

MUSIC 512: Music in the Jr./Sr. High Schools

Dr. Payne

Full Year Curriculum

for use in

Top Wind Ensemble

High School Level

Year-long Goals

Students will improve technique on their individual instruments, including technical facility and tone production.

Students will grow as musicians, working to make reasonable musical decisions based on what they hear and what they expect. This could be in relation to quality of sound, pitch, style, tempo, rhythm, blend, balance, phrasing, dynamics, and/or articulations.

Students will grow in their appreciation of music as an art form and it's influence on others.

Students will broaden their cultural understandings through the study and performance of many different types of music.

Students will find engage creativity and critical thinking skills in order to connect with music and see it as a means of personal expression of emotions.

Students will have an increased sense of discipline to further the productivity of rehearsals.

Students will become a team, working together for the common goal of affective musical performances.

Students will increase their understanding of citizenship through their dedication to something larger than themselves.

Course Objectives

Students will demonstrate an understanding of musical terminology through performance, verbal explanation, and written understanding.

Students will demonstrate an understanding of musical elements and their influence on style by written and verbal explanation.

Students will demonstrate technical skills on their instrument, including competence in rhythm, pitch, tone production, and musical phrasing by individual and group playing tests as well as overall group performances.

Students will use ensemble skills to address issues of balance, intonation, and ensemble unity.

Students will evaluate performances for technical accuracy and aesthetic appeal by comparing it to exemplary models by journaling and completing evaluation forms.

National Standards to be Addressed

1. Singing alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
2. Performing on instruments, alone and with others, a varied repertoire of music
3. Improvising melodies, variations, and accompaniments.
4. Composing and arranging music within specified guidelines
5. Reading and notating music.
6. Listening to, analyzing, and describing music.
7. Evaluating music and music performances.
8. Understanding relationships between music, the other arts, and disciplines outside the arts.
9. Understanding music in relation to history and culture.

Concert Repertoire

Fall Concert:

Overture for Winds – Charles Carter
Prospect – Pierre La Plante
Court Festival – William P. Latham
Combination March – Scott Joplin, arr. Gunther Schuller

Winter Concert:

Declaration Overture – Claude T. Smith
Air for Band – Frank Erickson
Variations on a Korean Folk Song – John Barnes Chance
Fairest of the Fair – John Phillips Sousa, ed. Brion & Schissel

Spring Concert:

Exaltation – James Swearingon
Allerseelen – Richard Strauss, arr. Albert Oliver Davis
I Am – Andrew Boysen, Jr.
Amparito Roca – Jaime Teixidor, arr. Aubrey Winter

Festival:

If Thou Be Near – J.S. Bach, arr. R.L. Moehlmann
Arsenal – Jan van der Roost

Overall Rationale

When coming up with concerts and festival music for my ensemble, there were many factors to consider. I chose a high school top ensemble – looking at mostly grade 3 or 4 literature. Thinking about the average high school ensemble, I realized that the ensemble would still need a progression from easier literature for the first concert to more difficult. The first concert may even be easier than the students are used to (risking boredom for top players). I decided this would be worth it to use this first concert as a chance to develop an ensemble tone (literally and figuratively). I feel that the ensemble needed to have a firm foundation without the frustrations of learning a lot of difficult notes and rhythms first. If this could be established on the first concert, it would give us the chance to tackle more difficult music with more overall success. The first concert therefore has mostly grade 3, and a grade 2 ballad. The literature then progresses to a mix of grade 3 and 4, developing more difficult pieces for the third concert. The festival literature attacks a grade 3 and a grade 4 piece, which complement each other well.

The literature comes from a mix of originals for wind band as well as transcriptions. With those pieces of literature written for the wind band itself, there is still a mix of compositions from the original wind ensemble (classics you could say) as well as more contemporary pieces by today's most popular wind writers. The transcriptions include a Joplin piano piece, a Strauss Lied, and a soprano aria from a Bach cantata. With presenting such variety, the students will play literature from, or representing, a variety of different musical periods. During the first concert they will play a piece meant to mimic the music of the Renaissance. The piece by Strauss comes from the late romantic era, Bach represents the Baroque era, and much of the new literature obviously addresses the wind band era. The literature also addresses a variety of cultures, from earlier western culture to contemporary. There is both a Mexican and Belgian march as well as the Variations on a Korean Folk Song that bring in oriental culture. The students will therefore experience a wide variety of music, hopefully allowing them to develop a broad appreciation for how different music can be, and yet how unified it still is.

Fall Concert Rationale

Standards addressed: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9

As stated before, the focus of the fall concert is to establish a group sound and dynamic as well as solidify the basic fundamentals of playing. Students return from their summer break and it is inevitable that they are going to need to brush off at least a little dust. If we jumped into grade 4 literature from the start, it simply would not build us up for success. Therefore, all of the literature will be grade 3, except for a grade 2 lyrical piece. This will also be helpful as the fall concert occurs during the heart of marching band season, so it can be expected that the concert preparation efforts will be stretched a little thin compared to later in the semester.

The concert block will open with Overture for Winds by Charles Carter. This piece is classic band literature. There is a lot of history with the overture in general that can be taught, including its background as a the introduction to a large stage work such as an opera. Many students may know of overtures from popular musicals, such as *The Music Man*, *Sound of Music*, or *Phantom of the Opera*. The piece also will work on technique with short, fast melodies versus lyrical lines and how to prepare the contrast in each. The piece contains a lot of octave doublings, which in some ways can make the piece easier, but also will be harder for tuning. This gives a great chance to start working on blend/balance and listening down throughout rehearsal. If we can establish good pitch and balance during this piece, the rest of the year will fall in place well.

The second piece on the concert will be Prospect by Pierre La Plante. This is the lyrical piece for the concert. It is written in strophic form – something the students should be familiar with in idea, though not in terminology. This will be a great chance to include some new vocabulary. The students may also be fairly familiar with the melody – a popular hymn tune, which will help them be interested in the actual piece. The point of using this piece is that as a grade 2 with minimal technical problems, the focus will be all about musical expression. It gives the students a chance to work on tone, vibrato, and breath support. The hymn tune is also based on a pentatonic scale, which would be good for the students to become familiar with. The most difficult part will be the modulation – the piece modulates between two distant keys, so there is a bunch of mode mixture in order to get there. This may be difficult for the students to hear and understand, so it will be important to address this. The piece also will help them become familiar with their particular instrument tone color and how it fits into different instrument combinations – there would be many opportunities for directed listening to help the band balance and blend.

Next I have Court Festival by William P. Latham. This piece takes us into a great chance to talk about history. Though the piece is originally composed, it is meant to mimic dances of the 16th and 17th century. There will be chances to educate on music, culture, instruments, and many other aspects of the time period. It is a four-movement work, though each movement is only 1.5 minutes tops, so the piece will go by really quickly. Therefore it will be important to be solid as to what character each movement is portraying so that the ensemble can lock in to each quickly. Along with mimicking this earlier music, the piece gives us many chances to teach particular stylistic aspects of the music – terraced dynamics, harmony, consort-style, and ornamentation. In an ensemble that has only been

prominent for about 60-70 years, being able to incorporate something that focuses on a different era is very important.

We will finish the concert with a march, though not your typical Sousa march. Combination March by Scott Joplin was an original piano work, but Gunther Schuller did a great job of arranging it for the band world. The piece is fun to play and includes all the styles of a march without the usual pattern. Instead, the piece is through-composed, which may keep the students interest a little better. We will get to Sousa later to discover how marches traditionally are written. The piece will give us a chance to work in cut-time and deal with ornamentations. There are many technical difficulties with this march, but nothing that is unattainable.

This concert block offers many options to go beyond simply playing their music. One thing that I would emphasize is that the students be able to sing as well as play. This is something that can be established on the first concert and will continue to be a helpful tool. Singing would first be introduced in warm-ups, but my primary use for it would be with Prospect. This piece will be one with difficult tuning at times; what I have found with ensembles is often they tune better when singing a chord than when playing. Singing would also allow them a chance to develop a sense of line and lyricism that hopefully will then transfer to their playing.

Another extension option would be one that I would use with the concert overture. I would like them to truly understand the history of the overture and how it become a stand-alone concert work. The project that I can think of is having the students work in groups, using garage band, to put together an overture for their favorite movie. The idea of an overture is to combine a few main themes in a way that becomes one larger work. Obviously these overtures would not be perfect, but it would give the students a chance to explore the main themes of a movie and arrange an overture of their own.

Of course the obvious extension with Court Festival would be to have the students learn about Renaissance music, culture, and dance. The students will probably have already taken a world history course and learned about the Renaissance time period; however, I would like to bring back that knowledge and have them go beyond this. I think a web quest would be great for this opportunity. Students would then be able to learn the information and watch videos of stylistic instruments, dances, and other information that may help them appreciate the music a bit more. It would also be fun to get with the dance team, since they are working with the marching band, and see if they would be interested in learning a few Renaissance dances. Then we would be able to incorporate them dancing into our concert, helping to portray the time period and style even better.

Each of these projects will offer chances for students to grow in all of the year goals and objectives. It will be important to assess the students fairly on their musical understanding. The garage band and web quest will be chances to assess the students on their creativity as well as their grasping of the knowledge given. I would also hold a couple of playing tests to make sure that the students are practicing their music. Chances for inauthentic assessment are always present during rehearsal, whether it be asking questions, listening to sections, or assessing the band's performance as a whole. At the end of the concert, I would have students do an assessment/journal to help them reflect on what they have learned.

Winter Concert Rationale

Standards addressed: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 9

The goal of the second concert is to start getting into the heart of the music and to develop the students' abilities. This concert is meant to begin really challenging them technically, so that they will be able to grow and improve by the time contest comes around. As marching band is winding down, students should have more time to devote to their wind literature, and thus the grade level of the literature moves up to grade 3/grade 4. This concert will have all literature that was written specifically for the band setting – though the compositions are a mix of works from the beginning band era to more recent compositions. It's a pleasing selection of works that I think the ensemble will really enjoy.

The concert begins with Declaration Overture by Claude T. Smith. This is classic band repertoire and an instant hit with pretty much everyone. The timbre is very typical of classic band orchestration, but yet every voice gets the melody at some point. The piece presents a basic theme, and from there develops the theme in many different styles. There is a very strong rhythmic drive in this piece that will be good for the students to work on keeping it moving well. This piece gives a lot of room for discussion about compositional techniques, including inversion, expansion, and others. This piece also has many chances to work on articulations such as accents, staccatos, and lyrical lines. Though not technically that demanding – it should be approachable for the students – the piece offers many chances for growth as performers.

The next piece is Air for Band by Frank Erickson. The piece is lyrical in style and will allow for the students to again have an expressive and connected performance. The Air is in English style of song from the 16th and early 17th centuries. This will give the chance to bring back the discussion of what they learned from the fall concert about the Renaissance time period and styles. They can even compare and contrast the difference between the dance/court music they played on that concert compared to this Air that they are playing on the winter concert. The piece is in binary form – which will be important to share with the band and talk about how to notice this. The piece has very long lines, often at softer dynamics, so the students will need to do a lot of work with breath support and tuning in this more difficult playing expectation. They will also need to understand the mood that the composer is trying to express and find a way to make this show. Also important will be keeping the piece slow and not rushing forward – almost feeling tenutos on the up beats as part of the rubato to help pull it back.

The concert will then move to the most difficult work – Variations on a Korean Folk Song by John Barnes Chance. A theme and five variations, it is based on a Korean folk-song titled Arrirang. The piece is based on a pentatonic melody, the typical oriental sound that we are all used to hearing. The piece also mixes in whole tone scales – a perfect theory teaching moment. The piece contrasts between many different styles, increasing the students' versatility at quick changes. This is especially important since the piece is not split into separate movements. Chance focused on writing for choirs (woodwind, brass, and percussion), so this will give more chance for them to establish this sound even more. The students will improve their rhythmic understanding as well with many time changes and tempo changes with each variation.

The closer of the concert will be a more traditional march – John Phillips Sousa’s Fairest of the Fair. This march is very typical in march style and should be a great learning opportunity in terms of form and Sousa in general. The piece is in concert E-flat, then going to concert A-flat. It will be good for students to learn both of these scales so that they are comfortable with them, especially the A-flat concert.

This concert will be more of a stretch for including extra activities. The students will again be expected to sing with Air for Band – this would be a great piece for the students to work on as a “choir” just as much as an ensemble. I really believe that students need to be able to sing it before they can play it – all about the internal ear. Though they may want to fight it, saying they don’t have good voices, we aren’t looking for state-ensemble quality of tone and timbre, but rather the sense of listening and blending with each other in pitch and tone.

I also think it would be fun to have the students analyze their Variations on a Korean Folk Song, or at least portions of it. First, the students need to know about the compositional style and musical influences on oriental, specifically Korean music. There will be many topics available to discuss, but one that I would want to focus on is the scales used, as it is not the typical major and minor scale that they are used to hearing. Once they learn what pentatonic and whole tone scales are, it would be effective for the students to look for these in their music. A good exercise would be to copy their music and have them use colors to mark these two different scales. Obviously not everything would clearly fit one of the two, so there would be things that were not marked, but each student should be able to find points that are clearly one or the other. Another fun activity with the variations would be for them to improvise a variation. We could play the theme, and then allow each section to have a chance to do their own variation. This would be a chance for them to play around with what a variation could be, based on what we have learned through the piece itself.

One way to test their understanding of the Sousa march form would be to have a listening quiz. During this quiz, students would listen to a few different examples of marches and would decide if the march was in Sousa form or if it was in a different form. This allows them to not only grasp how this form works in Fairest of the Fair, but also will have them listening to other marches in a more analytical way.

Again there are opportunities for students to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the concepts addressed during this concert with both formal and informal assessment. It is important to include both, as informal will be quicker and allow the students to work through problems they may have and continue to grow, but the formal allows me to judge the outcomes on a more individual basis and with clearer expectations. The formal assessment would include being able to see their highlighting to see how much they understand the pentatonic versus whole tone scales, the listening quiz, and some playing tests. The students would also journal after this concert, with the expectation that they are able to talk about at least one concept or terminology that they have learned about with each piece on this concert block. This is not only good for me to see what stood out to them in the teaching, but also allows them to really reflect on the overall learning, beyond simply giving a performance.

Spring Concert Rationale

Standards addressed: 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9

The spring concert is all about variety. I really want the students to go into the summer feeling inspired in some way. The music includes classic band writing a transcription, a novelty/programmatic work, and a non-traditional march. If the students don't each connect in some way to at least one of the pieces on this concert, I would be shocked. I also think that this concert offers the most variety for the audience to become invested as well. The concert contains some challenging music, though I don't know that it will be any more challenging technically than the winter concert was, though it will be much more musically taxing. The literature is a mix of grade 3 and 4 again. There will be moments of rhythmic challenges, moments of tonal challenges, and moments of emotional challenge. Above all, music is more than just playing instruments, and that's what students need to understand by the conclusion of this spring concert. The piece also will highlight top players in many sections, which would be good since often times these members are seniors and this is their final concert. Solos included in this concert are trumpet, alto saxophone, clarinet, baritone saxophone, horn, and flute. There are also prominent features for the trombone/euphonium sections in one of the pieces.

The first piece that the students will play is Exaltation by James Swearingen. This piece is a great concert opener (as well as a marching band opener if you get a good arrangement). Trumpets will get the chance to really show off as it features many solo and soli lines for them. There are a lot of counterpoint lines, which will be something to be sure to explain to the students and really get a grip on. Overall this piece is written in mostly classic band style – thematic and rhythmically driven. Often times there is rhythmic unison, so there will be moments of just playing attacks in rehearsal as well as counting exercises to see if things are lining up well. Overall this will probably be the easiest for the students to grab hold of and I imagine they would just sore through it.

Next we get into some more difficult/deep literature. Allerseelen was originally a lieder of the late romantic style, written by Strauss when he was only 18. This piece is one fantastic piece of writing and the band transcription by Albert Oliver Davis is fantastic. This piece will be a lot about rubato and emotion – romantic style is all about expression and the more the merrier. There will also be the importance of balancing to the melody. The piece is based on All Souls Day – a Catholic holiday all about honoring the dead. This will be interesting for students to see how they are able to connect with this. The piece should not be mournful necessarily, but rather more reverent. It will take some moments of connection to play this piece well. The piece will also present some rhythmic challenges with a lot of switches between duple and triple subdivisions. This will be something to work at throughout warmups in an attempt to lock these rhythms in.

After the lyrical piece, we go to the programmatic work, I Am by Andrew Boysen, Jr. This will be an interesting challenge for the ensemble – honestly this is my dream piece to teach. I played this piece as a freshman in high school and never really knew how to connect with the piece, now I would love to work with a high school ensemble where we can do more than simply play the notes. There are technical challenges in it, though it sounds harder than it actually is. The most difficult technical portions will be mixed

meters, syncopations, and the dense harmonies. There is also an aleatoric section, though I believe that as long as this isn't over-thought and simply allowed to happen, it can be effective in a fairly easy way. There is also singing involved; good thing we have been singing all year! Overall, my goal is to get the story of a high school student tragically killed in a car accident out to the students and to the audience in a way that makes them ponder, emote, and possibly even grieve for the piece and what it is all about.

After we've had plenty of emotion, the band will turn on the switch to Amparito Roca by Texidor. This Spanish march is very fun and engaging to play. The piece is mostly pretty repetitive, so shouldn't be too difficult to learn. The tonality portrays a strong Spanish flare that I believe the students will really enjoy. There is background to talk about with this march as well in reference to the two-step Spanish dance (paso doble) and the bull fighting tradition.

There are so many options for extending the curriculum beyond the music that I'm not sure I can narrow it down to just a few. First and foremost, I want to really get into I Am with the students. One idea I have for an extension activity is for students to think about this piece and how it makes them feel. I really believe that often times we don't allow ourselves enough opportunities to express our emotions when something eats at us. What I would like to do with the students is spend a class period, maybe two weeks in, and read them the program notes about the piece. Up until then, the piece is going to be all about notes and rhythms. The reason I want to wait is because I want them to have a real understanding of what the piece sounds like and be able to fit the pieces together as soon as they hear the story. The rest of the class period will be free-write. Students may write any kind of thoughts or emotions that they have down in a journal entry. Then, they will have two weeks to pick some other medium to display these emotions. This could be a poem, a drawing, a painting, a sculpture – something visual that can be put on display at our final concert. The hope is that not only will this allow the students to get into the music a bit more, but also will allow the audience to see how engaged the students are and allow them to connect a little better as well. At some point I will also share my story of performing this piece and then the follow up, because I think it may also touch the students and see how connections can occur even after performances are long over.

The next consideration for a connection would be to have the students do another listening example. The Strauss composition is beautiful in its original form as well, and I believe it is important that the students understand this original art form. I think it will also help to hear the original to know where that melody line lies; sometimes it is buried pretty well in the transcription. The idea then, would be for the students to listen to the piece in class and analyze how their part fits into the piece. I would give them a copy of the original work so that they can find their part either in the accompaniment or in the melody line – or maybe even it is something added beyond that. Then, if the sections share out their tie-ins, it will help with directed listening and balance the piece out better. This would be a benefit on top of just exposing them to the piece in its original lied form.

I think it would be fun to get a little bit of Spanish culture and do a Spanish party. We could even do mock bull fighting with the students in some sort of band instrument-off or something. The students would get the chance to learn how to paso doble and simply become energized – hopefully this would translate over into excitement about the piece itself.

This concert has many opportunities for assessment. Assessing the I Am activity would be difficult, though I think possible. This really hits home to students being able to connect and see music as a form of expression. Hopefully seeing what this piece means to some people will make the students interested in seeking out something that does the same to them. The assessment of the lieder would be easy enough. With the Spanish party, it would be fun to split the students into teams that help to plan the party. Then they would need to become experts on their portion, whether it's food, drinks, wardrobe, music, etc. Then, through the experience, everyone else becomes an expert; it's like an interactive jigsaw activity! The students would hopefully enjoy the last concert as well as getting a lot out of it.

Festival Rationale

Standards addressed:

For festival, I picked two grade 4 pieces because I felt that the band could handle them. Neither one is particularly long, but should present their own set of challenges. The pieces are very much contrasting as well in style and period. I think they are pieces the students will grow to enjoy, though not necessarily instant heart-grabbers. This is good for contest as I find the pieces that grab the heart first don't always turn out the best, as we grow tired of them too quickly.

The first piece is If Thou Be Near by J.S. Bach. The original piece is from a cantata, which would be fun to introduce that history to the students. The baroque style will be something the students will probably catch onto quickly. This piece is one that will definitely have the students thankful that we have worked on lyricism so much; it's impossible to be successful with this piece without an understanding of breathe support and proper pitch and tone.

The second piece is a stately concert march – Arsenal by Jan van der Roost. This march is Belgium, though I'm most reminded of a French march. Unlike in the United States where the march is considered to be an outdoor, family-friendly, one for all type of event, in other countries in Europe it is seen as elegant, noble, and elite. That is the precise character of this march, and it will require a bit of work for the students to play with this more laid-back tempo, nose-up arrogance.

With the festival literature, I really want to get the students thinking about compare and contrast a bit. By this time they have learned almost all of their literature for the year and had quite the variety. The first thing I would do is a triple-circle Venn diagram. This would be to compare the three marches they will have worked on thus far – Combination March, Fairest of the Fair, and Arsenal. The biggest thing with playing marches for me is that students realize that Sousa isn't the only march out there – and at this point I think they will begin to see this and be able to define a march as more than Stars and Stripes Forever.

The other option for extending with the students is to learn about Baroque music. Really, there is a lot of importance in the baroque style that the students can learn about. There are many different options for approaching this – a web quest, reading, group work, or simply discussion. No matter what way we go about it, I think the best way for the students to be assessed on this is through journaling of some sort, simply to see that the students are picking up on the information being presented.

With Festival, there will be more individual playing quizzes, just to hold students more accountable to their parts with the importance of contest. There will also be more options for students to have sectionals and work together to improve on these two pieces so that the band can score well.