

2015 Blair County Jr. High Honors Band

Dr. Travis J. Weller, Conductor

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Rehearsal and Concert Goals – Sharing, Learning, Serving

1. To artistically share music composed in a variety of styles and forms
2. To gain new musical insight and knowledge, to improve musical skills, engage in musical thought, and apply this understanding and ability in a meaningful context.
3. To represent and serve our schools and community as Ambassadors of Music.

My challenge to you is one of **RESPECT** for being selected for this festival:

Respect – Grant other students, directors, the music and the school in which we rehearse the self-worth they deserve.

Encourage – Raise each other up as we make music together.

Support - Enhance your sound and playing with great posture, hand position and AIR! ☺

Pride – You don't just represent your school or county, you represent all that can be great in music.

Effort – Prepare your music to the best of your ability so that we can go beyond the notes.

Cooperate – Work with each other, the music, your instrument, and your guest conductor to get the most out of this moment.

“T” – the “T’s” of playing: in tone, in tune, in time, with technique, and in touch.

Some other “notes” for you to look over:

- As Duke Ellington once said – “The most important thing a musician learns how to do is listen.”
- As our rehearsal begins, play so that you can hear, not so you can be heard. When **YOU** blend in, **WE** stand out.
- The moments of rest before your entrances are very import – *engage your mind to be aware of your aural surroundings so your entrance adds to the ensemble.*
- Focus on the expressive elements in music and not just reading the notation – get more out of the music from the very start so that the music can take us beyond the pages.

About our music for the festival:

***Nimrod* by Edward Elgar/arranged by Jay Bocook**

Edward Elgar is a famous English composer who is known to most band students because he wrote *Pomp and Circumstance* (often heard at graduations). Arguably his best work is *Enigma Variations*. One of the movements *Nimrod* is a beautiful and expressive ballad that Elgar wrote for one of his friends. We must play this song with superior tone and intonation, and effort to use legato articulation through the majority of the piece. There are wonderful opportunities for expressive playing throughout this work.

***Kentucky-1800* by Clare Grundman**

Clare Grundman wrote a number of wonderful pieces for school concert band that provide a window to see some of the American “popular” music of yester year. Three American folk songs are presented in *Kentucky 1800* including *The Promised Land*, *I’m Sad and Lonely*, and *Cindy*. The melodies are reminiscent of the time which the pioneers forged towards the west, and each song tells a story with its own unique, emotional template.

***Allied Honor* by Karl L. King/arranged by James Swearingen**

While Sousa and Fillmore get lots of attention by band directors, we should not forget the contributions of the quiet, and gracious, yet physical and spiritual giant that was Karl King. He lived out a boyhood dream by running away to join the circus! There he became a virtuoso baritone player and had some of his first compositions published at age 17. *Allied Honor* is a wonderful example of King’s understated compositional style in the march form. There are a couple of adjustments we will make to give the march a different feel. Please make sure you have a pencil with you to mark the music.

***Unraveling* by Andrew Boysen Jr.**

Dr. Boysen is an accomplished and prolific composer of band music, and his work *Unraveling* presents a unique challenge to us. The melodic material is built off an octatonic scale (alternates by a series of whole and half-steps) which creates moments of unique tension. The title has a dual meaning though. The concept of a repeating melodic line that gradually grows in intensity was first presented by Maurice Ravel in his famous work *Bolero*. The sinister melody increases in texture and speed(!) as the work begins to “unravel” in front of the audience. Hence the dual title *un-Ravel-ing*. I would encourage all of you to familiarize yourself with the octatonic scale example on the pages that follow.

***Suspended Animation* by Patrick J. Burns**

Written for an honor band setting similar to the Blair County Band, *Suspended Animation* combines elements of a relentless rhythmic drive and harmonic material with emphasis on a suspension. Suspensions are dissonances (tense sounds) which occur when one voice moves away from a consonance texture (relaxed sounds), leaving the stationary voice temporarily “suspended” in sound. Playing “In a comfortable groove ♩=140” is very important to the success of the piece, so we must dig in and play with lots of energy.

***Yankee Fanfare* by Travis J. Weller**

I am an ardent supporter of folk music and patriotic music for concert bands. It is wonderful when I have the opportunity to craft something that appeals to both these areas. *Yankee Doodle* remains a very popular American patriotic song that is instantly recognizable by all generations. Many are surprised to learn of its British origins. The song through the Revolutionary War until now has become a symbol of America’s pride and sense of accomplishment. Thought it is marked as **Allegretto** ♩=112, I have found a slightly faster tempo really makes this piece shine. When not marked with a slur, I expect us to play with a marcato articulation.

I am looking forward to meeting you all in February!