

Inside Out!
Creating A Successful Transfer of Ensemble Skills
From the Concert Season to the Marching Season

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I. Why This Clinic?

This was created at the suggestions of adjudicators and educators to help provide a more clear understanding of the outdoor activity and its challenges. We will discuss techniques, concepts and tips unique to the marching activity. Adapting current inside techniques to improve your program will also be included in this presentation.

II. Considerations When Moving From Inside to Outside

- A. **Fundamental Routine** should incorporate elements related to marching and movement training.
- B. **Listening Environment** is much larger, always changing and very organic.
- C. **Balancing of Musical Elements** presents a much bigger challenge outside.
- D. **Range of Dynamics and Expression** are often needed to be at a much wider level and intensity.
- E. **Spatial Demand Challenges** due to location of front ensemble, battery percussion and winds.

III. The Fundamental Routine: “Maintain and Overtrain”

“Its all about the Fundamentals” and basic training of skills is crucial to musical development. Finding a healthy balance between maintenance and overtraining is vital. Be creative and think outside the box. Your fundamental program should be designed to make performance easier, not harder.

IV. Breathing Techniques & Balloon Training

- A. Maintenance Breathing Exercises (In 8 – Out 8) (Sun Goddess)
- B. Overtraining Breathing Exercises (Suck & Pop) (5 – 15 – 5)
- C. Balloon Exercises (Dynamic Definition) (Immediacy of Sound)

V. Get Moving!

Most programs incorporate separate playing and marching warmups, but few combine these as a regular part of the daily training regimen. We must learn to play simple exercises on the move before we can expect to achieve a high level of performance and musical demand on the field. I think of this as the “**Bridge**”. To further enhance this concept, use show excerpts and rhythms in your daily fundamental routine. Be Creative and Explore!

VI. *Intonation and Outdoor Performance*

Tuning becomes much more challenging when we are outside due to climate changes. Consideration should be given to matching wind tuning with front ensemble and keyboard instruments.

Above all else, winds should focus on matching and playing in tune together.

VII. *To Watch Or Not To Watch, That Is The Question!*

The marching activity places many timing and listening challenges on the performer. During any given show, members are required to watch, listen and at times, both. We must also consider timing as it relates to “front to back” placement as well as “side to side” spatial relationship. Listen through the ensemble for time and balance and have a plan in place for each scenario and challenge.

VIII. *You Want Me To Put The Beat Where?*

Based on various field placements, performers will often have to adjust “where” they put their time in relationship to the drum majors hands and ictus. Adjustments both ahead and behind the beat will be needed based on field placement. Understanding these concepts should be clear to all members.

IX. *Understanding Timing Between Winds and Percussion*

Field placement of battery percussion and percussion ensemble will greatly dictate a group’s ability to play in time as a total ensemble.

The following is a formula for success:

1. Drum major watches battery percussion feet (center snare).
2. Winds watch and/or listen back to the battery when in given proximity.
3. Front percussion ensemble **ALWAYS** listens back to battery and/or winds, except when playing alone.

X. *Balance and Staging/Acoustic & Electronic*

- A. Balancing the musical ensemble should begin and end with attention towards the primary, secondary and tertiary musical lines. **ALWAYS** give precedence to the primary musical material.
- B. Proper staging will go far in helping you achieving clarity and transparency of the musical book. Work to present primary melodic material in the easiest listening environment possible. Much of your success can be determined by the quality and staging of the overall visual design.
- C. Electronics are becoming a major component in today’s marching arena. They can add a wonderful element to your program, but also present major problems if not used or balanced correctly.
- D. Balancing electronics to the acoustic performers should be a focal point of rehearsals. If all else fails, err on the side of caution when using electronics.

XI. Designing and Teaching Like A Judge

- A. Design in a way that is both creative, yet smart. It should not take a judge many viewings to “get” your show.
- B. Adjudicators have essentially “9 minutes to translate a show with 9 months of planning.” Be clever and create an interesting and unique program, but with a concept that is clear to follow for the “layman.”
- C. Teach like a judge and work to be objective in rehearsals. Look and Listen to every phrase as experiencing it for the first time and ask objective questions each repetition.
- D. Don’t assume that because you know the music program and the drill that everyone else will recognize all the elements upon an initial viewing. Improved performance allows for better understanding of the program. Always teach with a “judge’s ear.”

XII. “Top Ten” Adjudicators Comment List

1. Coordination of audio and visual
2. Percussion writing should enhance, not compete with winds
3. Balance of amplification to winds and percussion
4. Transparency and clarity of musical voices
5. “Band Ain’t Drum Corps”, its much more
6. Give direction and completion to all musical phrases
7. Its ALWAYS about fundamentals
8. Logical staging of musical elements - clarity of melody vs harmony
9. Perform with the same level of consistency and musicianship throughout the entire show
10. Vertical orchestration too thick – overuse of tutti writing (winds/percussion or alone), overuse of voice doubling, etc