

"From Carnegie Hall to the 50 yard line"

**Approaching Concert and
Marching Ensembles with
the same "vision"**

58th Annual

Midwest Clinic

Presenter

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Director, Spartan Marching Band
Associate Professor of Music
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2:30 PM

**Gold Room – Congress Plaza Hotel
Chicago, Illinois
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1. Creating Expectations for Your Ensembles Having High Standards

Expectations for ensembles are typically communicated at the beginning of the school year or at the beginning of a new semester or concert preparation. What about creating expectations at the beginning of each rehearsal, in every measure, on every beat? Are you secure with your expectations for your ensembles?

My Expectations for Any Ensemble:

- That our time together as an ensemble is "special."
- That the sounds we make are "beautiful."
- That rehearsal time is for "**ensemble development**," not for practicing parts.
- That individuals learn to prepare "**independently**" away from the rehearsal (homework).
- That we are a community and "team-oriented," in an atmosphere built upon respect and friendliness.
- That we are "goal oriented" in terms of musical achievement and performance.
- That we are committed to the highest music/visual/technical standards of our activity.
- That we prioritize becoming more "musically rich" away from the band.

"Your expectations will evolve, change, and flourish. This is healthy."

Suggestion for the future: create an assignment for your students asking them to write down their expectations for "our ensemble." You might be surprised!"

2. Rehearsal Atmosphere

What atmosphere exists as your students enter the rehearsal room or onto the practice field?

Band Room/Practice Field Set-up, environment:

- Carefully thought out concert band seating diagrams to ensure good listening, watching, consuming.
- A standardized "formation" to begin every outdoor marching rehearsal.
- A prescribed amount of time to enter the room, retrieve an instrument, warm-up, and get focused to rehearse.
- A prescribed amount of time to exit the room (if starting inside), get to the practice field, assemble rehearsal materials, warm-up, and get focused to rehearse.

3. The First Minutes of Teaching/Rehearsing

The first impression you create, your first words, your first agenda of any rehearsal, set a critically important tone for the success of that entire rehearsal!

The "Start of Concert Rehearsal" Routine

- The assignment of responsibilities
- **They** focus, **You** Greet, **We** Warm-up (sensitize), **They** Tune.

The "Start of Marching Rehearsal" Routine

- Ensemble is "whistled to" or "called" to report to a "position of focus" (attention, parade rest, etc), in a set formation (attendance block, warm-up arcs, marching block/fronts), to create focus and readiness.
- Start-up ritual (play the Fight Song, etc).

4. The Warm-up

I prefer the label of "Sensitizing Session" or "Technique Building Session". This is where we do most of our fundamental and pedagogical teaching away from the repertoire.

The "Concert Band" warm-up:

- Logical warm-up fundamentals, to include: long tones, scales, chorales, ear training, tone development, blend and balance training, flexibility (brass), tongue and finger technique, articulation and attack fundamentals, release quality and fundamental training, intonation training, rhythm building/learning, stick and mallet technique, percussion sound quality.
- Involve elements from the score/repertoire (rhythm, key centers, etc)
- Conductor sensitivity training.

The "Marching Band" warm-up:

- Same fundamentals as above, ***with some additional challenges:***
- Involve elements from the score/repertoire (rhythm, key centers, etc), ***in addition to challenges that occur as a result of the visual*** (awkward foot timing, step size, posture, horn moves, etc)

The Challenges:

- The weather (wind-chill factor).
- Acoustics. There are none.
- Brass/Woodwinds vs. Percussion Battery vs. Pit Percussion vs. Guard/Auxiliaries. These four sub sections need separate spaces and require specialized depth in teaching the correct fundamentals of each area. Specialized staff and instructors greatly enhance here.
- Concert setting "conductor sensitivity training" falls short on the field. Non-verbal teaching gets put on the "back burner". **HAZARD?** Avoid bringing this syndrome inside.

5. Executing the Musical Agenda of the Rehearsal. How do you rehearse?

The repertoire is the content area. The substantive teaching begins now. What tools should we bring to work?

How to Rehearse:

- Rehearsal items are determined by the challenges, issues, and substantive qualities found in the repertoire (concert or marching music) or drill design.
- Extract them similarly to that of a Doctor solving a medical problem:

Observe (to perceive, notice, see), **Diagnose** (to distinguish or identify),
Prescribe (to order or recommend a remedy or treatment).

- After having done that, approach the band specifically, "targeting" the issue:
- **Goal Set** (get them psyched to fix the target issue), **LISTEN** (to how they do what you asked them to do), **Create Feedback** (validate, congratulate, constructively criticize, TEACH).
- Please don't say too much! Targeted language speeds up the pace of the rehearsal. "They want to play, not listen to us."
- Isolation and Pacing. (Don't go back 32 counts in the drill if you only need to rehearse counts 31 and 32 of the move – go back to count 29, and isolate the 4 counts that are critical – **otherwise known as the SEAM**).

Starting and Stopping Sound:

- Concert Band – Start sound primarily non-verbally, with occasional verbal reinforcement (counting off). Stop sound non-verbally.
- Marching Band – You **MUST** be verbal, usually associated with a PA system. **Train the tapper, and train the ensemble to respond to the tapper!** Train the band to stop on the drum majors whistle, your whistle, (Madden's whistle!). Choose one or invent one, but train them to stop quickly!

The Rehearsal Toolbox? What Tools do you Bring to Work?

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Musicianship | 7. Eyes |
| 2. Your personality and necessary adjustments | 8. Tuner/Metronome |
| 3. Baton Technique (& baton please) | 9. Language efficiency (<i>including musical terms</i>) |
| 4. Preparation and personal study | 10. Gesture efficiency |
| 5. Interpretative Skills | 11. The isolator |
| 6. Ears | 12. Pace |

6. How to "listen" in the Concert Band vs. the Marching Band

Acoustics (or the lack of) create the most awkward set of problems and liabilities for students in the outdoor setting of the marching band.

Listening Skills in the Concert Band:

- Conductors encourage students to possess "beautiful" and "characteristic" tones.
- Conductors come to the podium with an "Internal Aural Image" of their ensemble before the sound begins to happen.
- Students participate in blending and balancing exercises.

- ***The Five Rules of Listening:***

1. Make a beautiful sound
2. Blend, match and balance with the players to your right and left
3. Blend, match and balance with your section
4. Blend, match and balance with your choir (brass/woodwind/percussion)
5. Blend, match and balance with the ensemble, the Band, the Wind Ensemble, etc

- Conductors reinforce these rules in a physical atmosphere that includes acoustics.

Listening Skills in the Marching Band:

- Conductors encourage students to possess "beautiful" and "characteristic" tones.
- Conductors come to the podium with an "Internal Aural Image" of their ensemble before the sound begins to happen.
- Students participate in blending and balancing exercises
- Listening rules change when acoustics don't exist and drill design stretches the "size of the stage."
- The "Rhythm Section Idea" replaces the "Conductor Sensitivity" way of life. Students listen to the drumline. Feet must stay "in time" and be "with the drumline." We teach the ensemble elements of "timing" directly through the proficiency and pulse provided by the drumline. Pit ensembles must "listen back". Drum Majors reflect "time" as reinforced by the drumline. In short, in order to have a good marching ensemble, you must have a solid drumline!
- The five rules of listening are replaced outdoors with the five rules of **ZONING**.

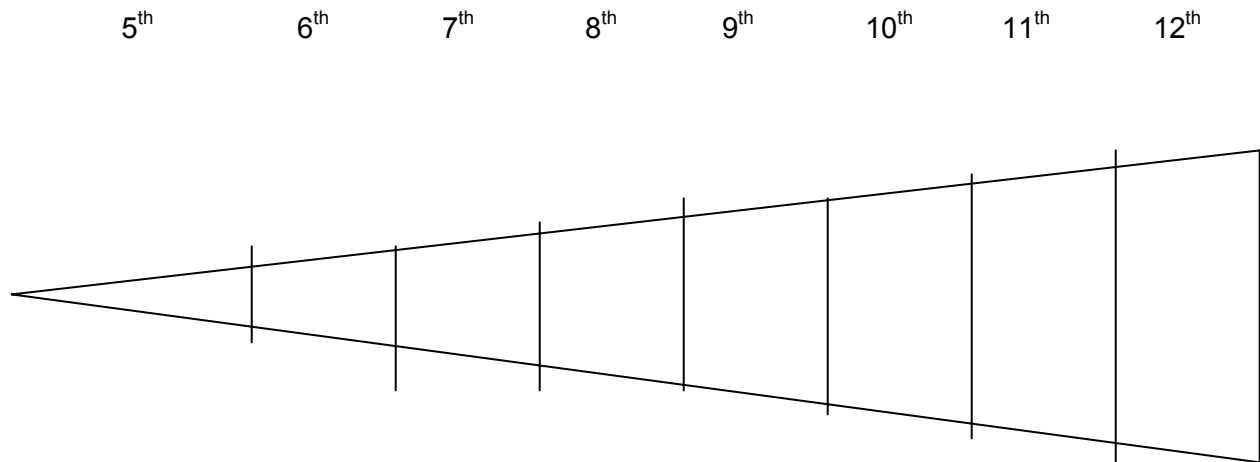
1. Make a beautiful sound.
2. Blend, match and balance with the players directly surrounding you (4 sides).
3. Blend, match and balance with players within "Ten Yards" of your charted position.
4. Blend, match and balance with the ZONE you are staged with.
5. Be able to hear the drumline pulse.

The title of this session was inspired by a visit that Dr. William D. Revelli made to Michigan State University in April of 1994. Dr. Revelli spoke to my undergraduate conducting class and other music education majors at MSU. It was a special and memorable day. One of the students asked of his days with the Michigan Marching Band, and what "ensemble development" concepts he taught with in the marching band environment. He replied with a definite expression of conviction on his face:

"I don't care if you're in Carnegie Hall or on the 50 yard line, a C is a C, and in tune is in tune!"

William D. Revelli (b. 2/12/1902 – d. 7/16/1994)

Crescendo of Balanced Instrumental Instruction



Biographical Information

JOHN T. MADDEN is Director of the Spartan Marching Band, Associate Director of Bands and Associate Professor of Music at Michigan State University in East Lansing, Michigan. He has held this position since the fall of 1989. He is the conductor of the MSU Symphony Band and Associate Conductor of the MSU Wind Symphony. As Director of Athletic Bands, Madden conducts the 300-member Spartan Marching Band and guides all aspects of the Spartan Brass. Madden also serves on the MSU Music Education faculty, teaching undergraduate conducting and marching band techniques.

Madden is a 1985 graduate of the Michigan State University School of Music, where he received his Bachelor of Music Education Degree. He received his Master of Music Education and Conducting degrees from the Wichita State University, where he also served as Graduate Assistant to the University Bands. Prior to coming to MSU, Madden held the post of Associate Director of Bands and Director of the Marching Band at Rutgers University in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Professor Madden is active throughout the United States as a guest conductor and clinician, and has conducted MSU ensembles at state, regional, and national conventions and conferences. Most recently, the MSU Symphony Band was selected to perform at the 2000 North Central Divisional Conference of the College Band Directors National Conference in Mt. Pleasant, Michigan. Madden is a member of the College Band Directors National Association and serves that organization as the State of Michigan Chair. He also holds memberships in the Music Educators National Conference, the Michigan School Band and Orchestra Association, the Big Ten Band Directors Association, and is the past National Vice-President for Professional Relations, and Past North Central District Governor of Kappa Kappa Psi, the national honorary band service fraternity. Madden is an honorary member of Phi Mu Alpha Sinfonia, Golden Key International Honor Society, and Tau Beta Sigma.