kids? They are kids after all? While such-and-such may be fun for us, maybe not so much for your young ones, and this is about their learning. (N.B. – a “yesssss” composition is still one with substance and teachable concepts.)

Does every selection you choose have something compelling for each instrument, including percussion, French horn and low winds? Give them music that is worthy and fuel their esteem to be magnificent young musicians.

**Musical Example: “The Low Brass Brigade”- Northeastern Music Publications.**

**Grade 1.** A composition intended for beginning band. A chance to feature the low brass (and low winds) in a fun way. Don’t dismiss the composition as simply a novelty. There are many teaching opportunities to be found, most notable in rhythmic vocabulary.

**Musical Example: “Jingle Jangle”- Northeastern Music Publications. Grade 1.**

A holiday novelty rich in teaching opportunities. Great tool for teaching 3/4 and 4/4 meter within the same composition. Nice vehicle to hear the differences between Bb major and G minor. Plus, there are some fun holiday treatments that the kids will be excited about.

**Musical Example: “To The Fore”- Northeastern Music Publications. Grade 1 1/2.**

This piece is intended to show case your young French Horn section. Composed in the key of F major, the horns play in comfortable and noble register. A fine way to feature young instrumentalists in a “grown up setting”.

**Musical Example: “A Little Jazz”- Neil A. Kjos Music Company. Grade 2.**

This piece is great fun and a terrific way to introduce your concert band to swing-style jazz! Adding finger snaps and rhythmic whisperings of “jazz” as indicated will invigorate your performers and your audience. “Blue” notes and flatted sevenths offer younger students a new and exciting (yet accessible) harmonic language. The student will enjoy learning a walking bass line.

*You are the creator of their musical horizons.  
Select well and have fun with them.*

**About Drew:**

Drew Shanefield serves as both an instrumental music teacher for the School District of Haverford Township (PA) and as a faculty member in the Department of Music and Dance at Swarthmore College.

Drew maintains a busy schedule as a composer and arranger for ensembles across the United States, Europe and Japan. He is a frequent presenter of sessions at annual conferences across the country. Recent sessions and premieres include the Bands of America Summer Symposium, Pennsylvania Music Educators Association Conference, Kentucky Music Educators Association Conference, Texas BandMasters Association, Vivace Productions Summer Educators Conference, Drum Corps International sanctioned events, as well as clinic appearances with ensembles across the country. Recent commission projects include compositions for the University of Houston, Eastern Kentucky University, Swarthmore College, the SOGOKEIBI "Vivace" Women's Brass Band of Tokyo, Japan as well as numerous public school commissions. His compositions for band are published by Northeastern Music Publications Inc., the Neil A. Kjos Music Publishing Company, and Marching Show Concepts Inc.

Drew graduated from New York University in 1992. He received a Masters in Music Education degree from Queens College and a Masters in Music Performance from West Chester University. He is currently pursuing doctoral studies at Widener University.

He is a member of the American Society of Composers Authors and Publishers (ASCAP). Additionally, Drew is a performing artist/clinician for Yamaha band instruments and is also an adjudicator/clinician for Bands of America/Music for All.

Drew is the newly appointed brass arranger for the Cavaliers Drum and Bugle Corps of Rosemont, IL. Prior to this appointment, Drew served as Program Coordinator for the Bluecoats Drum and Bugle Corps, designer, arranger and/or brass caption head for the Cavaliers, Cadets, Crown and Crossmen Drum and Bugle Corps.

Drew and his family reside in Drexel Hill, PA.

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## Publications for Band by Drew Shanefield

### 2009 Releases

#### **THE MAROON BELLS MARCH**

Drew Shanefield & Tom Rudolph  
NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Easy

#### **VOX**

Drew Shanefield, perc. by Michael McIntosh  
MARCHING SHOW CONCEPTS/  
CENTER X PRODUCTIONS

I. Kaval Sviri

II. Svatba

III. Polegnala e Todora

IV. Erghan Diado

### 2008 Releases

**CHAIN REACTION** Editors' Choice  
NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Medium

#### **JINGLE JANGLE**

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Very Easy

#### **MIDNIGHT GAMER**

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Medium Easy

#### **TO THE FORE**

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Easy

#### **GAMES**

Drew Shanefield, percussion parts by Bret Kuhn  
MARCHING SHOW CONCEPTS/  
CENTER X PRODUCTIONS

I. Tag

II. Sudoku

III. Capture the Flag

### Past Releases

#### **LITTLE JAZZ, A**

NEIL A KJOS MUSIC CO

Easy

#### **JUST JOSHIN'** Editors' Choice

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Easy

#### **KNIGHTS OF THE ROUND TABLE**

Drew Shanefield & Tom Rudolph  
NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Very Easy

#### **LAND OF THE FREE!**

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Very Easy

#### **LOW BRASS BRIGADE, THE**

NORTHEASTERN MUSIC PUBL.

Very Easy

#### **MARINES' HYMN**

Arr. Drew Shanefield & Tom Rudolph  
NEIL A KJOS MUSIC CO

Very Easy

#### **YOU ROCK!**

Drew Shanefield & Tom Rudolph  
NEIL A KJOS MUSIC CO

Easy