

CONTENTS

PREFACE

FOREWORD by M. Max McKee

PART ONE: BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS	15
First Year Philosophy	
Discipline	
Band Handbook	
Initial Meeting with Administration	
First Purchases	
PART TWO: DAY ONE	41
Professionalism	
Opening Remarks	
Disciplining the First Offender	
First Rehearsal	
PART THREE: SCHEDULING & POLICIES	55
Lesson Plans	
Grading	
Instructional Lessons	
Private Instruction	
Student Practice	
Auditions & Chair Placement	
Challenges	
Budget	

PART FOUR: RELATIONSHIPS	85
Communication	
Taming Dragons	
Administration	
Colleagues	
Maintenance Personnel	
School Board	
Community	
Booster Organization	
Parent/Teacher Conferences	
Fundraising	
Organizational Promotion	
The First Year Blues	
PART FIVE: REHEARSALS & PERFORMANCES	117
Recruiting	
Music Selection	
Ensemble Setup	
Organizing Rehearsal Time	
Sightreading	
Outside Rehearsals	
Printed Programs	
Concert Etiquette	
Concert Receptions	
Guest Soloist/Clinician	
Festivals	
Summer Music Camps	
PART SIX: ACQUIRING THE JOB	149
The Resume	
Format	
Cover Letter	
The Interview	
Follow-Up Correspondence	

APPENDIX	171
A. Administrative Forms	
B. Publishers	
C. Professional Organizations	
D. Professional Journals	

REFERENCES	203
-------------------	-----

PREFACE

Teaching is a wonderfully rewarding profession . . . it can also be difficult and overwhelming if you enter unprepared. Many new directors set foot in this arena wearing rose-colored glasses, uninformed of the realities, and unaware of the requirements. This book is intended to be a guide, a foundational approach to your first year in the field. It is written primarily for study during the undergraduate college experience and is especially useful to learners nearing their professional semester in preparation to student teach.

This text is divided into six sections that deal with the practical, pragmatic, technical, and philosophical elements of instrumental music education. Virtually every aspect needed to succeed during the inaugural year is addressed, from what to do prior to beginning the school year, to what to say on the first day of class, from building professional relationships, to rehearsal and performance techniques. The final section offers advice on how to formulate job application materials and successfully interview. In addition, you will find an extensive appendix which includes administrative forms, publisher listings, and professional organizations.

A heartfelt thanks to my former teachers, whose influences can clearly be seen in this writing: Edward L. Wingard, Ph.D., Tom Duden, Ed.D., David Evans, D.M.A., Paul Carpenter, D.A., and Bernard O. Onerheim. To my editor Shannon Vesely and production editor David Daniels – this experience would not have been possible without your assistance. Also a special thanks to my esteemed colleagues on the music faculty at Missouri Southern State College.

Go forth and succeed!

Phillip C. Wise

FOREWORD

As an individual launching a career in band directing, you are about to embark on the most amazing journey anyone could ever imagine. Band directing is in one instant completely exhilarating and in another totally frustrating. It is a job so filled with rewards, it is often difficult to fathom why minor incidents can cause a feeling of complete inadequacy. It is a profession in which learning new concepts is ever-exciting while serving as a needling reminder how ill-prepared we really are.

However, it is important to remember that band directing is first and foremost about people. If you like young people and care what happens to them, you are about to make a difference in the lives of countless individuals. Though you will pay a high price in terms of energy demands and required persistence, it will all come back to you tenfold every time you witness newfound confidence on the face of a student who learned something about music or something about life because of you.

There is little question but that band directing is one of the most complicated jobs man ever invented. Yet, at the same time, it is probably the only profession that develops qualities of total leadership and the complete understanding of complex organization. As a director you will be expected to prepare bands for concert, marching, and jazz performances while working one-on-one with students on more than a dozen entirely different instruments. At the same time you will deal with finances, promotion, publicity, travel arrangements and fundraising as well as show production and narration, equipment purchases and management, uniform design and maintenance, library and inventory, not to mention score selection and preparation, music arranging and marching band charting, private teaching and ensemble coaching, community service and festival preparation along with ever-present counseling and parenting.

Obviously, you didn't just close the cover of this book, deciding to explore a more mundane career. In any case, don't be discouraged by that rather overwhelming list of duties and responsibilities. The clear and concise presentation Dr. Phillip C. Wise has prepared for you in **SO . . . YOU'RE THE NEW BAND DIRECTOR: NOW WHAT?** will give you real insight into many important facets of band directing.

What Dr. Wise has included represents a synthesis of proven methods, materials and ideas. The many practical examples will provide you with a launching pad from which you can become airborne rather comfortably while learning how to handle the controls. If you are beginning with a good set of musical and people management skills, once you have extracted many of the ideas contained in this book to fit your situation and personality, you will not fail.

Couple all of that with the knowledge that there are thousands of us who have been in this business for thirty years or more who are willing to help smooth the way for you. So, share your dreams as well as your concerns with those who have already been on this most amazing journey. We know how it feels, and we never lose our willingness to help nor our love for a truly great profession.

M. Max McKee, Director
The American Band College
Editor, Bandworld Magazine

PART ONE

BEFORE SCHOOL BEGINS

*"Come to the edge," he said. They said, "We are afraid."
"Come to the edge," he said. They came. He pushed them
. . . and they flew.*

– Guillaume Appolinaire

FIRST YEAR PHILOSOPHY

In a short amount of time you will have survived the rigors of college, the struggles of preparing a resume, endured the interview process, and signed on the dotted line. SO . . . YOU'RE THE NEW BAND DIRECTOR: *NOW WHAT?*

The first year at any new job is a challenge. Expectations, relationships, rehearsals, performances, paperwork, and a host of other important issues face you. How will you approach your new position? Will you enter with great confidence, taking charge and implementing change immediately? Or will you use your first year to evaluate the situation while making plans for the following term? Perhaps you will take a middle-of-the-road approach, making a case by case evaluation as each situation presents itself. No one can tell you which method is best because each situation is dependent upon your philosophy, personality, school district, administration, community, and students. Don't be alarmed, there are ways to help ensure success!

The keys to a successful first year can be remembered by the acrostic **P.O.P – PREPARATION, ORGANIZATION, and PRECLUSION**. In truth, these skills define a master teacher. Will you make mistakes? Of course! Teachers are not perfect, nor will they ever be; however, with preparation, organization, and preclusion, you limit the majority of first year errors. It is also imperative that you be flexible and willing to adapt; after all, *the only thing constant in life is change*. Beginning right now, consider yourself a professional music educator, and although you may feel apprehensive about embarking upon this new chapter in your life, *take that monumental step to the other side of the podium*.

DISCIPLINE

Discipline must be dealt with *prior to beginning the school year*. This is your first task! Over the past ten years, public school

systems have evolved into a virtual disciplinary nightmare. Recent studies show that one in ten public school students admits to bringing a gun to school, and one in fourteen discloses that they have been threatened by a gun. One hundred thirty-five thousand guns are brought to school every day! In addition, over nine hundred public school teachers are verbally abused every hour, and forty are physically assaulted in that same scant time frame. The fact that these major disciplinary issues exist is evidence that a host of less severe problems occur on a regular basis. Whether you believe this to be a societal problem or an educational one, you must be *ready and willing* to deal with the situation.

Let's first agree upon the correct definition of discipline. **Discipline is simple order** – nothing more and nothing less. *Without order, you have chaos.* Will you have discipline issues arise? Of course! All professional educators encounter them; however, it is the method in which you approach and deal with these issues that will allow you to succeed. Disciplinary responsibilities are inherent in your job description; you cannot simply transfer these adversities to your building principal. *You* will be responsible for handling the majority of classroom disruptions, so the quicker you sharpen your skills, the better.

Many educators have model classrooms, and no doubt you have experienced, first hand, a teacher who has demonstrated exemplary skills. By the same token, most have been exposed to a teacher who exhibited poor disciplinary methods, a situation where chaos was tolerated. The title of teacher not only brings *empowerment*, but *responsibility* – the responsibility to maintain an orderly and educationally sound environment for your students. Unfortunately, one of the most basic tools needed to survive in education is rarely discussed in college teacher preparation courses, and although your student teaching experience is a worthwhile endeavor, it does not authorize you to have complete disciplinary control. The three keys to a successful discipline plan are: **EXPECTATIONS, CONSISTENCY, and FAIRNESS.**

Expectations

Olympic gold medalist, Frank Shorter stated “. . . motivation is a subtle thing; there must be an *attainable goal* if one is to succeed.” Disciplinary success begins with the development of high but attainable expectations. What kind of behavior should you require of your student musicians? Only you can answer that question. Of special consideration is the fact that instrumental groups tend to be much larger in size than traditional classrooms, sometimes housing three or four times as many learners. This, coupled with the fact that all of your students have access to *noisemakers*, demands that your expectations be very high.

Take time to list your behavioral expectations.

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____
9. _____
10. _____