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# PREFACE

The purpose of this book is to examine principles and practices relevant to the philosophical, administrative, and organizational concerns of operating a marching band program. Textbooks dealing with the marching band often focus only on marching fundamentals, the designing and charting of field shows, and the percussion and auxiliary units. While these aspects are important and their inclusion in marching band textbooks is certainly appropriate, there is a need for in-depth consideration of philosophical and theoretical aspects of contemporary marching bands as they function within the total school band program. Substantial background material is presented to enable the reader to understand the importance of formulating, communicating, and evaluating a philosophy from which all other aspects of the marching band program are developed.

The administrative responsibilities inherent in directing a marching band program are demanding in both time and importance. These administrative duties may range from normal teacher tasks, such as taking attendance, to the not-so-normal task of preparing and defending a budget proposal for thousands of dollars worth of new equipment. The pressures of public performance bring special demands to bear on the marching band director. General concepts as well as specific suggestions are presented in the areas of administration and operational procedures which are intended to help the marching band director make efficient and effective use of his or her talents so that maximum time may be spent in the actual teaching of music.

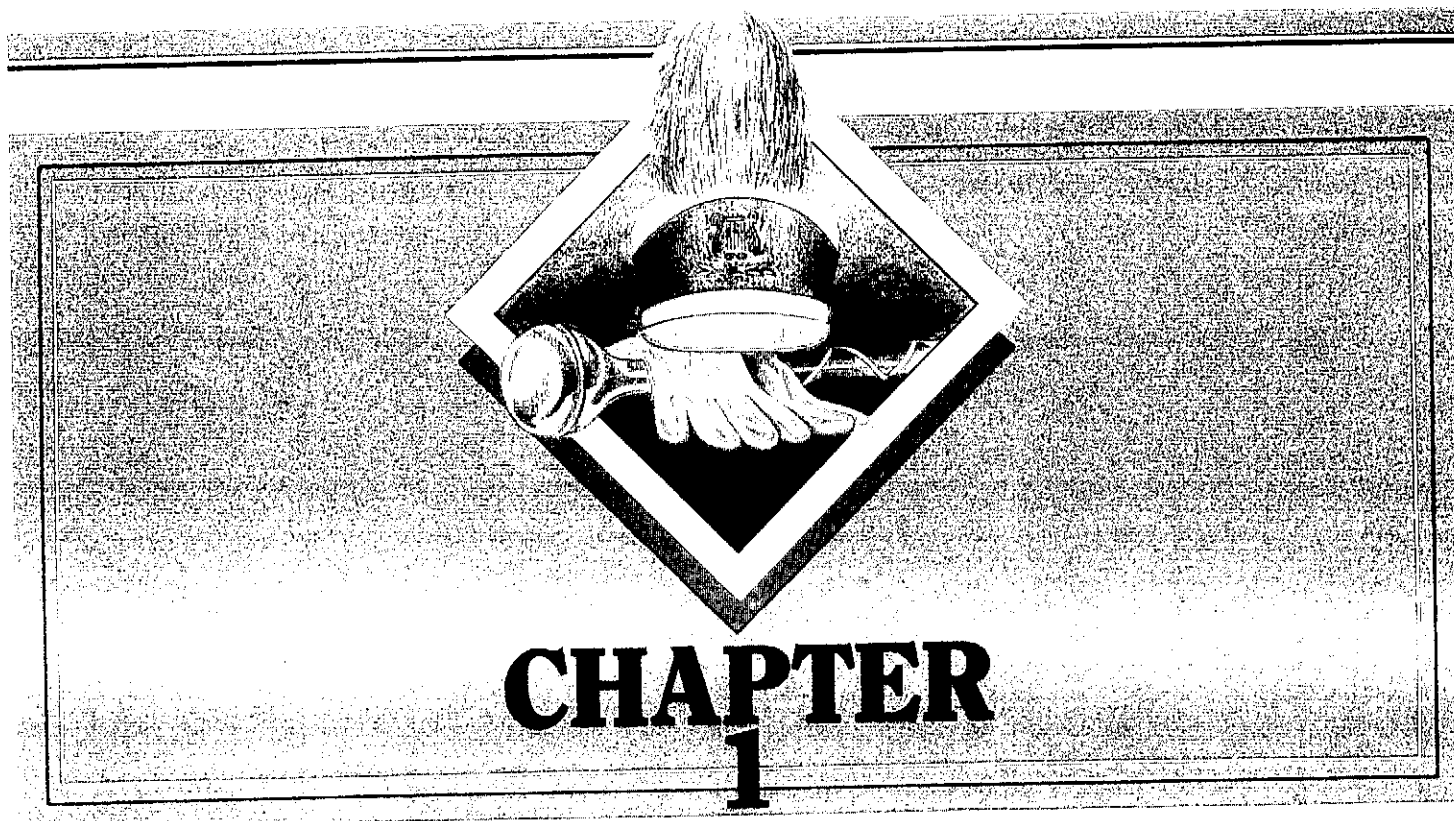
Intended for use in college and university music education courses, this book should also be helpful to student teachers, beginning teachers, and band directors who have been assigned the responsibility of working with the marching band. This book is not intended to be a "how-to" manual for training the marching band. Instead, it will attempt to provide a conceptual framework upon

which a complete marching program can be organized.

This book is divided into two parts. Part One deals with principles of program development while Part Two presents suggested practices implementing those principles. Each chapter begins with a fictional scenario which presents situations, poses questions, stimulates thinking, and sets the scene for the topics to be covered. While these particular scenarios are fictional they do represent real-life situations, feelings and events which might be expected to occur in high school marching band programs. The reader is encouraged to begin the study of each chapter by reading the scenario carefully, followed by a period of evaluation designed to formulate a plan of action for dealing with the situation. After studying the chapter the reader should review the scenario and use the information presented in the chapter to confirm, modify, or replace his or her initial reactions.

While this book is designed to stimulate thought and to provoke the formulation of philosophical and practical concepts, it is based on an underlying belief that the high school marching band can contribute to the musical education of its students *ONLY* if it is part of a balanced band program within the music curriculum of the school. The numerous nonmusical benefits which can be derived by participating in marching bands are certainly well-documented, and do indeed contribute to the lives of band students, their schools, and their communities. However, these benefits must be viewed by music educators as "supplementary" to the main goals of musical growth and understanding.

It is the hope of the authors that an understanding of the content and ideas presented in this book will result in more efficient management so that students have a rewarding musical experience and may receive maximum instruction in a minimal amount of rehearsal time.



# WHY MARCHING BANDS IN THE SCHOOLS?

## Background and Philosophy

### SCENARIO

Two principals, Mr. Rich from Southeast High School and Mr. Allen from Bradford High School, are attending the annual district principals meeting held each December. Mr. Allen is presenting his annual report to the membership and has just begun describing the activities of the Marching Band Program at Bradford High School. Mr. Rich has taken special interest in this portion of the presentation because the marching band program at Southeast High School has been going through a period of difficulty for several years.

Mr. Allen states that the marching band program at Bradford High has been a significant factor in improving community and school relationships, has seen increased participation and interest in the program over a period of many years, and has received a tremendous amount of support from the parents involved in the band booster organization. He is quick to state that the main reason for these positive influences is the fact that a carefully planned set of goals and objectives for the marching band program has been developed which are based on an underlying philosophy which guides the program's course of action, and which places the marching band as a component within the total band program.

Mr. Rich is sitting in the audience listening to the remarks of Mr. Allen when his thoughts shift to a meeting of one month earlier when he and his band director were discussing the direction that the marching band program would be taking at Southeast High School. Much to Mr. Rich's dismay, the band director could not give him any clear description of where the marching band was headed. Mr. Rich is especially concerned because the band director, once again, wishes to change key elements within the marching band, involving considerable expense, before

really having the chance to establish success with the changes made previously. With all these changes, Mr. Rich wonders, will this new equipment actually enable the students to play their instruments any better? This has been a concern of his for quite some time.

Mr. Rich's attention focuses back to the podium where Mr. Allen is describing that much of the marching band's success can be attributed to the fact that the band director has provided, over the past several years, a well-conceived plan of gradual change in order to take advantage of current trends and advancements in marching band techniques without sacrificing the music education of the students. These gradual changes have been well-received by both the community and the students in the band.

Mr. Rich reflects back on events during this past season when certain community members expressed displeasure and dissatisfaction with changes in the style and show format of the marching band. These and other changes in the band program have been abrupt, and seemingly, without sufficient planning. Consequently there is a general lack of support and interest in the band booster organization.

Mr. Allen has just touched upon the fact that the Bradford Marching Band rehearses only two days a week after school. Mr. Rich is wondering why they can accomplish so much in just two days when the Southeast band director requires his band to rehearse every day after school and yet accomplishes so much less. In addition, Mr. Rich can't help but wonder if many of the problems his band program is encountering can be attributed to the fact that the band director at his school seems to be so negative about working with the marching band.

Just at that moment, Mr. Allen is concluding his remarks by stating

that the positive results being produced by his school's marching band seem to be a reflection of his director's positive attitude about the marching band and its place in the total instrumental music program.

## BACKGROUND

The high school marching band of today has a heritage that is rich with tradition and purpose. As the most popular form of outdoor music, the marching band enjoys an ever-expanding audience. This is due in part to the fact that almost all high schools and many junior high and middle schools have marching bands as part of their music curricula. Performing almost exclusively out-of-doors the marching band continues the historical development of outdoor music. Outdoor music has always been functional music. Historically, these

### A well-defined philosophy helps keep the director on task and avoids wasting student time...

functions may be seen as falling into two general categories: (1) outdoor music for military purposes, and (2) outdoor music for social purposes. Understanding how these two functions were brought together in the school marching band is helpful when formulating a philosophy which addresses the purposes of including the marching band in the school curriculum.

The first school band on record was the FARM AND TRADES SCHOOL BAND of Boston Harbor, which was founded in 1858. Instrumental music, however, was not found widely in the schools until the turn of the century, even as an extracurricular activity. As instrumental music became more accepted in the schools, it was the Orchestra which was most prevalent until the beginning of World War I. The first world war gave tremendous impetus to bands because of high interest in the morale-boosting effect of bands playing martial and patriotic music. The United States Army trained many band leaders so that most military bases could support a band of their own. Following the War, many of these military band leaders became teachers and it was a natural outcome for them to continue the military style with school bands of that period.

*"The net result of the ensuing development over a period of fifteen years is a band in most of the progressive public schools in America." (Prescott and Chidester, 1938, p. 3)*

It was the rise in popularity of an uniquely American sporting event called "football" that served to bring together the military tradition and the entertainment value of the marching band.

The development of the school marching band is directly linked with the development of football in the schools. From the time when, in 1907, the Purdue University All-American Marching Band formed a block "P" on the football field, thus becoming the first band to create a formation other than a military block, through today's complex field-show drill concepts, the marching band continues to serve a functional as well as an educational purpose. (Wells, 1976, p.8)

## THE NEED FOR DEVELOPING A PHILOSOPHY FOR THE MARCHING BAND PROGRAM

An instrumental teacher should have a well thought-out philosophy that provides direction for the entire instrumental program. Since the marching band is an important component of the band program its philosophy should be compatible with the goals and objectives of teaching music through instrumental performance. The marching band director, therefore, needs to clearly identify common objectives along with the unique benefits of participating in the marching band

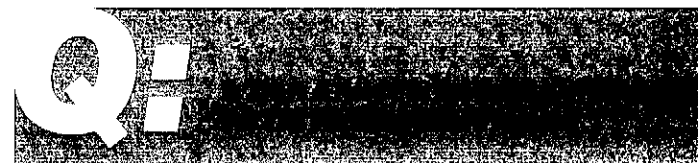
and be able to articulate those ideas to students, parents, and administrators. Teaching based on a solid philosophy provides purpose, meaning, direction and consistency for the marching band program.

The following ideas should be considered when developing a marching band philosophy. Participation in the marching band helps to further develop technical mastery of instruments. The marching band is involved in a number of performances; consequently, the opportunity exists to play a great deal of music, representing a variety of styles. This should result in improvement of music reading skills. The educator/conductor has the opportunity to teach students much about the content and expressiveness of music. The uniqueness of having many performances in a short period of time helps to encourage discipline, responsibility, cooperation, and teamwork.

A well-defined philosophy helps keep the director on task and avoids wasting student time, the "bottom line" of good teaching. Frequent changes of direction without sufficient planning and consideration hurts morale and causes students, parents, and administrators to lose confidence and interest in the program. The motivation generated in the quest for perfection is lost when oscillating from one idea to another.

The expense involved in supporting a marching band program requires help from students, administrators, parents, and the community. The ability to communicate the contributions of the marching band program is considered one of the important jobs of the band director. In order to receive school and community support, the Gemeinhart Report (1982) suggests that communication is one of the most important responsibilities of the music teacher.

A program that has purpose and direction fosters positive attitudes. As a result, everyone can feel pride and satisfaction in getting the job done in an efficient manner.



**A:** Yes. A philosophy helps the band director understand the purpose and rationale for the marching band program; helps the band director understand and focus his attention and the resources of the program on achievement of the goals and objectives; reduces the workload of the band director and students; allows the band director to communicate the purposes, goals, and values of the program to the school and community, and; fosters positive attitudes.

## WHY MARCHING BANDS IN SCHOOL BAND PROGRAMS?

Because of its size and scope, the marching band program has the unique opportunity to serve the needs of many students within the school population. In addition to playing musicians, the opportunity exists for non-playing members to participate in activities such as twirling, auxiliary units, and various other non-performing positions in the marching band. Not all aspects of the marching band program will be of a musical nature. Elements such as group and self-discipline, leadership, responsibility, self-initiative, social values, and the motivation to identify with one's own school become very important when dealing with a group of young students. Because of numerous outdoor functions during the Autumn, the general public can readily determine the extent to which these

qualities have been achieved.

The marching band performs a valuable role by serving the needs of the school and community through extracurricular activities such as strengthening public relations, providing entertainment for outdoor functions, and encouraging parental involvement in school activities. The band director is directly responsible for guiding the activities which are planned to meet the needs of the program in these educational and extracurricular areas. While the typical classroom teacher might spend one year with each student, the band director will normally spend three to four years. The director's position is unique in the teaching profession because of the divergence of responsibilities he or she must assume. To be successful in such a position, a director should possess the administrative skills of a corporate leader as well as the humanistic qualities of a concerned educator.

While each of these non-musical contributions is important, the director must fully realize that the main goal of the school marching band is to promote musical growth and understanding. What are the musical factors which should be included in a marching band's instructional program?

**TONE PRODUCTION** proper breathing, support, posture, and embouchure are stressed

**TONE QUALITY** characteristic tone quality is emphasized, modeled, and reinforced

**CONTROL** proper control of tone and dynamics is emphasized as a musical quality

**DYNAMICS** use of proper dynamic levels as well as dynamic contrast receives constant attention

**BALANCE AND BLEND** the production of a well-balanced, pleasing sonority is emphasized; contrasting sonorities are related to changes in musical expression; quality of ensemble sound is constantly stressed

**INTONATION** listening skills are developed so that individual and

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### **A program that has purpose and direction fosters positive attitudes.**

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ensemble intonation are enhanced

**ARTICULATION** instruction is provided that will allow students to develop the proper physical skills of articulation and to recognize and apply various "styles" of articulation

**RHYTHM** the skills of reading and performing rhythms correctly are developed through the performance of music of a wide variety of styles

**TECHNIQUE** growth of technical skills is promoted through instruction and the selection of music which is both accessible and challenging

**ACCURACY AND PRECISION** all elements of ensemble precision are stressed as well as individual performance accuracy

**TEMPO** the proper choice and maintenance of tempo is emphasized as an important performance factor

**STYLE** the knowledge and understanding of a variety of musical styles is promoted through the performance of a wide variety of repertoire; styles are discussed and analyzed

**PHRASING AND EXPRESSION** nuance, expression, and phrasing are developed, both individually and in ensemble, as important aspects of musical performance

If this list looks familiar, it is simply because these elements

represent those musical characteristics which are associated with any fine performing instrumental ensemble, regardless of its setting. Too often, these musical elements are not addressed in the marching band program. Only when a director can achieve proper balance between the musical and non-musical elements will the marching band achieve a high degree of educational success.



**A:** To teach students more about music through the instructional activities that lead to the performance of music for outdoor events, and to provide certain educational and extracurricular benefits to the students, school, and community.

## **THE PLACE OF THE MARCHING BAND IN A BALANCED BAND PROGRAM**

The primary justification for a well-balanced instrumental program is to provide students the opportunity to understand and enjoy music. Exposing students to quality literature representing a variety of styles, means providing a variety of instructional and performing experiences. These experiences will provide the basis for a well-balanced band program, and should include the following:

Large Concert Ensembles	Solo and Chamber Ensembles
Marching Band	Group and/or Private Instruction
Jazz and Pop Ensemble Experiences	

Programs which fail to provide the needed experiences in each of these performance areas are failing to provide the broad range of musical training which is necessary for musical growth and understanding. In a similar manner, programs which choose to emphasize one of these areas at the expense of others, are also failing to provide the proper range of learning experiences. Understanding the role, function, and purpose for each of the experience areas is a vital part of developing a philosophy for the total band program. Within this philosophy, the marching band must be given a place that will allow its stated purposes to be achieved without interfering with the functioning of the other experience areas.

The following three profiles represent examples of balanced band programs in which the marching band is one of the contributing components. These profiles are based on data collected from selected exemplary programs and may serve as models for further study and reference.

## **Profiles of Successful Instrumental Programs**

### **Example I**

#### **COMMUNITY SETTING**

Rural (Township)

#### **POPULATION**

Approximately 1,000

#### **TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS**

One building, K-12

#### **HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

185 (Grades 9-12)

#### **INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STAFFING**

One Teacher (duties include High School band and choir, 9-12; Jr. High band and choir, 7-8; 5th and 6th grade band and private lessons)

**BAND PROGRAM ENROLLMENT**

58

**MARCHING BAND ENROLLMENT**

\*55 in the Block

3 alternates

\*10 flags

1 Drum Major

\*2 or 3 advanced junior high students may be used to fill out instrumentation; eighth graders may be used on flag corps

**ARE PRIVATE LESSONS AVAILABLE?**

Yes — Lessons are given after school in the school building

(students pay), or they drive within a 10 mile radius of the school for after school or evening lessons

**PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PRIVATE LESSONS**

45%

**DO STUDENTS RECEIVE INSTRUCTION AND EXPERIENCE IN SOLO AND CHAMBER ENSEMBLES?**

Yes — In the Jr. High, all capable students perform a solo and participate in at least one ensemble. In the High School, students who take private lessons perform solos, and others must participate in at least one ensemble.

**TABLE OF INFORMATION**

COURSE OFFERINGS	ENROLLMENT	PRACTICE FREQUENCY AND LENGTH		PUBLIC PERFORMANCES	COMPETITIVE EVENTS
		DURING SCHOOL	AFTER SCHOOL		
Pep Band	24	None	1 day per week for 1¼ hrs. after football season	9 Basketball games and 2 Hockey games	None
Marching Band	69	5 days per week for 40 minutes	1 day per week for 1½ hrs.	approx. 19	7 2 Track Shows, 4 Field Shows at area competitions, 1 State event
Concert Band	58	5 days per week for 40 minutes	only 2 extra rehearsals are held each year, 1 prior to Dist. and 1 prior to State events	approx. 6	2 1 District event 1 State event
Jazz Band	18	None	1 day per week for 1½ hrs.	approx. 10	None

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

Six sectional practices are held after school for 2 hours each. Three are in preparation for the District event, and three are in preparation for the State event.

Each Concert Band member is required to play either selected portions or all of the concert music for the director. This procedure must be completed before the first concert performance and preferably before the section practices which occur three weeks prior to the first concert. Performance levels must reach a satisfactory level, as determined by the director.

After marching season, auxiliary members may continue on an instrument and receive full credit, or they may participate during football season for partial credit and then enroll in study hall for the remainder of the school year.

**Example II****COMMUNITY SETTING**

Suburban

**POPULATION**

Approximately 18,000

**TOTAL NUMBER OF SCHOOLS**

One High School

Two Middle Schools

Five Elementary Schools

**HIGH SCHOOL ENROLLMENT**

2,100 (Grades 9-12)

**INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC STAFFING**

One High School Band Director

One Assistant Band Director

Two Middle School Directors

One Flag Corps Adviser

One Percussion Section Adviser

**BAND PROGRAM ENROLLMENT**

237

**MARCHING BAND ENROLLMENT**

188 Musicians

30 Flags

4 Librarians

3 Field Commanders

**ARE PRIVATE LESSONS AVAILABLE?**

Yes — Private lessons are offered four nights a week at the Middle Schools. All students within the district have the option to participate and are charged a fee for each lesson. Instructors are members of the music staff or university students.

**PERCENTAGE OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS INVOLVED IN PRIVATE LESSONS**

68%

**DO STUDENTS RECEIVE INSTRUCTION AND EXPERIENCE IN SOLO AND CHAMBER ENSEMBLES?**

Yes — Each year a great number of students elect to participate in a state-wide sponsored Solo and Ensemble contest. In addition, student soloists are selected to play on the Spring Concert.