The Care and Feeding of the Second Band:
Second Band Doesn't Mean Second Best!

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THE SECOND BAND

Expectations

- The program: Supporting the direction and vision provided by the Director of Bands

- Sharing your ideas for the program as part of a team

- Continue to grow as a professional

- Always give focus to the students

- Establish musical and technical expectations for the "second band"

- Serve as a counselor

Building Morale

- Believe in the band (they will reflect your opinion of them)

- Be supportive and use "WE" language

- Avoid comparisons

- Select engaging literature

- Provide equal performance opportunities

- Remind students that there is not room for everyone in the "other" band

- Avoid use of "first" band terminology

- ENJOY working with this band

- Challenge the band

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Developing Program Autonomy

• A Part versus Apart: Developing a positive group dynamic begins with connecting students with the entire music program

• Provide the same authentic musical experience that is expected of the advanced ensemble through appropriate literature

• Create unique and special opportunities for the ensemble

• Director's attitude toward ensemble will directly affect the student experience

Auditions

• An audition is not a judgment of a person, rather an evaluation of that person's abilities at that time.

• Audition materials should not turn anyone away

• Physical conditions of the audition site/personnel listening to auditions

• Preliminary audition should select your top ensemble

• Secondary audition should select additional ensembles

• Involve private/studio teachers in your decisions

• Last chair versus solo chair

• Re-audition opportunities

Filling the Gaps

• Contacting those who might be interested in participating or left the program recently

• Contact those with scheduling problems to see if problems can be worked out

• Excessive numbers in certain sections might yield some individuals willing to switch instruments

• Music majors on minor instruments

• Offer beginning/intermediate instruction on certain instruments

• Do the footwork!

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Repertoire Selection
- Finding the balance between technical challenges vs. musical experience: Are second bands inherently less expressive?

- Resources:
  - State Music lists
  - Texts
  - Music conferences
  - References of colleagues
  - Websites: Composers, Ensembles, Publishers, Music Stores, and Conferences

Rehearsal Strategies
- Rehearse the same number of hours as the "first" band

- Have section leaders and allow them to run sectionals

- Use a rotating chair system for one concert

- Develop fundamentals and work scales

- SING chorales

- Balance intensity and levity

Creative Programming
- Use visuals to enhance the program

- Share a concert with another school and do a combined band piece

- Bring in a guest composer or soloist

- Feature members/sections of the band

- Have the Director of Bands conduct a selection

Creating Performance Opportunities
- Separate performances

- Specialized performances related to pedagogy or research at conferences

- Commissioning and performances with guest composers

- Contemporary Music Festivals

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- Guest conductors and guest artists

THE SECOND BAND DIRECTOR

Defining Your Role
- Eliminate "assistant" from the vocabulary

- Develop a collaborative environment instead of a director hierarchy

- Develop a departmental philosophy and curriculum for continuity of all performing ensembles

- Utilize your strengths in the music department

- Work with a top group: students at all levels will benefit from working with you

Your Philosophy
- Have a "sound" philosophy

- Does your philosophy serve you and your institution or district?

- Secrets to success

- Find a mentor/be a mentor

Developing Collaborative Relationships
- Communicate

- Share the decision making, administrative duties, and daily tasks

- Attend all concerts within the department

- Talk and socialize with other teachers within the department and school

- Get involved in other activities within the school

- Get to know professionals from other schools and universities

- Seek input and advice from other professionals

Finding Your Niche
- Don't be a clone

- Become an expert

- Fill a void/Supplant a weakness

- Temper your ego, and learn to share the limelight

- Learn to multi-task, become a professional "plate spinner"

- Enjoy your role!

Measuring Your Success
- Self-evaluation

- Professional development

- Student assessment

- Student and parent feedback

- Setting and achieving personal, curricular, and ensemble goals

- Student morale and esprit de corps

- Student enrollment: Playing an instrument is more important than the band in which the student plays

- Students continuing to play their instrument after high school graduation

- The success of the advanced ensemble is a reflection of the success of the "second band"

Personal Musical Growth
- "Filling the gaps" of our own musical knowledge

- Research

- Active listening

- Seeking new literature

- Attend rehearsals of other ensembles

- Steal from everyone, share with everyone

- Be a sponge – Never Stop Learning!

Favorite Quotes

We're number two. We try harder.

~ Avis Rental Cars

And in the end it's not the years in your life that count. It is the life in your years.

~ Abraham Lincoln

While it is wise to learn from experience, it is wiser to learn from the experiences of others.

~ Rick Warren

Music expresses that which cannot be said and on which it is impossible to be silent.

~ Victor Hugo

Eighty percent of success is showing up.

~ Woody Allen

Selected Resources

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"Online Resources for Band Directors"
http://150.216.12.227/knighten/

A website that provides links to more than 170 websites with recordings of wind ensemble and band repertoire for beginning, intermediate and advanced ensembles. Maintained by Christopher Knighten.

"The First Days of School"
http://www.glavac.com/harrywong.htm

A summary of the major concepts covered by Harry Wong.

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