A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SIX EXEMPLARY BAND DIRECTORS’ REPERTOIRE SELECTION PROCESSES

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the study was to conduct a multiple case study of six exemplary band directors’ repertoire selection processes. Two collegiate, two high school, and two middle school band directors were nominated based on their outstanding reputations as instrumental music educators and their knowledge in repertoire selection. Each band director was interviewed in person and asked ten semi-structured interview questions on the repertoire selection process they use for the ensembles that they teach. Each interview lasted approximately 45 minutes and was video-recorded and transcribed. The band directors identified a number of factors that are important in the repertoire selection process with the most important being that the music is high quality. The band directors use different criteria in determining quality of music, which include form, harmony, scoring, variety, and unpredictability. The directors select music that is appropriate for their ensemble’s ability level by selecting works that will challenge the students but also allow them to be successful in making music. The band directors indicated that an effective concert program has a variety of composers and styles as well as works that appeal to the audience, students, and conductor. The band directors also offer suggestions on how young band directors can become more effective in the repertoire selection process.
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CHAPTER I:
INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

The selection of repertoire for bands is important regardless of the musical ability level of the students. As music educators, band directors must find music that is of good quality, appropriate difficulty, varying styles and that provides musical content to teach students in their ensembles. Reynolds (2000) stated that “a well planned repertoire creates the framework for an excellent music curriculum that fosters the musical growth of our students” (p. 31). Hayward (2004) stated that “literature chosen for preparation in the ensemble provides the teaching materials used by the instructor to teach musical concepts as well as musical skills” (p. 2). If repertoire is to serve as the curriculum for performance ensembles, the importance of the process used by the band director to select repertoire for his or her ensemble becomes critical.

Several accomplished band, orchestra, and choral directors who teach a variety of ensembles have identified the criteria that they believe music educators should use in selecting repertoire. Reynolds (2000) suggested that a band director must use a selection process in which questions are answered regarding the appropriateness of standard or newly published repertoire, the difficulty of the music, the ability of the repertoire to be prepared in the amount of rehearsal time available, and the strengths of players in the ensemble (p. 32). Colwell and Goolsby (2002) believed that the primary considerations in band repertoire selection at any level should be instrumentation, student achievement level, audiences, conductor competence, and quality of music (p. 425).

There has been minimal research to identify the process band directors at the middle, high school, and collegiate level use in selecting appropriate repertoire to serve as their students’
Young (1998) surveyed high school and collegiate band directors to inquire about the repertoire they selected and the criteria they used. Young found that 47.7 percent of the directors were selecting music not considered quality repertoire by experienced conductors in the wind band medium (p. 98). Young found that many directors struggled to find quality music that they felt was educationally appropriate for their ensemble (p. 100). Woike (1990) surveyed college band directors on the current wind band curricula as well as the current repertoire selection processes. Woike indicated that 72 percent of the most frequently performed compositions were not identified by the panel as the most significant works for wind band (p. 90). Woike also found that a greater awareness of the musical abilities of a conductor’s ensemble would aid them in the repertoire selection process (p. 104). Woike suggested that band directors would benefit from learning an appropriate process to analyze musical compositions they are considering for their band (p. 105). Carney (2005) found that band directors were selecting compositions more for educational value than artistic merit. Howard (2001) investigated middle school band directors’ music selection processes and developed a core repertoire for middle school band. McMullian (1997) investigated the selection process and programming choices of university band directors at institutions in the Coalition of Christian Universities. King (2001) surveyed band directors of non-auditioned ensembles at 45 small colleges.

None of these studies focused on the specific processes of a small number of outstanding band directors at the middle school, high school, or collegiate level. However, conclusions of previous research suggested that several similarities and differences may exist in the repertoire selection process for middle school, high school, and collegiate level bands. The studies also indicated the need for directors to be educated in the process of finding appropriate and quality repertoire for their respective ensembles.
Need for the Study

The previous research on band repertoire selection has been primarily descriptive, in which data were collected from a large number of band directors through surveys. Cooper (2001) stated that “Music educators would be aided by an establishment of criteria for determining quality of repertoire” (p. 27). In addition, Colwell and Goolsby (2002) indicated that the repertoire selection process requires a great amount of time and expertise, and although many band directors may spend considerable time selecting music, they may not know what to look for when selecting the best repertoire (p. 425). Since this may be the case, research should inquire further about the selection methods of several accomplished conductors who have spent considerable time and expertise selecting repertoire. A qualitative multiple case study of exemplary band directors who teach ensembles of varying ability level might provide insight into the most successful practices in selecting repertoire for bands.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to conduct a multiple case study of six exemplary band directors’ repertoire selection processes. The study determined the method that outstanding band directors use in selecting repertoire of the highest quality that is suitable for their ensembles. The study also identified similarities and differences that middle school, high school, and collegiate band directors use in the repertoire selection processes. The considerations and criteria that these highly accomplished band directors use may provide insight into considerations and criteria that band directors should use in establishing their own repertoire selection process for their ensembles.
Previous research on band repertoire has focused on the importance of the selection on the curriculum and musical development of students, criteria used in selecting repertoire, and descriptive research studies involving band directors’ programming choices and selection criteria. The review of literature is divided into three sections pertaining to these areas: (a) Importance of Selecting Repertoire in Instrumental Music, (b) Criteria for Selecting Repertoire, and (c) Research in Selecting Repertoire.

Importance of Selecting Repertoire in Instrumental Music

There is considerable research and writing on the importance of repertoire in instrumental ensembles. The band room serves as a classroom for learning musical concepts and skills, and the repertoire becomes the curricular model for this development.

Apfelstadt (2000) stated “the selection of repertoire is the single most important task that music educators face before entering the classroom or rehearsal room” (p. 19). Even though there are now national standards for music, Apfelstadt claimed that it is still the teacher’s responsibility to determine the materials and means through which the students will meet these musical goals. A selection of quality repertoire can aid the director in teaching musical elements and enhance the students’ understanding of specific musical concepts (p. 19). Apfelstadt suggested that three main principles be applied in the repertoire selection process. The first is the selection of quality music. Quality music has a balance of tension and release as well as a balance of anticipation and surprise. Music of high quality also expresses itself through its form and depth (p. 19). The second main principle is selecting music that is teachable. Apfelstadt remarked that quality music is teachable because it contains outstanding musical characteristics.
for the students to learn. A teachable piece of music will contain depth of form, pitch, dynamics and texture. Teachable music will also expand the technical abilities of the students (p. 19).

Apfelstadt claimed that the final principle of repertoire selection is appropriate context. The music should balance the style of the other pieces of the program and fit the venue and time of the performance. The music that is performed must also have capability to reach the expected audience of the performance. Finally, the difficulty of the piece must not be so easy that the students will be bored or so hard that the students will be frustrated and discouraged (p. 20).

Reynolds (2000) stated that even with his considerable experience in the band profession, he finds repertoire selection is the most difficult but most important task he must carry out (p. 31). The process of repertoire selection begins with a number of questions that must be answered. Reynolds wrote that the considerations should include the best of the newly published repertoire as well as a look at the standard repertoire. Directors must consider student acceptance and ability as well as the audience acceptance. Reynolds also indicated it is important to consider the amount of rehearsal time to prepare the music and the specific instrumentation strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble (p. 31). There must also be a balance of style and musical aesthetics in the selected repertoire (p. 31).

Reynolds (2000) discussed keeping a list of the core repertoire for the level of ensemble a director teaches as an aid in the selection process. The state list for contest or festival can also serve as a guide in repertoire selection. Reynolds also suggested the MENC website (www.menc.org) as a source for repertoire lists, which includes literature lists for band, orchestra, and chorus as well as All-State repertoire from past years. It is also important to keep a list of pieces performed by the ensemble in previous years. This not only allows the conductor to
see when standard repertoire was last performed, but also becomes an indicator of balance in programming choices (p. 32).

Reynolds (2000) believed that in an educational ensemble, the piece must be well within the technical limits in order for the ensemble to explore the most musical aspects of the work. He also stated that repertoire selection can be aided by colleagues and networking. Most importantly, Reynolds concluded that students will be served the most by music that is of quality, depth, and substance, because this music will provide the best opportunities for musical development (p. 33).

Miles (2002) identified the importance of developing a curriculum plan in the chapter “Strategies for Teaching Music in the Rehearsal” in *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*, volume four. Miles stated, “the first step in overall planning for teaching musicianship is to develop a curriculum- ‘a long range guide for teaching music.’” (p. 65). Miles continued, “The literature serves as the primary text for which basic musical ideas and concepts for musicianship development are presented in a cyclic period” (p. 65). Miles outlined a unit of study that utilizes music in a three to four year cycle of literature with the purpose of providing a comprehensive program of musical development while also preparing for performances (p. 66). Miles suggested that the unit of study could direct lessons towards particular musical concepts found in the repertoire that would aid in the overall development of the musicians (p.66).

Sindberg (2001) stated in her contribution to *Spotlight on Teaching Band* that the directors of performance ensembles must understand that the music they select is the curriculum. “Therefore, it is essential that careful consideration be given to music selection-regardless of the age or achievement level of the students” (p. 81). Sindberg continued that if music becomes the curriculum, it is important to consider the repertoire selection for an entire year or the entire
duration a student may be involved in an instrumental music program. Sindberg suggested making a repertoire list for these time periods. “Creating a repertoire list gives everyone a chance to look at the broader, long-term view and will quickly make it clear if the repertoire list lacks balance, variety, or quality” (p. 81). A well-planned repertoire list will provide a strong foundation for musical learning in an ensemble. “Repertoire receives a lot of attention because quality repertoire is essential to excellence in teaching and learning music” (p. 81).

Persellin (2000) discussed the importance of selecting high quality repertoire that is appropriate for musical ensembles. She stated that quality musical repertoire allows the teacher to make connections outside of the classroom during the process of enhancing musical skills (p. 17). Warning of the danger of selecting poor repertoire, Persellin stated, “when repertoire has not been chosen wisely for an ensemble, no amount of charisma or creative teaching can undo the mistake” (p. 17). Directors must also consider if the quality repertoire is appropriate for their ensemble. Persellin wrote, “the music should not only reinforce our ensemble’s strengths, but also stretch them in some way” (p. 17).

Criteria for Selecting Repertoire

Experts in the wind band profession have identified the process and criteria they feel should be used in selecting quality repertoire that serves the educational needs of the ensembles.

Cooper (2001) stated, “the selection of appropriate music for our ensembles is one of the most important responsibilities of any ensemble director, and it is a task which can consume an enormous amount of time. It is, however, time well-spent, because one of our primary responsibilities as music educators is to find good music of the highest caliber to rehearse and perform” (p. 69). Cooper suggested ten criteria that should be considered, but very few pieces will meet all of these criteria. The music should have good melody, interesting harmony, a
variety of texture, expressive challenges, opportunities for student imagination, potential for emotional response, expand the students’ knowledge of music, contribute to the overall concert program, fit the developmental stage of the band, and be written by a quality composer (p. 69).

Cooper discussed that music should have stood the test of time and should have rhythmic vitality and originality (p. 69). Once music has been selected for its quality, the director must determine how the music will fit the strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble. The technical demands of the piece should not be so great that there is no time for the students to develop tone, intonation, balance, blend, and phrasing. Cooper commented that quality and suitable music can be found through evaluating resource recordings, publisher catalogues, music lists, and books on band repertoire (p. 69). Cooper indicated that the selection process might be aided by an establishment of standard criteria to easily identify quality music in the repertoire (p. 69).

Cramer (1997) stated in his chapter in volume one of *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* that the main focus of the publication is to provide band directors with a procedure to achieve musical success (p. 7). Without the selection of quality and appropriate repertoire, there cannot be the same opportunities for musical growth and achievement. Cramer recalled that when he began teaching, his most difficult task was choosing the literature for his high school and junior high school bands (p. 7). Cramer often asked for advice from his college band directors and experienced directors in the area (p. 7). Cramer stated that in his early years of teaching, the four main issues in selecting repertoire were if the students would enjoy it, if the players were competent enough to perform it, if there was enough rehearsal time to prepare the music, and if the parents and school personnel would enjoy the program (p. 7).

Cramer (1997) learned over his many years of experience that music that is of high artistic merit will provide better opportunities for students to learn appropriate musical skills.
while also producing worthwhile performances (p. 8). He suggested several criteria that should be used in evaluating quality of music. The music must have a well conceived form and structure. It must have creative melodies as well as counter-melodic material. The harmonic structure should also be creative and well planned. The rhythmic character of the piece should have energy and variety. There should also be contrast in the musical elements, as well as scoring that represents good potential in instrumental timbre and tone. Finally, Cramer stated that the music must have an emotional impact and that if directors are going to teach students about music while performing music, then all of these considerations must be made (p. 8). Cramer indicated that with all of the great music out there, directors should not have to settle for music not of high quality (p.8).

Del Borgo (1988) stated that the goal of repertoire should be to develop aesthetic and technical growth in the players. Style, technical challenges, audience and performer appeal, and educational value are important points to consider. Above all, however, the music must be of good quality (p. 23). He explained that quality music provides opportunities for creativity and discovery, has a variety of melody, timbre, and texture, shows contrast of dynamics, rhythm, tempo, instrumentation and key, and has dramatic shape, inventive harmony, coherent ideas, and natural transitions (p. 25). Del Borgo wrote that a good concert program should consist of the finest composers for the level of the ensemble. A well-educated conductor should not allow students to perform poorly written music (p. 25).

Hilliard (1992) wrote that quality band literature for young students should teach specific concepts and skills as well as aid the director in reinforcing fundamentals (p. 11). Hilliard stated that this music should contain melodic and rhythmic content, harmonic structure, unique texture, and teaching concepts (p. 23). Sustained notes in music for young band can be
used to develop embouchure, tone quality, breath support, and intonation (p. 12). Hilliard also
underlined the importance of homophonic rhythm to emphasize the concept of lining up parts in
ensembles. Consideration of doublings of instrument parts and the opportunity for different
instruments to play interesting lines are important as well. Other considerations should be
scoring, range, key signature, style, and structural elements (p. 13). Hilliard claimed that
percussion parts are important in young band music and should blend with the work and add
textural colors (p. 23). Hilliard stated that marches are excellent selections for teaching marcato
style, while ballads or chorales are excellent for teaching legato style (p. 23).

Owen (2001) wrote a chapter in Spotlight on Teaching Band on assessing difficulty in
band music and stated that, “suitability of any work requires the thoughtful consideration of
many elements, both individually and collectively” (p. 77). Owen suggested 12 areas that must
be assessed when determining the appropriateness of repertoire for the ensemble.
Instrumentation must be within the access of the ensemble, and the scoring must not include
excessive doubling or scoring that is too thin for the ensemble to play confidently. The length of
a piece should be considered for endurance of younger musicians. Key signatures and
accidentals should be examined to determine challenges in tuning and technique (p. 77). Owen
indicated that tempos are critical when it comes to technical limitations of an ensemble. If a
piece cannot be performed at a tempo that maintains its musical integrity, it may not be the best
choice for an ensemble (p.77). Owen stated that an ensemble must understand the historical
period of a composition, including harmonic, rhythmic, and articulation styles of the work (p. 78).
Owen noted that meter and rhythms can be more challenging if they are changed frequently
or unfamiliar such as in jazz or multicultural styles (p. 79). Interval shaping of lines adds
challenges with tuning and technique, and the intervalllic relationships should be assessed in both
melodic and supporting lines (p. 79). Owen recommended that range and tessitura be considered both from a playability standpoint and from a comfort standpoint. Players should not consistently be playing in an uncomfortable range, as this will compromise optimal tone and intonation (p. 79). Owen stated that by evaluating all of these items on their own and as they relate to each other, the match between the performers and repertoire will be stronger, and the music will be performed more successfully (p. 79).

Pearson (2001) contributed a chapter entitled “Selecting Music for Young Band” to the edition of *Teaching Music through Performance in Beginning Band*. Pearson stated, “without a doubt, one of the band conductor’s important responsibilities is the selection of music for their ensemble. Over the decades, the quantity of pieces being published each year for school bands has grown dramatically. While this has given teachers many more choices, it has also made the task of selecting just the right music for their ensembles more difficult. When teachers consider their curriculum requirements, programming needs, technical limitations of the ensemble, and musical possibilities, selecting music for band can be a daunting task” (p. 45).

Pearson (2001) identified a number of criteria that must be considered when selecting appropriate repertoire for the young band. The first and most important consideration should be the musical artistry of the piece. The piece should have a well-conceived formal structure, creative melodies, harmonic originality, rhythmic variety, contrast of styles, scoring that highlights tone and timbre, and emotional impact (p. 46). The next consideration must be the technical limitations of the ensemble. A piece should be a challenge for the ensemble, but not be far enough outside the technical ability of the performers that they are not able to learn the musical and expressive elements of the piece (p. 47).
Pearson suggested a number of areas to evaluate when determining technical demands of a piece of young band music (p. 47). Pearson explained that repetition, variation, and unity are important things to look for when examining meter and rhythm. Rhythmic complexity of the piece should give students an opportunity to develop their expertise in this area. Passages that lie within the ensemble’s dexterity and facility should be examined as well (p. 50). Especially with young students, range and tessitura of specific instruments must be considered. Music should be selected within ranges that enhance rather than compromise the development of student tone quality (p. 51). Pearson stated that melodic difficulty can be determined by looking at leaps, use of accidentals, and length of phrasing. (p. 52). Harmonies can be evaluated for difficulty by studying interval size, scoring, voice leading, and dissonances (p. 53). The more difficult textures will use less tutti scoring, less doublings, less unison rhythmic motives, and multiple instrument parts (p. 54). Pearson remarked that the key signatures are particularly important in determining difficulty of intonation. Keys such as F major and C major will cause more tuning problems for young musicians (p. 55). Musical maturity of the ensemble or the ability to play with dynamic control, expression of tempo, and tone endurance is very important to consider in young band music (p. 57). Pearson stated that selection of repertoire for young band must not only fit the programming needs but fit within the curriculum for the developing band students. Programming of a beginning band concert should include an energetic opener, a major of work of high musical quality, a lyrical piece contrasting the major work, a feature tune that might showcase a particular section, and a powerful closer that gives the audience a positive final impression of the band (p. 60). However, the director must select these pieces paying careful attention to the opportunities that they will provide to teach students musical concepts such as tonality, rhythm, phrasing, and music theory (p. 58).
Research in Selecting Repertoire

Published research studies in journals and a number of theses and dissertations have addressed the band repertoire selection process. The primary method for research has been surveys of large populations of music educators.

Carney (2005) surveyed Florida public school band directors to determine the rankings of six criteria of repertoire suitability and six criteria of repertoire quality. The 237 participants in the study ranked most elements of suitability higher than elements of quality. The three most important criteria were identified as experience of the ensemble, instrumentation of the ensemble, and amount of available rehearsal time. Carney suggested that many band directors fall into a trap of selecting music more for the appropriateness than its overall artistic merit.

Forbes (2001) conducted a survey of 104 choral directors divided into groups of directors considered outstanding and those in the remaining population. The data were gathered through the process of interviews, surveys, and concert programs. Forbes found that there was very little structure to the repertoire selection process of many choral directors (p. 105). Directors consider a number of factors in selecting repertoire but were found to be inconsistent. Individual criteria in selecting repertoire varied based on the type of repertoire being considered, teaching experience, program size, and socioeconomic status of the students (p. 118). Directors in the study that were not a part of the population identified as outstanding selected less variety of classical styles, more popular music, less multicultural selections, and relied more heavily on promotional materials to select repertoire. The directors not identified as outstanding valued quality less as a factor in selecting repertoire than the directors identified as outstanding (p. 119).

Grant (1993) surveyed Missouri high school band directors on the criteria used to select concert band repertoire and found that school and band program size, teaching experience,
teacher attendance at state and national conferences, and program participation in contests or festivals did not indicate significant differences in criteria used in selecting music. However, Grant indicated that the criteria ranked highest across the board were the quality of the musical composition, teaching goals, conductor appeal, contest or concert suitability, student appeal, and student recommendations. The least important criteria were publisher, publisher designated grade level, cost, and transcription versus original band works.

Hayward (2004) conducted a dissertation study that developed a course in band literature based on the standard literature selected by a panel of secondary school and collegiate band directors. Her study surveyed 83 collegiate and secondary school band directors who taught in all six regions of the College Band Directors’ National Association. The survey asked band directors to list pieces that they thought should be included in a class on the core repertoire of the wind band (p. 6). The panel of directors identified 24 pieces from grades III-VI from the core repertoire to be included in a course on band literature (p. 78).

Hayward (2004) identified the need for a course in wind band literature based on research showing that pre-service band directors needed more education in determining quality of repertoire (p. 27). As a part of her survey, Hayward also asked the band directors to identify criteria they used in evaluating quality of repertoire (p. 62). Hayward asked the panel of directors to indicate the criteria identified by Cramer in *Teaching Music through Performance Band, volume one*, they felt was important as well as suggest other criteria that were important in determining quality (p. 63). The criteria identified by the panel of directors included form, melody and countermelody, harmonic creativity, rhythmic interest, craftsmanship of scoring, unpredictability, consistency in style and ideas, emotional response, and a demonstration of style and expression (p. 64). Hayward found that there was some discrepancy about the priority of
each criterion, but suggested that these ten criteria could serve as meaningful discussion topics in
the course on band literature (p. 64). Hayward also suggested that directors should learn to
devise their own methods for determining quality of music by studying the standard literature (p.
64).

Howard (2001) investigated the repertoire selection practices of middle school band
directors and identified a core repertoire for the middle school band. Howard surveyed 184
middle school band directors considered experts because they had at least ten years in the field, a
successful track record of festival-contest ratings, and spent most of their teaching careers in a
middle school setting. One hundred thirty respondents to the survey identified 17 works as a core
repertoire for the young band. Howard concluded that repertoire for the young band should be
taught more in college methods classes, and that works of high quality needed to be selected on a
more frequent basis. The most important sources in repertoire selection were music publisher
materials, live performances, and recordings, and the most important factors in repertoire
selection decisions were the quality of the music, technical considerations within the music, and
the limitations of the ensemble performing the music.

King (2001) conducted a study that surveyed 45 conductors of small college non-
auditioned bands to determine the quality and technical difficulty of the repertoire performed by
these ensembles. King also asked for the criteria the conductors used to select the repertoire. The
conductors provided programs of their concerts for the years of 1997 to 2000, and the repertoire
was evaluated for quality using the Craig Young Repertoire Evaluation Inventory (REI), and
technical difficulty was determined by experts in the field as well as published literature. 61.18
percent of the compositions performed were identified as quality compositions. The mean
difficulty score of the repertoire was 4.22 on a six-point scale. King found that the conductors
who performed high quality repertoire valued exposing their students to music and composers of high artistic merit. The conductors who performed music of a lower quality level were more concerned with audience and student approval than the quality of composers and compositions.

McMullian (1997) surveyed band conductors at various universities in the Coalition of Christian Colleges and Universities (CCCU) on their program demographics, music selection criteria, concert programming criteria, band program goals, and Christian influence on the program. The findings of the study showed that the music selection criteria were similar to other collegiate band conductors, and that the directors emphasized selecting music of high quality that served educational purposes. Band directors were also concerned with a variety of style, moods, and tempos in their concert programming decisions. McMullian found that the repertoire selection process should include aesthetic, educational, and utilitarian needs of the ensemble, and that the results of the study show an emerging core repertoire for collegiate bands with which band directors should become familiar.

Woike (1990) conducted a survey on wind band performance repertoire at universities and the current repertoire selection process. Twenty-six college band directors responded to the survey, which included questions on demographic information on the ensembles’ enrollment, budget information, instructional goals of the ensembles, factors contributing to repertoire selection, significant works for wind band, and works performed over the past four years (p. 75). Woike produced a listing of the works performed at the participating institutions over the past four years. Woike concluded that, “frequency of performance is not an adequate indicator of a composition’s perceived overall artistic, technical, and educational merit, in that 72 percent of the 100 most frequently performed compositions during the study do not appear within the respondents subjective listing of the ‘most significant wind band compositions’” (p. 90).
Woike (1990) additionally found that directors were often selecting works that did not necessarily fit what they indicated as their instructional goals, musical ability levels, and demographics of their ensembles (p. 90). There was statistical evidence indicating the major factors in the selection of music for curriculum. The major factors identified were educational and artistic needs of the conductor, ensemble, and audience; integrity and artistic validity within the band medium; variety and range of interest for performer and audience; difficulty, instrumentation, compositional devices, composer, and emotional impact; cultural, historical, and musical significance; program balance, stylistic diversity, expressive content, frequency of performance, form and structure, and instructional potential (p. 60). Woike found no common method of analysis and classification for wind band repertoire, but a majority of the respondents believed that it was important (p. 91).

Young (1998) identified repertoire performed in a large sample of secondary schools for three school years, evaluated the quality of this repertoire, determined resources used to select this repertoire, and determined the criteria used by the directors in selecting this repertoire. The criterion that received the highest rating was that it fit the instrumentation strengths of the ensemble, with 44.4 percent of the respondents indicating this criterion (p. 85). Other important factors included the ability to prepare the technical demands within the rehearsal time, challenging and improving student understanding of musical style and quality, fitting the concert program, student appeal, and historical context (p. 85). Experienced band conductors completed Young’s Repertoire Evaluation Inventory (REI) for the pieces identified in the study. As stated earlier, Young found that 47.7 percent of the directors were selecting music not considered quality repertoire by experienced conductors in the wind band medium. In addition, Young found that 46.04 percent of the compositions considered quality by the experienced conductors
were not performed by the surveyed band directors (p. 98). Young concluded that too many of
the conductors were not developing the knowledge and skills necessary to make selections of
quality repertoire. Young suggested that band directors should increase their knowledge of
quality repertoire and devise a method and criteria to evaluate quality and appropriate repertoire
(p. 114).

Jones (2005) reviewed dissertations about concert band repertoire and also conducted his
own study, both of which appeared together in the *Journal of Band Research*. Jones reviewed the
written for band that could serve as the core repertoire (p. 62). Ostling (1978) had exemplary
band directors evaluate compositions in the band repertoire according to criteria for artistic merit.
The ten criteria were form, shape and design, craftsmanship in scoring, unpredictability,
compositional development, consistency of quality, consistency of style, ingenuity of
development, genuine in idiom, and musical validity beyond historical and pedagogical
importance (p. 64). Gilbert (1993) replicated the Ostling study, which reduced the list of 314
pieces identified as having artistic merit in the Ostling study down to 152 (p. 65). Casey (1993)
identified the works actually being performed by nonselective concert bands at a number of
colleges and universities (p. 66). Gelpi (1984) suggested repertoire that should be studied in
collegete bands to prepare music educators to teach all styles and historical periods (p. 67).
Peterson (1986) surveyed collegiate and high school band directors on the repertoire needs of
music education majors, the core repertoire that the aspiring school band director should know,
and the necessary action by collegiate band directors to meet these needs (p. 68). Peterson
suggested 20 pieces that collegiate band directors should expose music education students to
through performing groups and repertoire classes (p. 68). Gaines (1996) surveyed high school band directors to determine if there was an established core repertoire for the high school concert band. From the surveys, Gaines constructed a list of 106 compositions as the Core Repertoire List. Within this list, 52 works of the top quarter were identified as the Select Repertoire List, and 17 pieces from the top five percent were identified as the Essential Repertoire List (p. 69).

Jones (2005) also conducted his own study surveying Pennsylvania high school concert band directors to see the frequency the compositions in the Gaines study were performed (p. 70). A summary was made of pieces performed by 69 participating high school bands, the most frequently performed compositions, the extent to which the frequently performed compositions aligned with the core repertoire identified in the Gaines study, how directors learn new pieces of music, and what considerations the directors used in selecting the repertoire (p. 71). The 69 schools in the Jones study performed 609 different compositions over the course of the year. Jones identified the compositions performed that appeared on Gaines’ essential, select, and core repertoire lists. Eighty-two percent of the pieces on the essential repertoire list, 72 percent of the pieces from the select repertoire list, and 62 percent of the pieces from the core repertoire list were performed by the Pennsylvania high schools, validating Gaines’ identification of these pieces as standard repertoire (p. 75).

Jones (2005) stated that the directors in his study identified artistic and educational value as well as balanced programming as the most important criteria in selecting repertoire (p. 77). Jones found that more directors were using publisher materials rather than colleagues, concerts, and conferences to identify repertoire they wanted to perform. This finding indicated the importance of directors developing their own way of evaluating music for artistic and educational merit (p. 77). Jones stated, “directors must possess appropriate standards and skills
by which to determine which repertoire best meets the needs of their curriculum. This underscores the importance of Gelpi’s and Peterson’s assertions that the programming practices in collegiate bands, along with collegiate directors discussing repertoire and programming with music education majors, are crucial factors in assisting future directors develop the skills necessary to be critical when choosing repertoire” (p. 77). Jones recommended that teacher preparation programs develop the repertoire evaluation and selection skills of music education majors. The aspiring band director needs to develop their own evaluation and selection skills. Band directors must not only evaluate and analyze works for musical quality, but also determine the suitability for different level bands (p. 79).
CHAPTER III:
PROCEDURES

The purpose of the study was to conduct a multiple case study of six exemplary band directors’ repertoire selection processes. Two collegiate, two high school, and two middle school band directors were selected through a nomination process that identified them as exemplary in their respective positions. The study identified similarities and differences of the repertoire selection processes of these six outstanding band directors through in-person interviews.

Subject Selection

Previous research suggested that band directors may be aided by an establishment of criteria used to select quality and appropriate repertoire for ensembles (Cooper, 2001; Woike, 1990). Colwell and Goolsby (2002) indicated that experienced outstanding band directors might provide younger directors with guidelines for selecting the best literature to teach their ensembles (p. 425). In accordance with these findings, the researcher determined it would be most beneficial to conduct a multiple case study of several band directors who were considered exemplary.

The two collegiate band directors provided two examples of outstanding repertoire selection processes for advanced ensembles including undergraduate and graduate music education, composition, and performance majors. They might also provide insight on ways less experienced band directors can improve their own repertoire selection processes. The two high school band directors provided the examples for repertoire selection processes of advanced public school ensembles that include a wide range of student abilities and musical goals. The two middle school band directors provided two examples of the process and challenges of selecting repertoire for novice performers in a diverse body of repertoire. Two band directors were
selected for each ability level in order to understand the number of different ways repertoire selection can be approached. This allowed the researcher to compare and contrast repertoire selection processes at different levels as well as within the same levels.

The six band directors in this study were selected through a nomination process that included three university band directors at Bowling Green State University. Each band director completed a nomination form independently and indicated four band directors at each the middle school, high school, and collegiate level that they considered exemplary in the field and knowledgeable in the repertoire selection process. The directors were asked to nominate middle school and high school band directors in the state of Ohio and collegiate band directors in the states of Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. The band directors completing the nomination forms were asked to include a description of the nominees’ professional accomplishments and knowledge in repertoire selection. The band director nomination form is included in Appendix A of this thesis.

From the nomination forms, the researcher selected two collegiate, two high school, and two middle school band directors identified by the three band directors to be included in the study. Preference in the selection process was given to directors who appeared on more than one of the nomination forms. One of the selected collegiate band directors was named on two of the three nomination forms and was selected as a result of his outstanding reputation as a collegiate band director, music educator, and mentor to aspiring band directors. The second collegiate band director was named on one nomination form and has appeared as a presenter and conductor at numerous state and national conferences. The two selected high school band directors were named on two of the three nomination forms, and have established state and nationally renowned high school band programs that have performed at state and national conferences. One of the middle school band directors was identified on two nomination forms and has led performances
at Ohio Music Educators Association (OMEA) and American School Band Directors Association (ASBDA) conferences. The remaining middle school band director was named on one nomination form and has led numerous superior performances at OMEA large group contest. The selected exemplary band directors were:

1. Richard Blatti, Associate Director of Bands, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
2. Dr. Rodney Dorsey, Associate Director of Bands, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan
3. George Edge, Director of Bands, Grove City High School, Grove City, Ohio
4. Robert Bass, Director of Bands, William Mason High School, Mason, Ohio
5. Bruce Corrigan, Director of Bands, Bowling Green Junior High School, Bowling Green, Ohio
6. Rob Cebriak, Director of Bands, Gahanna Middle School West, Gahanna, Ohio

Interview Process

The six exemplary band directors were each contacted via a formal invitation letter, which is included in Appendix B, and an email that invited them to participate in the study. The band directors were interviewed in person at a time and place of their convenience. The interviews were video-recorded and transcribed by the researcher who asked ten semi-structured questions inquiring about the process the subjects use in selecting quality and appropriate repertoire for their respective bands. The interview questions, which are included in Appendix C, were constructed based on important issues and considerations found in previous research on band repertoire. The questions included identification of musical criteria used in determining both quality and appropriateness, programming considerations, resources used, student, director, and audience appeal, and ways young band directors could become better educated in the
repertoire selection process. Follow-up questions were asked as needed based on director responses.
CHAPTER IV: RESULTS

This chapter includes a summary of the responses of the six exemplary band directors to ten interview questions on their repertoire selection processes. A brief summary of the professional background and accomplishments of each director is included with his responses.

Richard Blatti

Richard Blatti is the Head of the Ensembles and Conducting Area and Associate Director of Bands at the Ohio State University. He conducts the OSU Symphonic Band and supervises the conducting curricula and the administration of all university ensembles for the School of Music. Ensembles under his direction have recorded for the Naxos, Delos International, Boosey & Hawkes, and Mark Recording labels and have performed at national and regional levels for the College Band Directors National Association, the American Bandmasters Association and the Ohio Music Educators Association. Professor Blatti has twice received The Ohio State University School of Music Distinguished Teaching Award, and in 2007, was presented with the Alumni Award for Distinguished Teaching by the President of the University. Prior to his appointment at OSU, Professor Blatti was Director of Instrumental Music at Albion College in Michigan for ten years, where he was twice selected the outstanding Faculty Member of the Year, and was awarded two grants in support of his research on rehearsal techniques and conducting pedagogy. Blatti also served as Director of Bands and Music Department Chair at York Community High School in Elmhurst, Illinois.

Professor Blatti identified a number of criteria that should determine the quality of the repertoire and stressed the importance of always being aware of the quality of the music above everything else. The compositional language used by the composer of the piece can determine
which criteria of artistic merit outlined in the Gilbert (1993) study are most important in a given work. For example, Blatti commented that a piece by Jennifer Higdon might contain different artistic merit in melody, harmony, form, and rhythmic structure than a Steven Bryant piece. Directors should be listening and determining quality when hearing performances of other bands at concerts, festivals, and conferences. Blatti also discussed the importance of score study in determining quality of literature and stated that “only through effective score study and analysis of a piece can we determine if it is a quality work for our students to perform.” Discussing the quality of works with colleagues and continuing to perform the standard works that have stood the test of time are also important factors in finding quality repertoire. Professor Blatti said that there are many composers that have written a high number of quality works, and they can be trusted on a consistent basis. However, it is important to be wary of performing multiple works by composers that continue to write music with similar content.

Blatti indicated that directors need to place more emphasis on always selecting music of the highest quality and stated that Stephen Budiansky of the Washington Post wrote both an article and presented at the 2009 World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles conference in Cincinnati on the lack of quality literature being performed by wind bands. Budiansky challenged directors to perform higher quality repertoire in the profession. Blatti remarked, “We haven’t evaluated our own music enough in the profession.” He added, “Over the course of our history in wind band, there have not been critics sitting in the audience the way there are in orchestra concerts.” He also said that a commissioned piece can end up not being a quality piece of music, but there is the pressure to perform it because of the time and money that was invested. Blatti was told by his colleague Craig Kirchoff, Director of Bands at the University
of Minnesota, that about 1000 new band pieces are written every year, and Blatti thinks that sometimes only 50 of them fit the criteria establishing them as quality literature.

Professor Blatti addressed appropriateness of repertoire by stating “I personally believe most of us in the profession over-program.” On each individual program with the Symphonic Band at Ohio State, Professor Blatti has what he calls a “project piece.” This is the most difficult piece on the program and challenges the students technically and musically. “I like to have one piece that is almost sight-readable, one project piece, and then pieces of varying degrees of difficulty.” Blatti warned that there is a danger in having multiple pieces beyond the ability level of the students. When this happens, Blatti stated, “You end up chasing notes the entire rehearsal sequence and there is no time for making music.” In certain multiple movement pieces, it is possible to play only certain movements if the entire piece is out of reach for the musicians in the ensemble. However, the ability to do this depends on the type of piece. In certain pieces it is appropriate to program only some movements, while in other pieces performing only select movements compromises the integrity of the piece. Blatti said that that he often finds it difficult to select appropriate repertoire for honor bands because he has never heard the students perform. He often gets past programs of the honor bands, but often does not get recordings to determine the quality of the performances related to the repertoire selection.

Blatti stated that contest and festival programs are often under-programmed and safe in order to get the best rating, which compromises the musical development of the students. He advocated that students need to be challenged in ways that best help their musical development. He continued “A lot of high school directors are so desperate when it comes to festival to make their band sound good that they deliberately program underneath certain players.” Music should be programmed more to the middle of the group, so that the most talented students can still
“excel and grow.” Blatti added that programming of pieces without form, excessive tutti scoring, lack of transitions, and lack of musical content does not allow students the opportunity to learn the best music available to them.

Professor Blatti stated that students should be exposed to the core repertoire, regardless of their ability or other programming concerns. Blatti works hard to maintain a cycle where students in the Symphonic Band have a chance to perform works from the core repertoire. He said, “It upsets me when a student from OSU tells me that they never played a Holst suite.” It is important that students be familiar with significant band composers such as Holst, Vaughan Williams, and John Barnes Chance. Blatti also believes that there are certain pieces from the core repertoire, such as Percy Grainger’s *Lincolnshire Posy*, that should always remain on the OMEA state required list. The process of maintaining a cycle of standard repertoire can be aided if directors keep a list of repertoire that is performed by all ensembles in a district or institution. Blatti stated that this will also help when students move from one ensemble to another that is directed by a colleague. Then, the director can program standard literature that the student has not yet performed. Keeping repertoire lists will also help to avoid duplicating pieces too often, so students get exposed to the most amount of repertoire as possible.

Professor Blatti responded that the balance between performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire is determined by the mission of the ensemble. In the top-tier college groups there is pressure to perform premieres, commissions, and contemporary music. There can even be a tug between bands at different institutions or the same institutions to perform the new up and coming works. Blatti stated, “The mission of my band is to educate future performers and teachers, so more standard literature is programmed.” However, he also said, “last year, we did a
premiere every quarter.” Whether the music is new or standard, Blatti insisted, “The music must make the students grow.”

Programming concerns should be driven by what the students need in their musical development. He also stated that is also important to challenge the audience as listeners. “Every piece on a program should speak to the audience in some way and change them before they leave the concert.” Blatti suggested that themes can be fun and can test the brain of the director. A good theme can bring in both quality repertoire and proper balance. Blatti used a past program entitled “New York, New York” as an example. This program included a contemporary work by Michael Daugherty called *Niagara Falls*, but also a core repertoire work, *George Washington Bridge* by William Schuman. “One of the dangers in the band world is playing pieces that are from the same period of time,” said Blatti. On the program he was working on at the time of the interview, there was a contemporary piece, transcriptions, and a medieval style piece on the same concert. It is always important to have a significant, large work on every program as well.

Professor Blatti suggested that programming for CBDNA or OMEA conferences can be very difficult because of the pressure of performing for colleagues. The program for a conference has to have a balance between heavy literature and pieces that might be a bit lighter and flashier. There is also the fear that programming a piece that is too contemporary won’t appeal to the public school directors. Blatti stated, “The audience must be considered more in public venues.” Blatti commented that the audience should be challenged as listeners but not on every piece of the concert. However, the piece should always speak to both the students and conductors. Blatti insisted that there must be something about the work that makes the conductor passionate and driven. Otherwise, the conductor will not be able to convey the musical emotion intended by the composer.
When Professor Blatti was asked what younger band directors should know about repertoire selection, he said, “The only yardstick at the end of the day should be, did I do what was best for the students? not what was easiest for them?” He continued, “We educate students by exposing them to good music. Be a changer and a motivator, don’t just want the students to love you, want them to love you for the right reasons.” Blatti said, “Performers that play bad music well don’t learn anything.” He added that it is ironic that the profession went from the early days of wind bands where conductors were grasping for new, original works for band, to a time when there are too many works, and too many works that aren’t high quality. Blatti said that quality music shouldn’t be too safe or predictable. Blatti referenced the tenth criteria in the Gilbert (1993) study, emphasizing that quality music should stand as significant not just for historical importance or pedagogical resource.

Professor Blatti indicated that universities can do a better job of preparing students on repertoire selection. It was not until recently that Ohio State had a wind repertoire class. The pressure of contest, audience appeal, and administrative satisfaction can affect programming choices in a negative way. As music educators, “We must stand up to the pressure and dig in for the best music,” said Blatti. He said, “You must be firm in your philosophy and hold your ground in performing good music.” Blatti added that not exposing students to the best music as possible can damage an opportunity.

Blatti concluded, “I wish every young band director put together a concert program and sent it to someone they trust, whether it be a college teacher, or an experienced teacher in the district, and asked for their thoughts on it.” He remembered a concert when he was teaching high school in Illinois when a professor from Drake University sent him a note on the program with feedback indicating he made good choices. Blatti said this was something that meant a great deal
to him as a young teacher. He also suggested evaluating whether or not the musical choices for each rehearsal sequence and concert music gave the students the best possible experience. He suggested getting student feedback to determine if they felt ready for the concert and if there were particular pieces they really enjoyed or did not enjoy. Blatti finished by saying, “Too many teachers are scared to ask for help.”

Dr. Rodney Dorsey

Rodney Dorsey is the Associate Director of Bands at the University of Michigan where he conducts the Concert Band, teaches undergraduate conducting, and conducts the Michigan Youth Band. Prior to this appointment, Dorsey served on the faculties of DePaul and Northwestern Universities. He received the Bachelor of Music Education degree from the Florida State University and the Master’s and Doctor of Music degrees in conducting from Northwestern University. He studied conducting with Dr. James Croft, Mr. John P. Paynter, and Dr. Mallory Thompson. Dorsey gained extensive experience teaching in the public schools of Florida and Georgia. Ensembles under Dr. Dorsey's direction have performed at several state and national events including the Bands of America National Concert Band Festival. Recent presentations include sessions at the Midwest Clinic and the 2002 MENC Biennial National Conference in Nashville, Tennessee, and the Illinois Music Educators Association State Convention.

Dr. Dorsey noted his main criteria in selecting quality literature are scoring, harmony, solo opportunities and form. He said that with scoring he tries to pick music that has enough variety that it will make the band sound different throughout the concert. An example of this on his current concert program was a quiet, song-like work by Carter Pann called *Hold this Boy and Listen*, that contrasted the more thickly scored Giannini *Symphony No. 3*. Dorsey also looks for
balance of harmony. Something that is more dissonant or atonal is followed or preceded by something more tonal. He said form is a consideration but not very high on the list. Dorsey mostly looks at form to try and establish variety on the program. Dorsey said he likes to challenge the advanced students and performance majors of his Concert Band at Michigan in some way on the concert program. Dorsey stated, “Those students need to be challenged and if I can find things to offer solo opportunities within a full band piece or a chamber music setting, that’s good.” Dorsey also tries to find pieces where the students are required to play one on a part. He added that he considers pieces he has done in the last four years or pieces the Symphony Band has done in the past two years. Dorsey suggested that there should be a balance between performing the new and exciting works while also honoring the standards. Dorsey recently programmed the Paul Hindemith Symphony in B-Flat and Gustav Holst’s Hammersmith but has also done premieres with the Concert Band.

Dorsey remarked that there should be a good mix of pieces at different levels of difficulty on a concert. He commented, “If students are struggling to play every piece on the program, it’s not going to be very good.” Dorsey continued, “If something is so difficult that students are constantly trying to get the notes, then beauty, shape, line, contour, and tonal focus is going to be out the window.” The Carter Pann work that Dorsey was working on was not too technical for his Concert Band, so he said he focused more on shaping the phrases. The varying levels of difficulty and deep pool of talent he is fortunate to have allows Dorsey to rotate parts often with his band. An easier piece might give a freshman or sophomore a chance to play first part rather than always playing third or fourth part.

Range, technique, and endurance were the most important musical criteria in determining difficulty. Dorsey said he will look at extended techniques such as flutter-tonguing, double-
tonguing, and triple-tonguing that are required in certain pieces of literature. He added that
technique, exposure, and intricacies of the percussion parts are important as well. In addition,
Dorsey remarked that directors have to consider endurance, specifically if the brass is constantly
playing. Dorsey stated, “If the horns are on the face constantly, even if the notes aren’t hard, they
never get a chance to rest.” Dorsey noted that almost all of his considerations for a concert
program are what will be best for the educational needs of his students. He selects works of
different historical styles such as the Tielman Susato *Suite No. 1 from the Danserye* so the
students learn to perform in a lighter and buoyant renaissance style. His repertoire choices are
intended to be good learning experiences for both the performance and education majors in the
ensemble.

Dorsey responded that he always tries to fit some standard literature on the program to
contrast the new, contemporary literature the group is performing. “I believe that there is a
responsibility at the college level to enrich and expand the music that’s written for winds because
hopefully we have the personnel resources and financial resources to do that,” said Dorsey. He
added, “And here, the composition faculty is wonderful and they write for winds and they
encourage their students to do that.” Dorsey said the Symphony Band has a piece by a current
UM graduate student or graduate on each of their concerts this term, and the Concert Band
recently performed a work by a current UM master’s student in composition. In maintaining
balance between old and new, Dorsey stated, “I think it’s kind of our responsibility to perpetuate
music being written for us, and to honor the standards is a good thought and a good way to
balance things.” Dorsey also added that he wants a student’s experience to be filled with a good
balance of standards and new repertoire because there are some standard pieces he never
performed because he played mostly new music when he was an undergraduate in the Wind Ensemble at Florida State.

Dr. Dorsey said he uses a vast number of resources to find repertoire. He will talk to colleagues and they might mention a piece they have done, and he will ask them about it if he doesn’t know it. Dorsey recommended publisher websites such as Boosey and Hawkes or Peters, or going directly to composer websites, since more and more composers are publishing their own music. College Band Director’s National Association regional and national conventions and the Midwest Clinic can be great opportunities to hear pieces. Dorsey said he also may find out about composers at a student solo recital and then might look to see if the composer has written anything for winds. He stated, “I learned from my colleague at DePaul, Don DeRoche, you have to be persistent about looking for things.” Dorsey added, “Really good pieces are out there, and just because we don’t know a composer or about a composer doesn’t mean a piece is better or worse than the things we know.”

Dorsey said that the typical concert program for the Concert Band at Michigan is about 60 minutes in length. He indicated that this is a lot of music to program, but can be done correctly if the pieces are of different degrees of difficulty. Dorsey stated, “The rationale here with my colleague, Michael Haithcock, is he wants students in the second band to feel like they are having just as valid of an experience as the students in the Symphony Band.” As result of this, Dorsey’s programs with the Concert Band are about the same length concert as the Symphony Band, but at different levels of difficulty. Dorsey suggested that the number of rehearsals should be a factor in determining the number of difficult pieces on a program. The time of year and the term to do large works should be a consideration as well. Dorsey noted,
“Maybe the Hindemith *Symphony* is the last concert of the term first semester, versus the last concert of the term second semester when people are thinking about being elsewhere.”

Dorsey stated that there has to be an equal appeal to both the students and audience and this is done most effectively through variety. He declared, “You have to consider the audience I think. You want people to come to the concert and you want them to come back. So if you’re going to take them to a place that stretches them you need to provide them with enough music that they’re comfortable with. As you continue to stretch the audience, they can be more prepared for Stravinsky or Messaien.” Dorsey pointed out that there also needs to be a variety of programming for the students, so that they are exposed to different forms and styles of music. He said there is a danger if a student performs pieces of similar form and compositional approach in high school and college because then there is a high chance that student will program the same pieces with their students when he or she is teaching.

The first thing Dorsey suggested young band directors do in finding repertoire is ask for help. He said he was fortunate to have colleagues in his first job that he could ask for advice on pieces that would be appropriate for his band. Dr. Dorsey also remarked, “Don’t be afraid to selectively and carefully challenge the students in all areas, technically, musically, aurally. Because a lot time, I think we program for festival.” He stated that we are often afraid to expose weaknesses in this case rather than challenge the students by giving them music that might expose weaknesses but provide an opportunity to improve. He indicated that giving the students appropriate challenges will enhance their musicianship. Dorsey suggested that band directors be critical of state music lists in order to decide which pieces are of the highest quality. He then added, “Also, maybe come up with a set of criteria.” He noted that certain pieces take time for the students to learn and subsequently enjoy. “I think if we program with the students best
interests in mind, I think we avoid a lot of traps," Dorsey concluded, “So think about the entire
student’s education. What can they get from a piece?”

George Edge

George Edge is Director of Bands at Grove City High School in Ohio where he has
taught instrumental music for over 20 years. Under his direction, The Grove City Symphonic
Band has performed at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in 1996 and 2002, and received
superior ratings at the Music Fest Orlando National Concert Band Contest in 1993, 1997, 2001,
and 2006. He has a Master of Arts degree in music education from The Ohio State University,
with a minor in educational supervision. He earned a Bachelor of Music Education degree from
Bowling Green State University after initial undergraduate work at Capital University in
Columbus. Edge has received numerous awards and recognition for his teaching, including the
2007 Ohio Teacher of the Year Award, he is also one of the few high school band directors
inducted to the American Bandmasters Association, and is a national recipient of the American
School Band Director Association’s Stanbury Award and the Columbus Symphony Orchestra’s
Secondary School Music Educator Award.

Mr. Edge responded that music of high quality should be exemplary in its period, and the
composer should be exemplary from that period. He continued “The music should have stood the
test of time, not here today, gone tomorrow pieces.” The music must have substance including
diversity, unique counter lines, rhythm, harmony, and form. Mr. Edge added, “I look for things
that are already in the band literature, that are nuggets.” He mentioned, for example, his top band
was playing Second Suite in F by Gustav Holst. He said that if a piece is quality, it will capture
historical styles and images accurately. He continued, “There must be something in the piece for
the students to relate to.” There are many pieces that he will program because of their cross-
curricular references. Edge said that the students may not like every piece of music, but they should always be performing music of high quality.

Mr. Edge stated that it is important to play both pieces on the high end of the ensemble’s ability level, but also on the low level of the ensemble’s ability level. For example, Mr. Edge talked about a piece like James Curnow’s Where Never Lark Nor Eagle Flew, which is on the high end of his second band’s ability level. “I’ll pull out a piece like that when I am not at the highest level of competition or the highest level of scrutiny so that the kids can grow,” said Edge, “[Where Never Lark Nor Eagle Flew] really pushes the horn range, it pushes articulation in the woodwinds, it pushes technical facility. My double reeds get a tremendous workout, there’s wonderful English horn exposure, but there’s parallel octaves, so you’re going to be into some stuff that’s going to expose some real tough intonation moments.” Edge also continued by saying that the difficulty is dictated by the amount of rehearsal time. He indicated that there are good arrangements of some quality literature such as Fillmore’s His Honor and The Footlifter in range and technical limits suitable for a less experienced band. Mr. Edge tries not to put pieces all on the high end of the ability level of the band on the same concert, mostly for endurance reasons.

There are also certain pieces that can’t be programmed depending on the strengths and weaknesses of the ensemble from year to year.

In meeting educational and developmental needs of the students, Edge insisted it is important to choose pieces that have variety. Edge suggested pieces on the same program have contrast in form and style. The students should also be exposed to pieces that have some element of unpredictability. Edge said that repertoire should also be selected based on what you want the students to accomplish. He referenced specific works such as Salvation is Created by Pavel Tschesnokoff, Air for Band by Frank Erickson, and Prospect by Pierre La Plante that can teach
phrasing, musicianship, balance, and blend. *Lux Arumuque* by Eric Whitacre is a piece that can help students learn tension and relaxation in harmonic language. Students also need to learn various compositional styles from the works of significant composers. Mr. Edge said, “I think if you play five pieces by the same composer, then there’s a problem, and you haven’t really taught your students variety within the musical literature that’s out there.”

Mr. Edge stated that the Midwest Clinic, Stanton’s Music website, publisher recordings and new music reading sessions are a great way for conductors to hear the best of the newly written repertoire. Directors can discuss new pieces with colleagues and also must stay in touch with new composers that are writing quality music. Edge suggested that directors make an evaluation of a new piece of music. “You need to find things that you think will stand the test of time,” said Edge. He insisted that it is always important to expose students to new music. He commented, “Every year, there’s something new that comes out that’s just a bit different, that has just a little different voicing, use of the color of instruments, and it’s innovative and it’s worth your while to look at it.” There can be a danger in performing too much new repertoire so there must be a balance between the old and the new. Edge suggested younger directors become familiar with pieces in the standard repertoire by speaking with more experienced directors that may have an established library of standard repertoire. Edge also recommended guides on the National Band Association websites, and recommendations in *The Instrumentalist*.

Edge considers several factors in programming including endurance and the musical variety of the concert. He commented, “If I am going to do a classic overture, then I am certainly going to find something that goes with it that is more contemporary, and is more intricate in the percussion section.” Edge will perform pieces that have a variety in texture and energy, such as Elgar’s “Nimrod” from *Enigma Variations* coupled with something more technical, contrapuntal,
and sporadic. Edge almost always performs a march because it is the reason that bands became popular in America, and he feels it is important to not only play them, but play them in the correct style. It is important to Mr. Edge that the audiences relate to the music. Edge said, “I might set the stage for pieces by talking to the audience.” He said that certain pieces, such as twelve-tone works, may be tougher for the audience to hear, but can be good for the students to learn. He might create contrast in his program with a jazzier style piece such as Frank Ticheli’s Blue Shades or a solo and band work featuring a guest or student soloist such as the Carnival of Venice. Edge noted that there should always be something from the standard repertoire on the program as well.

Edge emphasized a balance between student appeal and conductor appeal. He said it is important to challenge students with pieces that require a large amount of skills to be taught but also select pieces that they can grasp more independently with some guidance from the conductor. Edge said, “The kids won’t have a good experience if they can’t handle the music.” Edge also stated that students should enjoy what they play, but there will be certain pieces that the students won’t like at first, but can grow to enjoy. Edge said it is important to program what is best for the students, not only pieces that appeal to the conductor. Lighter pieces can be good if they are still well-written with crafted scoring, contrasting tempos, and good harmonies.

The advice that Mr. Edge offered to younger directors is to observe and interact with successful directors. Mr. Edge said, “Watch other directors’ rehearsals to learn repertoire.” Mr. Edge had the pleasure of receiving guidance from individuals such as Don Jenkins, Dick Cool at Northmont High School, and Ed Nichol at Marion Local High School. Edge stated that it can be beneficial to bounce ideas off of mentors. “Even if it is a newer piece, or a piece they don’t know, bring them a score and a recording and ask them what they think,” said Edge, “be
prepared for what your mentors say, good or bad.” Edge stressed the importance of learning the 
score to a piece, not just hearing a piece and deciding to perform it. Mr. Edge suggested the use 
of fundamental exercises such as rhythmic studies, sight-reading pieces, method books, and the 
16 chorales by J.S. Bach. Edge said that the fundamentals need to be taught before the repertoire 
and then the skills can be applied in the repertoire.

Robert Bass

Robert Bass received his Bachelor degree in Music Education and Euphonium 
Performance from the University of Cincinnati, College Conservatory of Music in 1985. He has 
been Director of Bands at Mason High School in Mason, Ohio since 1999, previously teaching 
throughout Ohio at Williamsburg High School, Green Junior High School, and Fairborn High 
School. Bands under Mr. Bass’ direction have performed at The Midwest International Band and 
Orchestra Clinic, OMEA State Conventions and Bands of America National Concert Band 
Festival as the first representative from the state of Ohio. They have consistently received 
superior ratings and have been awarded numerous honors in concert and marching events. Mr. 
Bass’ responsibilities include director of Wind Symphony, Concert Band White and Red, 
Marching Band, Pep Band, and musical director for Mason City Schools. In addition to his duties 
at Mason High School, Mr. Bass has been a guest conductor and clinician throughout the United 
States.

Robert Bass stated that repertoire should be selected for the literature itself, and that the 
teaching should be adapted for the repertoire. Bass remarked, “We try and go after the quality of 
literature and then reinforce [musical skills] that way.” He said that at Mason, there is an 
extensive process of teaching rhythm, terminology, and form. The students are given diagrams 
and are often asked to make their own diagrams of literature they are performing. Bass
commented that the middle school program is designed to go through a comprehensive approach to teaching musical skills and then the skills are reinforced at the high school level.

Mr. Bass remarked that in order to determine appropriate repertoire, directors must ask if the piece will fit the instrumentation of the ensemble. However, there are many quality pieces that are worth considering if they can be adjusted. “If you have a mean bassoon solo, and you don’t have a bassoonist, that’s hard to do, but it’s not impossible to do that piece. If it’s a quality piece, then you re-write the bassoon part and give a kid a chance.” Bass also commented, “Unfortunately, contest sometimes dictates what we do, and that is so wrong.” Bass said, “It’s not about the rating, it’s about the quality of literature you give your kids.” It is also important to not only hear a piece, but look at the score and decide if it is going to work for the students.

In determining programming that will appeal to the audience, Bass stated, “I am a huge proponent of having an entertaining concert, and how you do that is having an emotional timeline of ups and downs for the audience, the students, and the director.” Bass continued “I think programming is one of the most crucial things we do as educators. If we do all heavy literature or all light literature, we aren’t servicing our students.” It is possible to do some serious repertoire such as Grainger, and then balance it with a quality arrangement of a movie theme. The students don’t learn as much just by performing one style. Bass said he wants the audience member to leave having had an enjoyable and emotional experience. Certain pieces may require educating the audience through multimedia, composer’s notes, and talking so that the audience understands them.

There are many considerations that Mr. Bass makes in programming with the students in mind as well. Bass stated, “I think a piece is too hard, and not as valuable if you spend three to four months of after school sectionals getting everyone to play the right notes.” If this happens,
Bass feels the students will have no emotional connection to the music. Bass remarked, “Students should be exposed to as much repertoire as they possibly can be exposed to with excellence in mind.” It is important that students grow by taking an active role in learning a piece of music, and they must also be emotionally engaged with the music. Bass said that teaching an entire piece by rote is bad. He also said one of the greatest experiences he had was programming for the National Concert Band Festival because it exposed the students to repertoire that was difficult and music they may not have learned otherwise. His high school students were able to perform works such as the Finale from Shostakovich’s Fifth Symphony, and the Florent Schmitt Dionysiaques. Bass indicated that different performances venues such as the National Concert Band Festival, OMEA conference, and district contest can dictate programming, whether this is right or wrong.

Mr. Bass stated that sometimes students don’t understand music, but it is our job to show the students why it is a quality piece of music. He said pieces such as Symphonic Songs for Band by Robert Russell Bennett and Music for Prague by Karel Husa can be difficult for students to like at the beginning, but the pieces need to be performed because of their quality as pieces of music. I’ll put things in front of them that they might not necessarily like. Bass remarked, “When we did Music for Prague, it was a tough sell at the beginning, until their paper. They each did a paper, found out about the piece, researched it, and then it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, and probably the kids will remember doing that piece forever.”

When Mr. Bass was asked what resources he uses to find quality literature, he said he uses everything he possibly can. Bass said, “Teaching Music through Performance in Band is exceptional for everybody, whether you are a 25 or 35 year vet, or a first year teacher.” He continued, “There is just a lot of great material in those books, and having the recordings is
great.” Bass discussed his interest in finding new music, but he did say, “There is so much stuff being written that shouldn’t be put in front of our kids.” Bass makes a lot of phone calls to other high school band directors, university band directors, and even composers themselves to see what new pieces are out there. He said that directors shouldn’t be afraid to call composers such as Frank Ticheli, Mark Camphouse, David Gillingham, and Steven Bryant. They can be so accommodating, and may even come out and conduct the piece for a small amount of money.

Bass said publisher websites, clinics, and listening to band concerts are also important resources in finding quality repertoire.

Bass suggested that young directors pick music that sets their students up for success rather than just music the directors like. He said that the foundation and fundamentals should come before literature. Bass also said, “We also do our students a disservice if we program too many pieces that are similar to each other.” He stated that it is critical to pick pieces that fit the talent and instrumentation of the group. When Bass was asked how young band directors can be better educated in the repertoire selection process, he said, “Listen to as much orchestral music as possible. It is so important. That is how I learned to teach musicianship with a band.” He said that this is important in order to teach students more in the music than just the notes and rhythms. Having an understanding of quality of music in general will allow a director to evaluate if a current piece of music will stand the test of time. Bass concluded that another way to expose students to new music is featuring outstanding professional or student soloists with bands. It often doesn’t cost much, and it gives the students a unique experience. Mason High School featured Chris Martin, the principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, along with his father and brother on two works with the band. Bass stated that chamber music literature is also important for students to learn.
Bruce Corrigan

Bruce Corrigan is the Director of Bands at Bowling Green Junior High School in Ohio. He has over 25 years of experience with the majority of it in directing junior high bands. He directs the seventh and eighth grade concert and jazz bands, and serves as an assistant director for the Bowling Green High School Bobcat Marching Band. Under Mr. Corrigan’s direction, the Bowling Green Junior High Bands have performed at ASBDA conference, OMEA convention, and the Bowling Green State University Reading Clinic. Mr. Corrigan and the Bowling Green Junior High Band have also been responsible for commissioning several quality works for junior high bands.

Mr. Corrigan began by saying that selecting repertoire is the most challenging thing he has to do, and he works very hard at making the right choices. He said that it is encouraging because there are more gems in the junior high concert band literature than there were when he first started teaching. He remarked, “When I choose literature based on quality, I want it to represent a composer at his best. I want it to represent something new and something different that someone else hasn’t said.” He continued, “Emotionally, it needs to do something for me.” Corrigan said it is difficult to find junior high music that does something exciting harmonically, so he looks for something that has good harmonic writing. The music should have something that challenges the best players in the group, for example, short solos or soli sections. Speaking about the need for solos in junior high music, Corrigan stated, “For that reason, sometimes I have even commissioned works. Ryan Nowlin’s Enchanted was written partly for that reason.” Nowlin wrote the commission, Enchanted, with several short solos in sections such as clarinet, tuba, and flute, and also wrote intricate percussion parts at Mr. Corrigan’s request. Corrigan’s concept of high quality literature also needs to represent a definite style and time period, and have a formal
structure. Mr. Corrigan stated, “When I think of quality literature for middle school, I think of what is going to help these kids grow musically and what is going to interest them.”

Mr. Corrigan selects appropriate repertoire that he feels will help the students be successful. The music should help them grow and build confidence in some way. “It could be rhythm, key signature, scales such as major or minor, pentatonic, or octatonic,” said Corrigan. He also looks for pieces that are interesting harmonically and give the students a chance to develop an ensemble sound. Corrigan stated that pulse is always a concern with middle school, and sometimes the slower ones can be the hardest for students to play rhythms correctly. He likes to find pieces that vary between slow, medium, and fast tempos. Mr. Corrigan also tries to find music that uses different meters such as 6/8, cut time, and even 9/8. Corrigan commented, “I think band directors shy away from using different meters, and I don’t think they should.” He added that range is always a consideration in middle school music. He also said there are times when he has met students halfway on pieces that aren’t of the highest quality, but may peak their interest. He has used simpler, popular works like *Hang on Sloopy* to motivate some students, but also teaches them valuable concepts. A piece like this also gave students that normally play third clarinet or second trumpet a chance to play first parts and expand their range and confidence.

Mr. Corrigan stated that educational goals are met by working in the method books for fundamentals, and then reinforcing them in the repertoire. Corrigan uses method books, long tone exercises, and Herbert Clarke B-flat sixteenth exercises. He said that rhythm exercises and key signatures can be correlated with the literature being worked on. He indicated students need to feel security on certain rhythms before they are able to sight-read them.

Corrigan said that in finding the balance between established repertoire and newly composed repertoire, he simply tries to find the best music for the ensemble. “For me, as a
teacher, if I don’t find new things, it’s not as fun and motivating for me.” Corrigan stated on the other hand that there is a piece, *Three Kentucky Sketches* by John O’Reilly that he is doing and he hasn’t done in about 20 years. He indicated that it is a great piece of music with three short movements, nice brass parts, a solo in the second movement, interesting style, a 5/4 time signature, and is in F concert. In the junior high setting, Corrigan made the comment that the instrumentation, individual strengths, and overall ensemble ability change so much from year to year that it makes it difficult to repeat pieces too often.

Mr. Corrigan recommended publisher CD and website recordings as useful resources in finding new repertoire. He said he likes to go through recordings in the first six months of the school year, often in August or September to plan what pieces he might like to purchase. Mr. Corrigan also suggested going to conferences such as OMEA and the Midwest Clinic to hear performances of new pieces. He remarked, “sometimes a live performance gives you a completely different feel for a piece than a recording.” Corrigan will also ask band directors he respects if there are new works that they have found or performed. He added that it is important for him to see the score. He continued, “I want to see harmonically what it does, I want to see what parts are lacking in interest.” Corrigan said that it is important to sometimes pick music that is good music, but not necessarily the most interesting for everyone.

Programming a variety of styles on a concert is important to Mr. Corrigan as well. He said he struggles to find good marches for young band, and as a result doesn’t perform as many as he necessarily should. He typically looks for an opener, closer, and a middle number. When the eighth grade band performed at ASBDA conference, the band performed eight different pieces. In the performances leading up to the conference, the students performed each of these pieces once before this large performance. Corrigan stated, “In general, I try to choose things that
are right for them, will inspire them to practice, and go to the next level.” He has selected music of a programmatic nature such as The Raven, or movie music such as Pirates of the Caribbean. He also has performed young band arrangements of famous orchestral pieces such as the March to the Scaffold from Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique. Corrigan is cautious not to ruin too many advanced pieces of music by performing poor young band arrangements of them. He then added, “At the same time, you could ruin a good piece of music, or you could ruin a lousy piece of music.”

Mr. Corrigan explained that he does work to balance audience, students, and director appeal, but said his priority is to pick a piece of music because it is a great piece of music. Corrigan said, “Sometimes I choose music for the students, sometimes for the audiences, and sometimes I choose it for me.” He told a story when he chose an arrangement of Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair because he thought it would give him a chance to teach phrasing, tone color, and different textures. It ended up that the students liked it and performed it well. Corrigan said it is important for him to choose pieces that will challenge him and make him a better musician. He also worked with Marilyn Shrude, the chair of the Department of Musicology, Composition, and Theory at Bowling Green State University, to write a piece for his eighth grade band entitled Awakenings. He said, “There was something special about having music written for them.” He added “the music was different than anything they had played.” Corrigan also advocated reading music that the students may not end up performing. He said the eighth grade band might play 30-40 pieces over the course of the year, because it is important to get the students reading music.

In making suggestions on repertoire selection for younger directors, Mr. Corrigan said, “Know your band, know what your strengths are, and know what you need to develop.” He
explained that he picked a piece for his seventh grade band because it helped develop his percussion section. He also suggested using supplemental materials such as method books to develop the necessary skills to perform the literature. Corrigan added that taking in interest in the students as people, finding their interests, and finding out where they want to go can help you find the music that is going to develop them the most.

Corrigan said that young directors should understand that repertoire selection process is time consuming and difficult. “It is rare that I figure it out quickly,” he said. Corrigan added that there might be times when you don’t make the right decision, but that you probably learn more from mistakes than you do from successes. He also added that there are great resources for specific works in *Teaching Music through Performance in Band*. He did suggest that directors look beyond one person’s opinion when it comes to analyses of specific pieces. However, he said he really enjoys the historical information, composer information, and performance problems the resources provide. Mr. Corrigan suggested that directors always look for growth in themselves and the students as musicians. Corrigan continued, “You learn so much by watching other people.” It is very beneficial for students to hear performances and recordings by advanced students, professional musicians, and other bands. He suggested making contact with a good composer, and that middle school directors could be doing more commissions from quality composers.

**Rob Cebriak**

Rob Cebriak is Director of Bands at Gahanna Middle School West in Ohio, where his responsibilities include sixth, seventh, and eighth grade concert bands, two jazz bands, woodwind choir, and assisting with the high school marching band, pep band, and concert bands. Mr. Cebriak earned his Bachelor of Music Education from The Ohio State University in 1992.
and his Master of Music in performance from Ithaca College in 1997. Mr. Cebriak previously taught in the Miami Trace Local Schools, Crestview Local Schools, and Washington Court House City Schools. Mr. Cebriak is active as an adjudicator and has served OMEA as a large group adjudicated event chair, chairperson for the 2004 and 2007 OMEA High School All State Jazz Ensemble, district treasurer, district honor band host, and as a member of the large group adjudicated event music selection committee and the government relations committee.

Mr. Cebriak stated that variety is his biggest concern in selecting quality music. He tries to find quality pieces while trying to find a variety of composers, styles, and forms. Cebriak continued, “I like to see things, especially at the middle school level, that are idiomatic of the band repertoire, things that sound like the standard band literature should sound, but also things that might perk our interest or be a little unusual.” Cebriak tries to program a march on each concert with all of his bands. He also likes to do a lyrical piece or a piece that has a lyrical section. Cebriak remarked that good music has interesting harmonies and melodies and is not overly predictable. He added that pieces should be well written and interesting for all instrument parts, not simply melody in upper voices and whole notes in the low brass. He also selects works that are historic in the literature for middle school bands as well as quality transcriptions of orchestral works for middle school players.

Cebriak noted that his main considerations in difficulty are range, technique, endurance, meter, and part division. He said that there will be certain range limits for his brass players and also his clarinets. He added, “At the same time, I also want to make sure that the range is not too easy.” Cebriak will select pieces that might expand the range of the clarinets and brass players, but can be attainable enough to have a successful performance on the concert. He continued, “Endurance can be big at the middle school level. Every once and a while I’ve been caught in the
mistake of programming things that just didn’t give enough rest and so the kids were worn out by the end of concert.” Cebriak said that too much speed and technical runs will limit the amount of success the students will have in preparing and performing a piece. He added that he looks for a variety of meters including 6/8, cut time, and mixed meter. Cebriak suggested that the percussion parts should be challenging and not too redundant. He also looks at the number of times the parts such as clarinet, trumpet, and trombone will divide. Cebriak stated, for example, that only with his good eighth grade groups is three trombone parts attainable.

In fitting the educational and musical skill development of his students, Cebriak relies on method books to introduce concepts and the literature to implement the concepts. He said that the students have a different book for each year from sixth grade to eighth grade. Through these books and literature, Cebriak will increase range, technical, and rhythmic demands through the course of each school year. Cebriak said, “The seventh graders are just getting in to cut time, so we’re going to make sure that we have some sort of piece that’s cut time related, and then continue that and 6/8 and things through the year with the eighth graders.” He added he makes sure that the parts are written in ways that will challenge all of the instruments in some way. Cebriak suggested finding pieces with a variety of dynamics and orchestration. He stated, “I love finding pieces where they’ve put different combinations of instruments together that are a little unusual or some of the pieces that do things with sections that are just woodwind choir and sections that are just brass choir.”

Cebriak said it is difficult to balance new and old at the middle school level, because there is not nearly the amount of established repertoire for the middle school level. He commented that he does not necessarily try to have balance, but rather find older things he believes are of value while also looking at the newer repertoire. Cebriak said that he will try to
program standards in the repertoire such as *Balladair* by Frank Erickson or the easier works by Clare Grundman. He added, “At the same time, I’ll try and look for some new stuff that I think can end up being the next classic.”

Cebriak indicated a number of resources are important in finding repertoire. Promotional recordings and reading clinics at universities such as Capital University, University of Akron, and Bowling Green State University can be vital resources for finding new music in the repertoire. He also suggested having conversations with other directors about pieces that they have found. He added that the process of looking at new pieces has become easier since publishers provide recordings and parts or all of the scores to pieces on their websites. OMEA conference performances and other band concerts are also opportunities to hear unfamiliar works, both old and new. Cebriak continued, “As far as the old stuff, the *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* series is really good, and I’ve used that. Thomas Dvorak has his *Best Music for Young Band* that I’ve used.” Cebriak also has the unique opportunity to ask his dad, who is a retired band director, for his opinion on pieces. Cebriak stated that he would have really struggled at his first middle school band job if he had not had his dad and other experienced band directors to ask for advice in finding repertoire.

Selecting a variety of styles and difficulties is the most important programming consideration for Cebriak. He likes to program a march, a lyrical piece, and one or more pieces of other styles. Cebriak insisted that it is important to program pieces of varying degrees of difficulty for the students. He noted, “We’ll have one thing that is going to really push them and stretch them. I’ll have at least one piece for each group that is just a sure fire, this isn’t going to take a lot of rehearsal, they’re going to sound great on it, and they’ll play it musically.” Cebriak then added that the other pieces on the program will be somewhere in between those two pieces.
He remarked, “I’ve often programmed too hard and then we don’t really get to the musical aspects as much as I’d like and we end up doing too much technical work and trying to work out the parts.” Cebriak said he is fortunate that his concert schedule is set up in a way that each group always has about the same number of weeks between concerts, so their rehearsal schedule remains fairly consistent. Mr. Cebriak added that he will occasionally do a concert with some sort of theme. He mentioned the current music for the seventh and eighth grade band was all going to tie in to some sort of place. The concert included pieces such as *March of the Irish Guard*, *Arabian Dances*, *In a Quiet Place*, and an arrangement of themes from Holst’s *The Planets*.

When asked how he balances student, conductor, and audience appeal, Cebriak stated, “If I can’t get excited about the piece, I’m not going to be able to get the kids excited about it probably, and the same goes for the audience.” He continued, “If I like it and find it interesting and I can be excited about it in front of the kids, I’ll program it if it’s within their grasp.” Cebriak said he won’t pick a piece he doesn’t think is a great piece of music or doesn’t appeal to him just to give the students something fun. He added that there have been pieces that the students have hated at first and grown to love once they understood the music and could handle playing the parts. Cebriak remarked that the sixth grade might do more novelty numbers because they are beginning students and their abilities are limited. However, in seventh and eighth grade, he exposes the students to music he believes is interesting, and insists that if he loves the music, he will be able to convince the students and audience that it is a great piece of music.

Cebriak suggested young band directors use every resource at their disposal for the repertoire selection process. The repertoire selection process takes a lot of time, listening, thought, and discussion. Cebriak said that the music publisher is only one source of information.
He noted, “There are other directors out there who would love to share what they think are great pieces with you.” Mr. Cebriak also commented that it is important to pick more than just three or four pieces and work on them until the concert. He will work on a number of pieces that the bands do not perform and also have a back-up to certain pieces. Cebriak stated, “If you’re going to do a march, maybe have two marches in the folder, because one might turn out to work better for your group than the other. Or after you get into it you might say, ‘musically, this is just a better march.’” Cebriak also suggested finding composers that you can trust and go back to for quality music, but also said that even good composers might write a piece of music that is not of high quality.

According to Mr. Cebriak, undergraduate music education majors could be more active in learning repertoire while they are in college. Undergraduate students should attend presentations at conferences such as OMEA on middle school band repertoire and go to reading bands. Cebriak said that it is important to play the advanced college music while there is the opportunity, but students can be discussing and learning the quality and standard literature for the middle school level as well. Because of the lack of education students get in middle school band repertoire, too much newly published music is performed, and the older and standard repertoire goes out of print. Cebriak spoke about the lack of standard repertoire by Frank Erickson, Clare Grundman, and Claude T. Smith being performed. He stated, “There’s a lot of great music out there, but I don’t see it getting programmed very much.” Cebriak will even bring back works like Grundman’s *Little English Suite* every few years as long as it fits his band.
CHAPTER V:
DISCUSSION

The purpose of the study was to conduct a multiple case study of six exemplary band directors’ repertoire selection processes. The discussion offers a summary of both similarities and differences in the repertoire selection processes of these exemplary band directors. It is organized according to the categories of the interview questions and concludes with implications for music education and suggestions for further research. The researcher cautions against generalizing the results because repertoire selection is a different process for every band director and the results simply offer the similarities and differences in six exemplary band directors’ repertoire selection processes.

All of the exemplary band directors indicated that quality was a high priority in the selection of repertoire. Blatti, Bass, and Edge indicated that selecting the quality repertoire will give the students the best musical development. This statement is supported by the claims by Apfelstadt (2000), Persellin (2000), and Reynolds (2000) on the importance of quality repertoire above all other factors in repertoire selection. The research of Grant (1993), Hayward (2004), Howard (2001), and King (2001) also concluded that experienced and outstanding band directors place a high value on music with high artistic merit. Carney (2005) and Young (1998) had indicated that many directors were not selecting the highest quality repertoire. Blatti and Bass agreed that it is unfortunate that many band directors may select repertoire to appease students, audiences, administrators and parents, and this can be a disservice to the students.

Blatti and Corrigan suggested that effective score study is critical in selecting repertoire of high quality. Only through appropriate analysis of the musical composition can a band director determine if it meets the standards of high quality repertoire. The researcher found that
although there may be discrepancy on which criteria determine the highest quality music, each
director interviewed listed various criteria that should be found in high quality repertoire. The
Ostling (1978) and Gilbert (1993) criteria of high artistic merit or Cramer’s (1997) seven criteria
from *Teaching Music through Performance in Band, volume 1* may serve as guide, but as Blatti
indicated, each individual piece will determine which of these criteria make it a quality piece of
music. Dorsey also suggested directors establish their own criteria to look for in finding quality
literature. Corrigan, Cebriak, Edge, and Blatti mentioned high quality music should represent the
best work of a quality composer and not be too similar to other works that they have written.
Bass, Edge, Dorsey, and Cebriak made reference to several criteria that are part of both the
considered form to be an important characteristic of quality music. Edge said to look at harmony
and unpredictability and Dorsey also said there should be a wide range of scoring and solo
opportunities. Corrigan remarked that music of interesting form and harmonic structure can be
hard to find in young band music, but is very important. Dorsey added that pieces should be
selected that make the band sound different and Cebriak agreed that variety of composers and
styles is important.

There were several important issues indicated regarding appropriateness of repertoire for
the ensemble. Blatti, Dorsey, Cebriak and Edge stressed the importance of performing pieces at
the high end of ensemble’s ability range as well as the low end of the ensemble’s ability range.
Cebriak, Dorsey, and Blatti said that each of their programs will include one piece that really
pushes the students, one that is easier but gives them a chance to be musical, and then pieces of
varying degrees of difficulty in between. Dorsey, Cebriak, Blatti and Edge also suggested
performing pieces of varying difficulty on a program so that the rehearsal and performance do
not wear out the students, and there is time to make music rather than just learning notes and rhythms. Range is a considerable factor in selecting music for Corrigan and Cebriak at the junior high level, but also for Edge at the high school level. Edge, Blatti, and Bass all discussed instrumentation as an important factor in determining suitability of repertoire, but they agree that even without ideal instrumentation, the quality works can still be performed. Unfortunately, a common comment from all of the directors was that contest can discourage directors from performing quality and standard literature. Bass, Dorsey, and Blatti felt that it is wrong for directors not to program standard literature that can best serve the students in order to get the best rating. It was important to Blatti and Corrigan to find repertoire that will allow the students to be successful. Tempo, range, and rhythm were considerable factors in determining difficulty for the middle school band directors. This coincides with Owen (2001) and Pearson (2001), who considered tempo, range, and rhythm important criteria. Cebriak added that endurance, technique, and part division are important as well.

The performance of both the standard literature and high quality new repertoire was important to all of the directors. Blatti, Dorsey, Edge, and Bass agreed that there are certain pieces from the core repertoire that all band directors and instrumental music students should know and learn. Blatti, Edge and Dorsey will program certain pieces every few years to make sure that students experience the significant works in the repertoire. According to Cebriak, Corrigan, and Bass, there are more quality pieces of new repertoire accessible to school ensembles than there were 20-25 years ago. However, Blatti and Bass indicated that there is also a lot of poorly written new music that does not benefit the students’ growth as musicians. All of the directors indicated that the best resources for finding the highest quality standard and new music are at professional conferences and in conferring with respected colleagues in the band
profession. Publisher websites and recordings as well as *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* were recommended as useful resources, but it was suggested that neither be the only resources a director should use. Cebriak and Bass suggested directors use as many of the resources that are available to find great literature.

The main theme on programming concerns was to include a variety of styles, forms and composers on a concert. Edge and Dorsey suggested standard literature be a contrast to works that are more contemporary. Blatti added that programs should have a variety of historical periods on the concert. Difficulty and endurance are concerns for Cebriak and Dorsey. The high school and middle school band directors all indicated that they perform pieces that are still quality but may be lighter and appealing to the students and audience. Blatti, Dorsey, and Bass consider the emotional impact that the concert is going to have on the audience. Dorsey and Edge advised that performing a program entirely of new music is hard for the audience to grasp. Blatti also said that the audience should be challenged as listeners and Bass and Edge recommended preparing the audience for pieces that they may not understand with program notes or speaking. Cebriak and Blatti both used themes, such as “New York, New York,” as an interesting way to tie music together certain concerts. Bass and Blatti said that the audience is more of a concern when the band is performing in a public venue such as a professional conference.

There were several opinions on balancing appeal between the conductor and students. Blatti, Cebriak, and Bass all indicated that it is most important that as directors they value the literature they are going to present to the students. Blatti indicated that the conductor should have an emotional connection to the piece. Cebriak and Bass added that the students learn to value a piece if the director teaches them about the quality and importance of the music. Students may
not enjoy a piece of music at first, but Dorsey, Cebriak, and Bass said students can learn to enjoy a piece once they have mastered the music and performed it. Blatti, Dorsey, Bass, and Corrigan concurred that the selection of literature has to be done with the students’ best interests and musical development in mind. Dorsey and Blatti said that if directors program quality music that will be best for the students, directors could avoid pitfalls in repertoire selection.

All six directors had a number of specific suggestions on repertoire selection to offer to younger band directors. Everyone recommended that directors ask for advice from more experienced directors on specific pieces and considerations on repertoire for their bands. Blatti and Bass believed that many directors are afraid to ask for help, and Cebriak added that there are plenty of directors that are more than willing to assist. Blatti said that too often directors allow pressure from parents, administrators and other factors to discourage them from exposing students to the best literature. Dorsey, Corrigan, and Cebriak recommended the use of the abundant resources in music education to find quality repertoire. Cebriak, Corrigan, Bass, and Edge also suggested establishing strong fundamentals before trying to perform pieces in the repertoire. Dorsey, Blatti, and Cebriak felt that directors could take a more active role as undergraduate students in learning quality literature at all levels. Blatti and Dorsey said that it is important to have a good repertoire class. Bass, Dorsey, and Corrigan also agreed that it is important to listen to quality music of any kind, whether it is band, orchestral, or solo music, so that there is a benchmark to evaluate quality music.

Implications for Music Education

Based on the results of this study, the following suggestions are made for instrumental music education:
1. The highest priority for band directors in selecting repertoire should be that music is of the highest quality and artistic merit.

2. Directors should establish their own set of criteria to determine quality literature.

3. Band directors should select repertoire that challenges the students in ways that will promote their overall music education while also setting them up to have successful performances.

4. Band directors should expose students to a variety of composers, forms, and historical time periods through the repertoire that is selected.

5. Band directors should select a balance of the core repertoire and the newly composed repertoire.

6. Band directors should use every resource available to aid in the repertoire selection, and most importantly, consult with other band directors on the selection of repertoire.

Suggestions for Further Research

Based on the results of this study, the following recommendations are made for further research:

1. An expansion of the case study or a survey to include a larger number of directors may provide further insight on the repertoire selection process at the middle school, high school, and collegiate levels.

2. A study that includes the application of the recommendations made on selecting repertoire that includes specific pieces from the repertoire and criteria that make the works quality and appropriate for specific level ensembles.
3. A case study that examines only the factors that impact programming, including repertoire selection, audience size, venue and having a successful and entertaining concert.
REFERENCES


BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A:

BAND DIRECTOR NOMINATION FORM
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SIX EXEMPLARY
BAND DIRECTORS’ REPERTOIRE SELECTION PROCESSES

BAND DIRECTOR NOMINATION FORM

Please list the names and institutions of FOUR college band directors in the states of Ohio, Indiana, and Michigan who you would consider exemplary and list examples of their accomplishments and knowledge in selecting band repertoire.

1. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

2. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

3. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

4. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:
Please list the names and institutions of FOUR high school band directors in the state of Ohio who you would consider exemplary and list examples of their accomplishments and knowledge in selecting band repertoire.

1. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

2. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

3. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

4. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:
Please list the names and institutions of FOUR middle school band directors in the state of Ohio who you would consider exemplary and list examples of their accomplishments and knowledge in selecting band repertoire.

1. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

2. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

3. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:

4. Name:
   Institution:
   Description:
APPENDIX B:

LETTER TO BAND DIRECTORS
January 6, 2010

Dear Dr. or Professor Smith:

I am currently a Master of Music Education candidate at Bowling Green State University. My master’s thesis is a multiple case study of the repertoire selection processes of six exemplary band directors. You were nominated as an exemplary band director with a thorough understanding of the repertoire selection process. I would like to interview you in person at a time and place of your convenience on the repertoire selection process you use for your ensemble(s). The interview will be transcribed and video-recorded for data collection purposes and should last no longer than one hour. I would also like to gather your concert programs from the past four years.

Your responses in the interview will be valuable in providing information to pre-service and novice band directors on selecting the highest quality and most appropriate repertoire for the ensembles they teach. If you wish participate in this study, please complete the attached consent form and contact me at your convenience.

If you have questions regarding the conduct of this study or about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

Thank you for your time and consideration,

Aaron J. Backes  
Master of Music Education Candidate  
1068B Moore Musical Arts Center  
Bowling Green State University  
Bowling Green, Ohio 43403  
(248) 840-7455  
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A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SIX EXEMPLARY
BAND DIRECTORS’ REPERTOIRE SELECTION PROCESSES

BAND DIRECTOR CONSENT FORM

By signing this consent form, you voluntarily consent to participate in an interview on your repertoire selection process for the ensembles you teach. Your participation in this research study is entirely voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time. You have been informed that the interview will last approximately one hour, and will be transcribed and video-recorded. You have been informed that the answers you give will be included in the results of the multiple case study as a part of the master’s thesis requirements. You have been informed that you will provide a sample of concert programs from the past four years as a part of the study. You have been informed that the purpose of the study will be to compare and contrast repertoire selection processes of six exemplary band directors at the middle school, high school, and collegiate level. The information gathered in the study will be used to educate the researcher and readers on how to select the highest quality and most appropriate repertoire. If you have questions regarding the conduct of this study or about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Chair of Bowling Green State University’s Human Subjects Review Board at (419) 372-7716 (hsrb@bgsu.edu).

__________________________________________
Printed Name

__________________________________________
Signature

________________________
Date

You would like to remain anonymous in the results of the study (Please circle one):

Yes  No

Any questions regarding the study may be directed to:

Aaron J. Backes  Dr. Carol Hayward
Graduate Teaching Assistant  Assistant Professor of Music Education
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APPENDIX C:

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS AND

TRANSCRIBED RESPONSES
A MULTIPLE CASE STUDY OF SIX EXEMPLARY
BAND DIRECTORS’ REPERTOIRE SELECTION PROCESSES

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

1. What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?
2. What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?
3. What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?
4. How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?
5. What resources do you use to find this repertoire?
6. What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?
7. How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?
8. What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?
9. What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?
10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.
Richard Blatti

1. **What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?**

   - I think anybody in the profession, among college people, and high school people, a piece that gets your attention somehow is the first step. For me, it’s going to a CBDNA convention or an ABA convention and hearing piece, or it’s a friend of mine talking about a piece. Or it’s being at a conference like this and you run across a piece or you hear people talking about a piece.

   - There are so many pieces out there like that these days that it seems like a program kind of builds itself for me. I might suddenly decide I need this kind of piece for the third piece on the program, or I need to think about this concerto opportunity, or something that is a little more specific. That’s when I’ll go back to other pieces I’ve done, and I usually keep a pretty good record of what those are. That might trigger something for me, it might be the same composer I did six years ago, but I’d like to try this other piece of his.

   - Then if I encounter a piece I don’t know, and I don’t know that it’s been recommended by somebody I trust, or it’s not a composer I’m familiar with, or which has happened to me a lot lately, you’re doing a premiere. It’s always an interesting proposition particularly if you have commissioned a piece, to find out what the quality is. That’s when the score study reveals what the quality is.

   - I don’t have a yardstick or formula because I think a lot of times the language of the composer dictates if one of these, melody, harmony, form, style, is kind of the prime moving, decision making process. If you’re looking at the music of Jennifer Higdon, you’re not going to find as much melody as if you’re looking at the music of Steven Bryant. Those things we mentioned in the Gilbert list, those things can apply or not apply to varying degrees depending on the language of the composer. You certainly can’t expect that every composer is going to get a 10 out of 10 on each one of those categories.

   - At some point, if it looks to me that this is a piece worth doing, this is a piece that will speak to my students, speak to an audience, and speak to me. But there is a certain amount of score study that has to happen before you can make that decision. Unless of course, it is clearly a great, significant contribution to the repertoire. In recent memory it was the new symphony by William Bolcom, or Steven Bryant’s *Ecstatic Waters*. If it’s a composer you know you can trust, to me, that’s a lot of it. That’s said, there have been some disappointments.

   - You can find a piece where a composer keeps trying to rewrite the same piece
2. What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?

-If it’s an honor band, about all you can go on is what they did in the past. A lot of times I will get programs but not recordings, and then you can get there and you can be stuck. Picking music for kids you have never seen before is very difficult

-I personally believe that most of us as a profession over-program.

-To me, if you have one what I call project piece, one piece in your folder for a given concert, that may be enough. You have at least one piece that stretches the kids because if they sound great on everything in the first week of rehearsals, that’s a problem too. I think you have to have at least one piece where they are really going to have to work their butts off to get to the level they need to get to. The problem is having five pieces or eight pieces like that, because then you end of chasing notes the entire rehearsal sequence, and you never make any music.

-That’s kind of my formula, I do one piece that’s a project piece, one piece that they can probably sight-read pretty well at the first rehearsal, and then varying degrees of other kinds of pieces in between. Then you have some latitude to pick a slow piece, a wild and crazy piece, or a piece with multiple movements, which might be the project piece.

-If it’s my situation at home, I’ve gotten to know fairly well, even before auditions, what kind of players I’m going to have. Every year I try to make that bar go higher.

-I really try hard not to over-program

-I do think a lot of high school directors are so desperate when it comes to festival to make their band sound good that they deliberately program underneath certain players. They program to the bottom third of the band rather than the middle in order for those really terrific kids to excel and grow. I’m afraid there’s a lot of literature out there that supports that idea. Literature that doesn’t have transitions, it doesn’t have anything for the 2nd bassoon or tenor saxophone to do. Literature that dumbs down those risk taking chances. We tend to play too much music that is scored tutti and doesn’t let those soloists really have an opportunity.

-The question is, are these pieces pushing the kids to what they should become? Musical development can be minimized by under-programming

-There was a system developed by Ken Singleton at the University of Northern Colorado, that ranked pieces of the core repertoire. There are pieces that are in the most important pieces, then pieces just outside that realm, and pieces even more obscure. There is core repertoire that needs simply to be played. It upsets me when a former student comes back and says they never played a Holst Suite, or Grainger. I try to maintain a rotation of the core repertoire, because students need to play the core repertoire.
-I insisted when I was on the selection committee for the OMEA list that there are certain pieces like *Lincolnshire Posy* that need to be on the OMEA required list every year.

-It is important to keep lists of performed repertoire by your ensemble and other ensembles at the school. I work with my colleague Russ Mikkelson, and look at pieces we have done in the past few years so that when a student moves to the Wind Symphony from the Symphonic Band, they aren’t performing a piece they just played. We are careful not to duplicate repertoire, but each student should be exposed to certain composers.

3. **What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?**

   - They are going to have musical skills coming into by band, so I will find music that I think they need to know and experience, and reinforce and stretch their development.

   - I think we will fit the development of kids if we expose them to the best music we can, and teach them what the value is in that music.

4. **How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?**

   - That depends on the mission of the ensemble

   - With Russ Mikkelson and the Wind Symphony, there is certain pressure to perform up and coming contemporary works. And there are times, for example, I really wanted to program Ticheli’s *Angels in the Architecture*, but Russ said he was going to do it. So there can be a certain tug with colleagues on performing the new repertoire.

   - Now the mission of my band is to educate future performers and teachers, so more standard literature is programmed

   - But also we had a goal last year; we did a premiere every quarter

   - No matter what, the music must make the students grow

5. **What resources do you use to find this repertoire?**

   - Mostly what I said before. I have a number of colleagues like Bruce Moss that I will just talk to him and ask him what pieces he has done recently. Or maybe a new piece he heard a group do and then I will check it out.

   - I’ll listen to groups at CBDNA, Midwest, maybe I’ll hear something and get a score and study it.
- Of course, I have so many old programs and books that I can go back to those and look at what I have done, and find a piece maybe a piece I need to do

6. What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?

- I think themes can be fun and can test the brain. If the theme is right, it can bring in good repertoire and proper balance on the program. Last year, I did a program called “New York, New York.” We did pieces like Michael Daugherty’s *Niagara Falls* and *George Washington Bridge*.

- The danger in the band world can be playing pieces written within a similar period of time. I went to a concert recently where all of the pieces were written within about ten years of each other.

- The program I am doing right now has Procession du Rocio, a piece by Carter Pann, and Medieval Suite by Ron Nelson. Now there is a transcription, a medieval piece in a more modern setting, and a contemporary work.

- I think it is important for us also to challenge the audience as listeners

- Of course significant large works are always important

- It is most important that the program is driven by what the students need, but I also want every piece to speak to the audience and change them in some way when they leave the concert.

- Performing at OMEA or CBDNA can be the hardest program to put together because you know you are playing for colleagues. The program can’t be all flashy or all high-end stuff. And of course, the public schools directors can dislike certain contemporary pieces.

- I think you always have to consider the audience more in public venues. There are certain pieces I will perform at home, but would never perform at an OMEA conference or other public venue.

- The piece must always speak to the students and the conductor. As a conductor, there must be something in the piece that makes you passionate and driven by the music. Otherwise, you won’t be able to convey the music of the piece as a conductor and sell it to your students.

7. How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?

- The audience should be stretched, but not on every piece. If you have a good balance of things that will relate to the audience and things that maybe push their ears a little bit, I think that is important.
-The most important thing though is that the music is the best music for the students. Stephen Budiansky from the Washington Post wrote an article in the WASBE journal that challenged the quality of repertoire we are performing in the profession. Then last summer here in Cincinnati, he made a presentation that was very controversial, but made us rethink some of the choices we have made. So many bands are not performing the best music they can!

-We haven’t evaluated our own music enough throughout the history of our profession! You go to an orchestra concert, there are critics in the audience. We haven’t evaluated our music enough. Over the course of our history in wind band, there have not been critics sitting in the audience the way there are in orchestra concerts. We have let music that is not high quality be performed far too often.

-I talked about pieces that are commissioned and cannot be written of the highest quality. At that point, it’s almost too late because of the pressure to perform the piece. Bob Reynolds told me there were a couple pieces he commissioned that he never performed, because he wasn’t happy with the quality.

-I did an honor band last weekend with Craig Kirchoff, he told me that something like 1000 new pieces for band are written every year. And I think maybe 50 of them will be good.

8. **What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?**

- The only yardstick at the end of the day should be did I do what was best for my students, not what was easiest for them?

- We educate students by exposing them to good music. Be a changer and a motivator, don’t just want the students to love you, want them to love you for the right reasons

-Performers that play bad music well don’t learn anything

-And you know, the publishers have figured it out. If a piece is on the shelf and doesn’t sell for a year, they take it off. We had to fight to keep pieces like *Ye Banks and Braes O’ Bonnie Doon* in print. They will replace the standards that no one is performing with new music that we shouldn’t be giving our students.

-It is unfortunate. When I was going through school, we mostly played transcriptions and the Gianinis, the Hindemiths, not even that much Persichetti was there yet. The band profession went from a time when we were grasping for new, original works to having too many pieces, and too many pieces that aren’t good.

- I always say that good music shouldn’t be too safe or predictable
9. What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?

-Well, I think we can do a better job of preparing students at the universities. It wasn’t until a few years ago that we even had a wind repertoire class at Ohio State.

-And then, a lot of young directors fall into the trap of letting the pressure of ratings, approval of parents and administrators affect their programming choices. Playing the best music might not always make you popular, but it will be the best for the students.

-We must stand up to the pressure and dig for the best music. Be firm in your philosophy; hold your ground when it comes to good music. Not exposing students to good music damages an opportunity.

10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.

-I wish every young band director put together a program and sent it to someone they trust, be it a college teacher, or an experienced director in their district and asked for their thoughts on it.

-I remember when I was in my first year of teaching, a professor from Drake University in Chicago came to one of my concerts. He wrote a little note on my program and told me what he thought and sent it to me. That meant so much to me as a young teacher!

-After the rehearsal sequence is over, I still think it is important to evaluate, was it the best experience for the students?

-Get feedback from the students. Did they think they were ready? Was there a piece they really enjoyed? Was there a piece they didn’t enjoy?

-Too many teachers are scared to ask for help.

Rodney Dorsey

1. What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?

-Usually, I start, in no order, with what the group has played before. In my role here, I have to consider if music has been played either in the past three to four years by my band or if has been played recently by the Symphony Band. We try to avoid any back-to-back year overlaps between groups. So, at the beginning of the summer my colleague
Mike Haithcock will send me a list of things the Symphony Band has done in the last two years that might be appropriate for my group.

-I think also in overall quality. Is the composer a recognized name? If not, why? Maybe, some piece by a composer may just have not been played much.

-Scoring. How is it scored? I try to pick music per concert, per term that has enough variety in it so the band doesn’t sound the same piece to piece, half to half, etc. etc. Like on our current concert, our last piece is the Gianinni Symphony, so there’s also another piece by Carter Pann, *Hold This Boy and Listen*, which is very quiet, I think the strongest dynamic in it is a forte, if I remember correctly. So that is a song-like, soft, with different harmonies and will contrast the Gianinni, although they’re not on the same half, but it’s a different sound.

-Harmony is another one. If we have something really dissonant, how can I contrast that either right before it or right after it? In terms of where it falls in the program, but also where it falls in the entire concert cycle. If we’re doing everything atonal that gets a little bit rough on the audience. After a while, it’s, “Ok can I have a major chord somewhere.” So there’s that.

-Another criteria I use is solo opportunities. Most of my experience in the college level, in my last two jobs, has been working with the second bands, so there will be students who audition each year, depending on the day, they could be in either band. So those students need to be challenged and if I can find things to offer solo opportunities within a full band piece or a chamber music setting, that’s good.

-I think about form, but it’s not really high on the list. I think it comes into play if I select things that are too similar. If something is slow introduction, ABA, Coda, and then the next piece is a slow introduction and then a fast section. I try to mix it up in terms of variety for the listener, because I think if someone comes to a concert and they hear a lot of the same kinds of music, same formal design, it gets a little monotonous.

-Also, I mean it’s nice to do new music, but also we need to do some standards. Since I’ve been here with my band, I’ve been fortunate to be able to do the Hindemith *Symphony, Hammersmith*, the Holst Suites, things like that, so there’s got to be enough of that involved also. And maybe another formal thing, is it’s not bad to do a march every now and then. There’s some people I come in contact with that believe that that form is being lost with our students, because they don’t play it.

2. What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?

-I think there needs to be a good mix of difficulty. If students are struggling to play every piece on the program, it’s not going to be very good. It’s a little bit like if someone doesn’t swim at all or swim very well, and you throw them in the deep end of the pool. Style is out the window, they’re just going to be concerned about surviving and not
sinking to the bottom. So if something is so difficult that students are constantly trying to get the notes, then beauty, shape, line, contour, tonal focus is going to be out the window. They’re just going to be concerned about getting the notes. Like the Carter Pann piece I mentioned, technique is not an issue. In our first rehearsal they could read all the notes and now it’s just about what are we going to do with the music? How are we going to shape it? How their parts need to relate front to back and bottom to top. We can’t have everything super hard, so I think in the whole programming, you match not only soundscapes, but difficulty level within the program.

-Also, we rotate parts here quite a bit. I have pieces on each concert that I think of and call an “opportunity piece.” And that’s an opportunity for maybe a freshman or sophomore to play first, someone who doesn’t normally play first, and have that opportunity to be heard. That way they’re not always playing third part of fourth part.

-So musical criteria for difficulty, just to go back, Range. How are the ranges for the instruments? Extended techniques like tonguing, flutter-tonguing, double tonguing, triple-tonguing. How difficult is that? How difficult are the percussion parts? Are there a lot of extended percussion parts? We have to think about that too.

-I also think something we tend to forget about, especially if you’re not a brass player, how much are they playing all of the time? If the horns are on the face constantly, even if the notes aren’t hard, they never get a chance to rest. That’s going to be just as difficult if it’s above the staff a lot.

-We’re fairly lucky here that the pool across the board is fairly deep. So I can count on a certain level. I do have to say, the way our audition system works, if more students in a studio decide to only play in one ensemble, they have a choice, so the more students that do that, the more students I have availability to when it gets down to Concert Band. Prime example, this year because of auditions and grad school auditions, a few less flute players decided to play in two ensembles, so based on the trickle-down effect, I didn’t have as many flute players. So that gets into my ability to do chamber music. What we try to do is have a model where there might be a small octet or a double quintet going in a room and there’s a full band piece going at the same time. So when you look at bassoons, oboes, flutes, you don’t have a lot, or if you need three or four flutes on a full band piece and a double quintet and you need two in the other room and you only have five you’re short.

-The overall level stays pretty steady. There are just a few things we modify. We did a little bit of modification this year after the first term. We thought it would be better for my group if we did larger chamber pieces versus octets or double quintets, so we’re doing some larger things to give them that one on a part experience. And that’s a part of the whole scoring thing. It’s good for those guys that are music majors to do that one on a part of playing.

3. What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?
-You’ll find in the Symphony Band there will be more premieres of new works. Although we have done a few solo pieces with band or wind ensemble, the Symphony Band will do more of that here featuring faculty. Obviously, they are the group that’s going to be recording. So, a couple of years ago there was a Michael Daugherty CD, so that was recorded over a period of time. Not an all Daugherty concert, but pieces over time.

-When I think about educational needs, some of the individual aspects I’ve talked about before fall into that. One on a part playing. So if my group has a lot of performance majors, which it does, they need that experience. And I think that’s one thing we do well here that makes band a good thing, instead of band is bad, and orchestra is all good.

-And educationally, I go back to the whole scoring thing, if I find a piece that has good percussion exposure, that’s good for those guys. If you look at the Gianinni Symphony, percussion is fairly limited in number and the contribution. So if we do a piece, like we’re doing on our concert Cycles by Samuel Zyman, there’s more exposure for the percussion, more colors, wood blocks, things like that versus, cymbals, snare, bass drum, timpani.

-It’s interesting here, sometimes I feel like there’s a bit of a disconnect between the music education world and what’s going on in the ensemble world. I’m not sure why that happens. I think both parties just kind of get into their own worlds and do what they do and think about their students and I think sometimes on the band side we forget to try to link what we do to what a student in the group might have to do later on. I mean I go back to my own experience as college student, as an undergraduate, and gosh, 95% of the things I played in Wind Ensemble at Florida State I couldn’t do at my first school. There’s no way. And that’s pretty much what I’d do, “Oh this is a great piece, no there’s no way we can do this.” So then you have to spin back to, if you didn’t have a good repertoire class, well what did I do in high school? And hopefully that was good stuff, if it was bad, you don’t have a good pool to draw from.

-But also, we try and spin into the mix a variety of historic styles. We did the Susato Danserey Suite by Pat Dunnigan a couple of years ago, so they get to some renaissance music and play in that style to achieve a lighter, more buoyant style. So, the historical side of it also comes in to play.

-You know, I want to say almost every aspect that goes into how I am going to put together a program is based on the students and what’s going to be good for them. And hopefully I can come up with some piece maybe I haven’t done or I need to do, that also serves a personal purpose, because I don’t think you should deny that. If we’re always in our safety zone, we don’t grow and students don’t either.

-I’ll bring back pieces like Holst suites, Lincolnshire Posy, things like that. Just in Lincolnshire Posy, just think of the opportunities for solo playing, chamber music type playing within a setting in the third movement. And any kind of Grainger you can program you’re thinking it’s not just about technique it’s about colors. Just that one piece has so many different things, so we’ll spin those back through.
4. How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?

-I think a lot of times we say if we’re going to call standard Holst, Grainger, Hindemith, things like that, they can tend to be a good contrast to something new depending on the piece. I’ll go back to my current concert literature as an example. You take the Carter Pann piece, which is slow and lyrical and contrast that against the Gianinni. It’s harmonic contrast, Gianinni is kind of a neo-romantic composition and the Carter Pann almost has jazzy chords in it, so there’s a contrast there.

-I believe that there is responsibility at the college level to enrich and expand the music that’s written for winds because hopefully we have the personnel resources and financial resources to do that. And here, the composition faculty is wonderful and they write for winds and they encourage their students to do that. I believe this term with the Symphony Band each concert has a new piece either by a current UM student or a graduate, and our last concert with the Concert Band we had a piece written by a current Master’s student in composition. In a place like Michigan, you can and should and are well advised to nurture new music. I think bands are in a good place to do that because we don’t have the history of repertoire for full groups that the Orchestra does. We can do the Hindemith Symphony and that’s great but Brahms didn’t write any symphonies for band, so it’s not like you can pull that out. So I think it’s kind of our responsibility to perpetuate music being written for us, and to honor the standards is a good thought and a good way to balance things.

-I mean, everything can’t be new. I even think back to some things I may not have played as an undergraduate just based on my ensemble placement because the Wind Ensemble did a lot of new things all of the time. The joke was, when there was a major chord it was like “Wow, there was a major chord on the Wind Ensemble concert last night!” So there might have been some things I missed along the way as a player, so hopefully we can provide those things for our students.

5. What resources do you use to find this repertoire?

-In no certain order, other colleagues, just conversations with people. They might mention, “Hey, I have done this piece,” and if I don’t know it they might tell me about it and I’ll call and get a score and follow up.

-The internet, publisher’s websites are a great place to go. Sometimes I’ll just go to Boosey and Hawkes, or Peters and just find a composer I don’t know and see if they wrote something for winds. Also, under that internet category, composer’s websites are a wealth of information. As the publishing world has changed, more composers are publishing their own music.

-Conventions, CBDNA regionals and nationals, Midwest you might stumble on something that’s decent.
-Going to student recitals, actually. I might run into a composer on the program I don’t know, or a lot of the students here will do solo pieces and they’ll do a chamber piece, and you may run into a piece and think, “Man, I didn’t know this. I wonder has this person written anything for winds?”

-Professional concerts, also going to orchestra concerts, you might run into a piece that they have commissioned. Orchestra websites are also good because a lot of orchestras have composers-in-residence that might write for them. For an example, the Chicago Symphony, Turnage is their composer-in-residence, he’s written some things for winds.

-National Public Radio

-I learned from my colleague at Depaul, Don DeRoche, you have to be persistent about looking for things if you’re not in a situation where composers send you scores and ask you to do their music. And there are a very small number of jobs like that. You have to be pretty diligent about looking for those things, because they are out there, really good pieces are out there, and just because we don’t know a composer or about a composer doesn’t mean a piece is better or worse than the things we know.

6. What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?

-Our model here with the second band is we try to do 56-60 minutes of music for a concert, and that’s actually a lot of music. Coming in, at Depaul, the model for all of the ensembles was do less, but do it really, really well. Here, it’s we want you to do more and we want you to do it really well. And I understand the rationale, because the rationale here with my colleague, Michael Haithcock, is he wants students in the second band to feel like they are having just as valid of an experience as the students in the Symphony Band. So if Symphony Band does 64-65 minutes of music on a concert, and I do 35 minutes of music, “Ok well, if I wind up in Concert Band, I’m doing way less music than Symphony Band, so this group must be not as good, or someone thinks I don’t have the capacity to do that much.” So, within those 58 to 60 minutes of music, if I balance the difficulty correctly, we can do that amount of music and do it well, but go back to what I said before, if every single piece is not Hindemith Symphony difficult, like if we have something they can read right away and just worry about making it beautiful, or this piece is going to require a little bit of work but we can get there.

-Also, I have to think about the number of rehearsals I have. My first concert this term we had twelve rehearsals. I don’t count the dress as a rehearsal. So, we had twelve rehearsals, and one thing I learned from my colleague Mike Haithcock is halfway through the process he plays through everything front to back. And that’s really good, because it reminds you of what you haven’t rehearsed either at all or very much, because I find you go through and the band will sound great, sound great, and all the sudden it’s sounds terrible and then it will sound good again. And I’m always the one to point the finger at me and think “Ok, I haven’t rehearsed that B section as much.” So that’s another key.
-Maybe it was last summer, when I was working on programs, we also do a rehearsal model to see, okay, if a piece is ten minutes long, usually the model is, I’ll devote twenty minutes of rehearsal time, double the rehearsal time of the performance time. So, if it’s a ten minute piece we can read it through and have time at the end to go back and do some things, rehearse it. So, I was working on the rehearsal schedule, and it didn’t even occur to me until I put the rehearsal schedule together that if I was brass player, I would die rehearsing the music in this order because everything was loud back-to-back. One loud piece, then a slow piece, but it was a lot of loud, so I had to change a lot of it. And that didn’t occur to me until I put the rehearsal schedule together.

-Big major pieces I also think about where they are in the term. Maybe the Hindemith Symphony is the last concert of the term first semester, versus the last concert of the term second semester when people are thinking about being elsewhere. Like outside when it’s warm.

7. How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?

-We try to balance if something is going to be very contemporary, very dissonant, we try to balance it out with maybe one of the Alfred Reed Bach settings. Maybe we start with something that is within the audience’s comfort zone, we go away from that, and then we bring them back to a place where they’re comfortable. With the Concert Band, we might do a big piece at the end and put kind of a closer button at the end to get the audiences feet tapping when they leave.

-You know I think you have to be very careful that there’s enough variety things you do for the students, that they’re not getting a steady diet of any one kind of music. I think there’s a vicious cycle in what we do as far as programming goes, if I grow up in high school and we do one kind of music. Predictable form, Slow introduction, A, Contrasting slow B section, return of A section, Coda, and there’s a drum break in between the introduction and the A section. If that’s all I do, and I go to college where we’re not experimenting with new forms, and I’m a music ed major, the chances of me going back out and teaching music just like that are pretty high.

-So, if during the process they can be exposed to a lot of different things, hopefully, if they can’t play the piece when they go out and teach, they can use the piece for a measuring stick by which to judge other good pieces of music. If you do the Hindemith Symphony, what is about this piece is good? Well my part is interesting, the parts fit together in an interesting way, the forms and the way he develops motives and themes is not predictable.

-We need to think about what we are doing for the students, so that they are getting a bigger output. And, if you’re going to do composers that if they go to a Detroit Symphony Concert, they can say “Hey, I did a piece by this composer.” Not that we are constantly looking for validity, which sometimes I think we are. But if they are doing a
piece on their recital by a composer you might have played in your group, that’s also a good thing. Because hopefully the music that their applied teachers are giving them, they believe in.

-You have to consider the audience I think. You want people to come to the concert, and you want them to come back. So if you’re going to take them to a place that stretches them we need to provide them with enough music that they’re comfortable with. As we continue to stretch the audience, they can be more prepared for Stravinsky or Messiaen.

8. What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?

-Ask for help. I was very fortunate as a new teacher to be surrounded by other band directors I could call at any time and ask for help. And part of that help was “Help me find music that is grade three, four, easy fives that I can do with my group.” I’d never played any threes, fours in five years at Florida State. A little bit of that was my fault, in that maybe I could have done Campus Band on a secondary instrument and played easier music.

-Don’t be afraid to selectively and carefully challenge the students in all areas, technically, musically, aurally. Because a lot of time, I think we program, and I’ll be the first to admit I was guilty of this, program for festival. And things that maybe expose weaknesses, we shy away from those things because they expose weaknesses. You have to be careful, I’ve been in situations, like in one of my high school jobs, where a lot of things we re-written and re-scored for festival music to make them less “dangerous.” And as a result of that, a lot of students weren’t challenged. Their technique wasn’t challenged. A lot of things were re-scored for the clarinet section and as a result of that, the upper register never developed. So you have to be mindful to challenge people.

-Be critical of state music lists. I was lucky. My first high school teaching job was in Florida, and at the time, the music committee took it upon themselves to go through the list and identify what they thought were significant pieces. They called it significant literature. They had an asterisk by them. So when I started teaching, if I was looking for grade threes and fours, I started with those pieces. “Somebody thinks this is a good piece, well let me see it.” So, if the list doesn’t identify those pieces, choose wisely. And even if they do, who is to say that the committee’s criteria are your own?

-Also, maybe come up with a set of criteria. “Well I want to do this piece with my band because I like it.” Why do you like? Is it easy to conduct? Do you like it because the students like it?

-Sometimes the students like pieces immediately, and other times it takes a while. And some of that time, it takes us explaining the piece to them and why we think it’s a good piece to them. And just because they read it very well doesn’t mean it’s a bad piece. I tell my high school band that all of the time. “We don’t like this piece.” “Well, you don’t like
it yet because you can’t play it.” “You don’t like the piece because it’s difficult and it’s going to challenge you. It didn’t sound good right away”

-And that’s not to say if in the third week of rehearsal it still sounds like the first read maybe it is too hard and you should punt

-Some of these other resources I’ve talked about, use them. Internet, Colleagues, go to conventions, seek out new works.

-Don’t try to program all of the pieces you’ve always wanted to do on the first concert.

-I think if we program with the students best interests in mind, I think we avoid a lot of traps. Because as I’m thinking about this, if I program to get a one or superior at festival, I’m really not thinking about the students. I might fake myself into saying I am, but I’m really not. So think about the entire students’ education, what can they get from a piece?

9. What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?

-Really examine why is this piece good? Why is the Dahl Sinfonietta a good piece? I played the Dahl Sinfonietta as undergraduate. No high school band I ever taught could come close to playing it. Maybe at my last job we could have done and just killed ourselves working on it, but it’s a good piece, so what is it about that piece that I could find somewhere else?

10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.

-With the Youth Band or Honor Band, rehearsal time is the first thing that comes to my mind. You go in with an Honor Band and you have no idea what you’re going to get. But, I still try to balance things out, and give the percussion exposure.

-With the Youth Band here, I have to think about the fact that we only rehearse once a week. So the beginning of our rehearsal is a little bit about what we did last time and bringing it back up. This program we’re doing Chester by Schumann, Scriabin Nocturne, Op. 9, No. 2, the arrangement by Alfred Reed, the last movement of Ticheli’s Second Symphony, and a new piece last year called Vinessence by a grad student David Biedenbender. It’s kind of interesting. All of the pieces except for the Scriabin are all based on some hymn tune. Not by design, but it kind of fell that way.

-With honor bands, I tend to be on the conservative side. I hate those concerts where it’s a relief to get to the last note. In the honor band experience, hopefully I can expose them to music they might not have played for. Or at least play the piece they have played but with different resources.
-It takes a long time to come up with something that works. I am fortunate here to have graduate conductors and colleagues that really take a lot of time with it. It’s been a great learning experience being around Mike Haithcock to see what he goes through with the level of students and the care he uses with programming. I’ll ask questions to my colleagues. You have to ask questions at the risk of looking at dumb. I think you are only dumb when you don’t ask.

-I do think there are some really good resources for teachers. The *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* series I think is a really good resource. Some of the analyses can be a little bit uneven just because there are so many different people contributing. But what a great resource and having the recording.

-One of my colleagues in Florida, Joseph Kreines wrote a book on programming. And when I started teaching that’s what I started with. I sat down with my colleagues in town and said “what are some of these pieces?”

-It’s a challenge to do it well. A lot of people forget the artistic side of it. We forget the moods of the pieces in the concert. Maybe there something that’s just gorgeous and molto espresivo and something really angular and biting as a contrast.

George Edge

1. **What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?**

- I think, in criteria, I look for things that are exemplary for the period of time they were written in, that are going to last the test of time, that are not trivial, that are not here today gone tomorrow pieces, they should have substance to them.

- By substance, I mean the harmonic structure is quality, there is form, diverse in its stylistic approach, it’s not ostinato pattern three quarters of the way through the piece, it has some interesting counter-lines, interesting harmonies

- I say interesting harmonies, but if you are playing a transcription, it’s a 1700s, 1800s piece. It’s not going to have 9\textsuperscript{th}, 11\textsuperscript{th}, 13\textsuperscript{th}, 15\textsuperscript{th} color chords that we’re used to hearing in contemporary harmony.

- I look for things that are going to stand the test of time. I look for things that are already in to the band literature that are nuggets to say. For instance, we’re doing the Holst Suite with the top band. Now that’s on the A list, and we’re a AA band, and you say, “well, why are you playing that.” It’s a very important part of our history with Holst. The Blacksmith brings out the social things that are going on as well, which music so eloquently does. You can actually visualize the blacksmith sitting there hammering away at the horseshoes, and the major mode of traffic, not everyone had cars until Henry Ford came out with the assembly line. The majority of Americans and the majority of Europeans didn’t have anything other access, so the blacksmith was a pretty important
person within the society. So the kids can relate to that, you can go back and talk about that.

-I look for historical things to do. We’re doing *Orpheus in the Underworld*, so you can talk a little bit about Greek mythology and you can talk a little bit about opera things that are going on. It’s very traditional and it’s something that they can relate to.

-Now there’s twelve tone pieces that maybe the students don’t get into right away, but it is important for them to know

-Korean Folk Song, I play probably once every five years because it does a couple of things. It gives kids a chance to play a piece of the standard literature, it relates a little bit of Korea to them. It is a wonderful variation of a different melodic line and then the very ending has a wonderful counter-play between the brass line which is very long and lethargic and the woodwinds which are flying.

-I try to mix it up quite a bit, but there must be something to for the students to relate to.

2. **What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?**

-It is important to play different levels. *Where Never Lark nor Eagle Flew* has a very high French horn part. I’ll put a piece like that when I’m not at the highest level of competition or highest level of scrutiny so that the kids can grow. It really pushes the horn range, it pushes articulation in the woodwinds, it pushes technical facility. My double reeds get a tremendous workout, there’s wonderful English horn exposure, but there’s parallel octaves, so you’re going to be into some stuff that’s going to expose some real tough intonation moments. For district contest, I’ll pull out a piece like that.

-For district band contest, I’ll also pull out a piece that has more demand on them technically, range wise, intonation wise, than I would later in the year at a state competition, just because I want them to grow

-In the shorter amounts of weeks that I have to work with a piece, I would pick a piece that is not as technically challenging. But, if I have six to eight weeks to work on a piece, then I will pick a harder selection and really work it, because there is plenty to work on

-Some spring concert pieces can be pretty involved themselves technically.

-Another thing I’d like to talk about is technical demands and doing good literature. The Sousa Band could play anything, they had virtuosos in every instrument. So in Sousa marches, the first clarinet part is on high F and high G, and high E-Flat, so I think a good choice in younger bands like my second band, our third band at Grove City, or Class C high school bands are some really good arrangements of quality literature like that, like the *Footlifter* and *His Honor* that are not scored as high. Andrew Balent has done a nice
job of rescoring some of those marches, from a younger band standpoint or a Class C high school band, but not have to play a virtuosic first clarinet part.

-Another thing I would consider is programming a high piece with a high tessitura in the trumpets with a demand of a high C and high D. I wouldn’t put a lot of those on the same concert, depending on the year, and depending on the virtuosic nature of the trumpet section. If I had year where range where range was an issue, I would make sure that I was careful in selecting pieces that were within their grasp. Where they could do a nice job and play in tune and not have to force to get up to the higher pitches.

-I talked about Where Never Lark Nor Eagle Flew, I certainly wouldn’t put anything else on that concert that demanded that range from my French horns, so programming is pretty important as far as choosing the number of pieces that you have on a concert.

3. **What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?**

-You have to look at pieces from a form standpoint. You certainly don’t want three pieces in a row that are ABA in form. You want pieces that have some variety to them, some pieces that aren’t even predictable. You introduce a third theme close to the end or you have something that totally catches you off guard.

-You have considerations such as, What do you want to accomplish? For instance, Salvation is Created is a wonderful lyrical band piece, just like Erickson’s Air for Band. There’s Pierre La Plante’s Prospect, there’s some wonderful things for the students to learn from a balance standpoint, from a blend standpoint, from a parallel octaves across the band. ‘Who am I matching with?’ ‘Who has the most important melodic line?’ ‘How do I bring it out?’ The Whitacre piece, Lux Arumque, has a lot to offer from a harsh harmony standpoint, from tension to relaxation in music, that’s very important.

- I think if you play five pieces by the same composer, then there’s a problem, and you haven’t really taught your students variety within the musical literature that’s out there.

4. **How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?**

-I think it’s important for conductors to go to Midwest, to go to new music reading sessions and to talk to other directors on something that they may have run across that they are playing that’s new that’s of interest.

-There are a lot of new composers coming on the scene, and I think important to stay abreast to what new arrangers and composers are bringing on to the scene. I think that’s important for you to keep up with.

-I think the balance has to be that you have the new and you have the old, and you try to mix it pretty frequently.
The danger with playing the new is you need to find things that you think will stand the test of time, and that’s not always easy with new. There will be pieces you’ll choose that won’t stand the test of time, that are for a time period and they are gone.

I think it’s important to expose your kids to the new.

Every year, there’s something new that comes out that’s just a bit different, that has just a little different voicing, use of the color of instruments, and it’s innovative and it’s worth your while to look at it.

I think a 100% diet of new, just so you don’t play the old is very bad too. I think there’s a lot of wonderful things like *Fanfare and Allegro*, and some of the older Vaughan Williams things are worth the while.

5. What resources do you use to find this repertoire?

-I talked about Midwest, obviously listening to recordings is pretty important, and all of the publisher’s seem to hand them out now.

-Stanton’s has a wonderful music library online that you can go and listen to any tune.

-Talking to more experienced directors that might have a library of different things that you might want to consider that are not in print, or are in print but there are no recordings out.

-There’s a wonderful library that the National Band Association puts out that has rankings on pieces.

-The Instrumentalist has a wonderful guide on new pieces.

6. What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?

-Endurance is obviously is a big one.

-If I’m going to do a classic overture, then I am certainly going to find something that goes with it that is more contemporary and intricate in the percussion section.

-From a texture standpoint, obviously good programming has a wide variety. The Nimrod from the Elgar *Enigma Variations* balanced with something very technical, contrapuntal, and sporadic. Then doing something maybe a little bit more predictable.

-I always put a march on every concert. I think that’s important. Marches are our history. America bought into band music because of marches. If it wasn’t for marches, we wouldn’t be as important of a medium as we are today. So I don’t downplay marches, and
I think the way you play a march is important, with a lot of thought into texture changes and dynamic changes.

7. **How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?**

-I want the audience to relate to the music in some way. I might set the stage for pieces by talking to the audience. There are certain pieces that are difficult for the audience to hear. A twelve-tone piece might be hard to hear, but it’s important for the students to learn and play.

-I might balance a program with a piece that features a trumpet soloist like Carnival of Venice, or a jazzier piece like Blue Shades. Sometimes, maybe too much, I will balance to the audience with pieces like these.

-It is more difficult for the audience to pick on the standard repertoire

8. **What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?**

-I think there must be a good balance between challenging the students and teaching them what you want them to learn.

-I also think it’s important to know where to play pieces. It’s going to be hard for a younger director to play a contemporary piece in a more public venue. It’s also going to be hard for a younger director to do a standard at contest when they know they will be under scrutiny.

-We also have to remember the kids won’t have a good experience if they can’t handle the music. The kids should also enjoy the music. Don’t just play what the conductor likes. Now on the other hand, there may be pieces that the kids won’t like at first. But, they may grow to like it if they learn to play it well.

-I think light pieces can be good if they are well written. I mean if they are not thinly scored, have different tempos, and good harmonies

9. **What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?**

-Sitting under successful directors. Watch other directors’ rehearsals to learn repertoire. I had the privilege of working under Dick Cool at Northmont, Don Jenkins, Ed Nichol was at Marion Local for years. You can have guest conductors and take advantage of the mature directors.

-Bounce ideas off of your mentors. Even if it’s a newer piece, or a piece they don’t know, bring them a score and a recording and ask them what they think.
- Don’t just hear a piece and decide, you need to learn the score

- I was talking about mentors, I had Mark Kelly come out and work with my band, and I was really nervous. It’s important to be prepared for what your mentors say, good or bad.

10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.

- I use the 48 rhythmic studies to develop fundamentals in rhythm. There are lots of method books you can use.

- We will also sight-read a lot of pieces. We go through the process and we will talk about what to look for in the music.

- I think the fundamentals need to be taught before you learn the repertoire. You can use the 16 chorales by Bach or your warm-ups to teach fundamentals. Then you can apply the fundamentals in the repertoire.

Robert Bass

1. What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?

- We go through an extensive process, me and the two other guys that work with me, teaching rhythm, terminology, form.

- Every piece has a form, and we give them diagrams and have them do diagrams of the pieces we perform.

- We sometimes pick music according to what we’re doing, for instance if we’re in cut time, we do a cut time march, we sometimes do that.

- But we kind of go for the literature itself and then fit the criteria within that place.

2. What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?

- We let the middle school go through a comprehensive curriculum. It goes through this is the rhythm that needs to be taught, this is the type music, this is when cut time is introduced, this is when 6/8 is introduced, so by the time they get to us we do the reinforcing of that

- Depending on the band, if it’s the preparatory band, that’s when we continue on with reinforcing, the music’s a little easier, but we try and go at the literature first, try and find the quality literature and reinforce that way
3. **What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?**

- That happens on both ends, you have to look at it, and you also look at your ensemble and will it fit your ensemble?

- If you have a mean bassoon solo, and you don’t have a bassoonist, that’s hard to do, but it’s not impossible to do that piece, if it’s a quality piece, you rewrite the bassoon part in something else and give a kid a chance, there is no problem with that

- Unfortunately, contest dictates sometimes what we do, and that is so wrong, and I learned that ten years into teaching.

- I used to be the guy who would pick three tunes, work on them work two months, then you go to state and work on two of the same tunes.

- It’s for the kids, it’s not for a rating, ratings should be secondary way in the distance, it’s about the quality of literature you give your kids

- There are sometimes that I’ll go listen to a piece, I hear a piece on the radio, or go to one of these clinics, and want to do that with my group, and then you get the score, it sounds great but there is no substance to it at all. You have to watch out for that. Once you discover a piece, then you have to look at your group, or you have to look once you see the score, does this work?

- I would say 90% of us are not blessed with perfect instrumentation

4. **How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?**

- I am a huge proponent of having an entertaining concert, and how you have an entertaining concert is you create an actual timeline where you have emotional ups and downs for the audience, for the students, and even for the director.

- I think programming is one of the most crucial things that we do as educators. If we all play the same stuff, if we have all heavy literature, or do all light literature, we’re not servicing our students to the emotional impact.

- You might do a standard, then a quality arrangement of movie music such as *Raiders of the Lost Ark*, I love to program Grainger, if I can get Grainger on a concert, having a march.

- It’s going through an emotional roller coaster so when the audience member leaves, they had an enjoyable time.
There’s also a part of this that we have to educate the audience. So you’re going to have a piece on that concert perhaps that they might not understand, but as long as you prep it, whether it is through multimedia, through just talking, having a composer there, there are so many things you can do to direct the audience to what to listen for.

5. **What resources do you use to find this repertoire?**

- Anything you possibly can

- *Teaching Music through Performance* is exceptional for everybody, whether you are a 25 or 35 year vet, or a first year teacher, there’s just a lot great material in there, and having the recordings is great

- About 2004, I started to explore new music, I think that’s vital. There’s so much stuff being written that shouldn’t be put in front of our kids, and I learned that in 2004.

- Some of things I do are call band directors, talk to university band directors, actually call composers, “hey you got anything new for a younger band, or an advanced band?” I’ve called Frank Ticheli, Mark Camphouse, anyone can do that. I think everyone is afraid. We hear these huge names, David Gillingham, Bryant, all these guys, but they are so accommodating, and in fact sometimes will come conduct a piece with your band for very little.

- That social networking is very important to do

- You can go even to Stanton’s Editor’s Choice, you might find one or two pieces out of list of a hundred or two hundred, it’s very sparse in that area and at times can be too time consuming, but if you have that time in the summer to look at it that that’s great

- Word of mouth, going to clinics, listening to bands play at Midwest, convention here, you’ll hear a piece, check out the score and see if it fits your band

- I think it’s vital, I think it’s the most important thing to do, as many resources as you possible can find

6. **What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?**

- I think the piece is too hard and not as valuable if you spend three to four months having after school sectionals trying to get everyone to play the exact right notes and style, it almost like it’s programmed so when you get on that stage, they might be doing all of that, but there is no emotional attachment for the student, it’s programmed and rote taught by the director and that’s a major problem.

- Students should be exposed to as much literature as they possibly can be exposed to with excellence in mind.
- You don’t want to say my band did all of this stuff, but it doesn’t sound good, there has to be an excellence part of it.

- Give the kids a lot of literature and having them do the work, have them practice, then they can come to the table and actually rehearse.

- It’s a really difficult fine line, and I made so many mistakes, but I just had to learn.

- I think there is a difference in performance venue, right or wrong.

- At the National Concert Band Festival, their philosophy, which I love, is expose the students to music they might not necessarily play in their district or state because of contest it has to be perfected. They say play literature that is challenging, that you might not do before. So in that venue I give them so really difficult stuff. It’s a heavier concert perhaps, but it still has its Grainger and lighter moments. Last year we did Shostakovich Five and Dionysiaques. I never would have done something like that in a venue such as contest because of length and demand.

- OMEA is a little lighter, you try to put in some tunes you can sit back to and just enjoy.

- Midwest is dictated by the publisher, you have to perform at least half of your program new music, and that’s where I started to get into what’s out there, because there is so much stuff that is really bad, and to try and find that gem which is fun.

7. **How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?**

- It’s interesting, a story right now, we are doing *Symphonic Songs for Band* by Bennett, and sometimes you pick a piece of music and the students don’t understand it and they don’t buy into it. You know it’s quality, and the students don’t have as much knowledge as the instructor, so it is our job to show the qualities of the music as to why it is important. There are times we need to appreciate types of literature we might not normally like, and teach what the value is in it.

- I’ll put things in front of them that they might not necessarily like. When we did *Music for Prague*, it was a tough sell at the beginning, until their paper. They each did a paper, found out about the piece, researched it, and then it was one of the most rewarding experiences of my career, and probably the kids will remember doing that piece forever.

8. **What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?**

- Sometimes we pick literature that we like, and want to do, but we don’t set the kids up for success. They need to know how to read music. They need to have basic fundamental skills. They need to know their skills. It’s like if you are a football coach and try to win
all these games without lifting weights and go through two a days. They have to have a good foundation before they do the literature.

-Some of the pitfalls are playing music that is so similar. I love to listen to bands, and I think everyone should go hear collegiate bands, and go to contest and listen to all the bands at contest or try sit in a sight-reading session. Some many times I go to contest and hear pieces by the same composer, and that’s a disservice to students.

-Again, picking pieces that fit your group, that fit the instrumentation if possible, and fit the talent level of your group

9. What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?

-This is going to sound bizarre…listen to as much orchestral repertoire as possible. It’s so important. That’s how I learned to teach musicianship with a band. It’s a venue, a genre that is so valuable for us. It’s so vital for us, going to the symphony, I listen to classical music all the time. When I went to the University of Cincinnati, I learned to play arias and recitatives on my instrument. I think it’s important so you can teach musicality to your kids, rather than just “we’re going to tackle these notes and rhythms.” Turning a musical phrase

10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.

-Solo literature with your band. Find great musicians, whether it’s collegiate performers, professional performers, or student performers. You might have this outstanding kid or a couple kids. Feature them. Chamber groups and chamber ensembles are vital, and that’s part of programming.

-I had Chris Martin, principal trumpet of the Chicago Symphony, and his father conducted him and his brother Michael played a piece. That probably cost us $600, and most bands can do that. They loved doing it. It’s great exposure for kids.

Bruce Corrigan

1. What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?

-Well let me start by saying, I’m not sure if I’m an expert, but I do work really hard at picking the right literature. Certainly high quality band literature, there are all kinds of gems out there now. When I first started my career twenty five years ago, there were great pieces too but seems like that it’s multiplied quite a bit since then.

-When I choose quality based on high quality, I want it to represent a composer at his best. I want it to represent something new, something different that someone else hasn’t said in their own way. Emotionally, it needs to something for me. Harmonically, for
young band literature this is one of the hardest challenges I find, is finding music that is harmonically interesting.

-As a middle school band director, also it’s choosing music that will challenge your best players and feature them sometimes as soloists, whether it be a two measure solo, or ten measure solo or something else, or as small soli groups. That’s hard to find in literature for young bands. I want my best players to be challenged. For that reason, sometimes I’ve even commissioned works. Ryan Nowlin’s *Enchanted* was written partly for that reason. That also had a lot of percussion interest, which I’d asked Ryan to do. Personally, I just think he turned out a great piece. Ryan is one of the young composers out there that I think has a bright future.

-Representing a style, representing a time period. Does it represent a formal structure? I wrote a fugue for brass choir once because I wanted my kids to learn about a fugue. In that fugue, my goal was to use every tool that I could think of that were used in fugues. So, retrograde, retrograde inversion, inversion, diminution, augmentation, pedal tones. I tried to use everything single thing in that fugue. We also use that for a little period of music class, where I teach kids to compose, we use that and they have to analyze it and find all of the things in each section.

-When I think of quality literature for middle school, I think of what is going to help these kids grow musically. What is going to interest them?

2. **What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?**

-There are so many reasons to choose music for middle school, and on the top of that list is, are they going to be successful with this piece? And how do you find music that they will be successful with? Are they going to build confidence and grow in some way?

-It could key signature, it could be scales, whether it be major, minor, pentatonic, octatonic and different modes. Harmonically, again, I find it hard to find music that is interesting harmonically that fits my group. The ensemble sound, does it develop a good ensemble sound?

-Again for middle school, pulse is something that is a concern. So, are we building confidence with pulse? Or are we teaching them things? For middle school, I think in slow, medium, and fast. If they can play a rhythm at a slow tempo, that’s usually harder for them than playing it at a medium tempo. Medium is usually the easiest, but to be able to do a rhythm at a slow tempo or at a fast tempo is harder. There’s meter. Whether it be 4/4, 3/4, or 2/4, which is what a lot of the musical literature is for. It’d be nice to go into 6/8 more, and I always look for literature that way. Cut time, and even in 9/8, 7/8, 5/8, I’ve used music in all of those meters with middle school. I think band directors shy away from using different meters and I don’t think they should. I don’t think it’s that hard. Kids pick up on it quicker than that.
-Certainly, range is a consideration. Is it going to be too high for the trumpets? Or is going to be too low for the saxes to play with a good tone? Or is it going to help them develop that?

-I try to find things that will challenge them just enough to move to the next level, from that standpoint.

-I often choose literature maybe to inspire some kids. Let’s face it, they probably don’t listen to a lot of Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner and things like that at home. So you have to sometimes meet them on their own field. Sometimes that might be playing a song you might hear at a high school basketball game. Or Hang on Sloopy. I use Hang On Sloopy every year. It’s not because I like the tune, it’s not because it’s great. It’s ok, it’s a nice little pep tune. But, it does two things for me. It has four notes in the bass voices, so my tuba players that maybe just switched over for trumpet or trombone or something, it’s going to help build their conference. They play Bb, Eb, F, and C and they use the same rhythm throughout. And they use the same pattern, it’s a two measure two pattern. So, if they’re playing that repetitively it helps them develop the confidence on those four notes. And if they’re just a starting player, that helps them. Often tuba players need that help to get a strong foundation when everyone else has been playing for a year or two. So, sometimes kids need to grab something they can relate to and develop their skills that way.

-The other thing about Hang on Sloopy, is sometimes I’ll do this with pieces, where I give the third trumpets the first trumpet part, and I give the third clarinets the first clarinet part, and I usually do that because they don’t often get to play the melody, and it’s for them to be able to do that. But also, they don’t necessarily get to play the higher range and helps develop them that way. It helps get those third trumpets comfortable playing higher notes, and the lower clarinets, it’s going to help them play over the break. Which they probably don’t do as much when they’re playing third clarinet, especially in the young band setting.

3. What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?

-Actually, I lot of things I’ll do through method books to make sure they are heading in the right direction that way. But I will also right out things. I have little technique sheet called middle range that starts on their F concert and it works down to Low Bb, and starts on their F Concert and works up to High C. It’s really for tonal development in that range and making sure they’re working their tone to keep the tone strong, especially going up to the higher C. I have another one that’s called Bb Clarke in Sixteenths that I wrote I out that just uses the old trumpet Herbert Clarke exercise. And we start out doing that really slow, and working towards developing fingers and fluency and just getting comfortable reading those notes. It also reaches the range issues too.

-Foundations, I took from a clinic at Midwest years ago. They did a clinic on foundations for young bands. Three Texas band directors talked about developing tone and pulse with
the young band. I have some sheets called foundations that I use for that purpose, and articulation drills. There’s just so out there these days that will do that.

- Often I will introduce concepts in a book and in literature at the same time. I often write out rhythm sheets for them to play on a unison pitch. Sometimes, in the method books I’ll pick certain exercises because they’re in the same key or I’ll try to find a chorale that’s in the same key that they’re playing. Especially if it goes to one their not used to like a Db Concert, Ab Concert, or C Concert.

- The rhythm things, for instance, we’re doing a piece called *Pompeii Unearthed*, again it’s by Ryan Nowlin, there are some rhythms for the seventh grade band that they’re not comfortable with. So, we spent a week just reading through the rhythm chart singing it, and then clapping a little bit, and it helped tremendously. They started to understand the rhythms, so when they play the music it works better.

4. **How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?**

- I just look for the right literature for that ensemble. Sometimes that’s older stuff and sometimes it’s new stuff. Right now, I have a budget that allows me to get more than some band directors may have right now, to buy new literature.

- There are certain pieces that I’ll repeat. But for me as a teacher, I find that if I don’t do new things, than it’s not as fun for me, not as motivating for me. I have to look for new things for myself.

- There’s a piece by *Three Kentucky Sketches* by John O’Reilly that I did twenty years ago or eighteen years ago. It’s a great piece of music. It’s three short movements, it has some nice brass parts in the first movement. In the second movement, it has a real nice opportunity to have a soloist. It’s in the key of F, it’s in 5/4, so it has some teaching things in there. It has some real interesting style things. And the third movement is just fun for kids, they just like playing the third movement. Some interesting syncopated rhythms in there for me. But I did that probably eighteen years ago, and I’m planning to get it out again, and I want to make sure I do it in a fresh way that is new for me. Sometimes, I’ve found when I repeat a piece, the ensemble might be better the second time, the performance isn’t necessarily better. And is that because of me or because of them?

- That’s one of the things about middle school teaching and even high school teaching. Your ensemble changes so much every year. If I was just picking great music for the perfect ensemble, that’s different than picking great music for an ensemble that one year has five flutes and the next year has ten flutes. And one year has four trumpets and the next year has twelve trumpets. So finding the right literature for a constantly changing environment is a whole different ballgame.

5. **What resources do you use to find this repertoire?**
-It’s so much easier now that it was thirty years ago. First of all, the publishers tend to
send out recordings at least for the grade one to grade four literature, and even for grade
five and grade six. They tend to send out publisher recordings with either an excerpt from
the piece or the entire piece on CD. So it’s easy to sit down and listen to that compared to
thirty years ago.

-Secondly, the internet. If you go to the publisher’s websites they often have recordings
on the internet as well. I’ve done that occasionally, especially this year I’ve started doing
that more. So that’s another source. I try to go through all the recordings within the first
six months of the school year for the new publications. Most of them I go through in
August or September, if they sent them to me send them to July. I would do it then. But
for most band directors they are probably not thinking that way and would rather have it
in August or September.

-Going to conferences, OMEA just had a conference the past four days here. Going to
conferences and hearing groups and hearing their performances. Sometimes a live
performance gives you a completely different feel for a piece than a recording. I will go
to performances to hear other bands perform it and see what it turns out like.

-And certainly there are band directors that I respect and ask their opinions. “What have
you found that’s new this year that you like?” I often ask that, even at conference, I’ll talk
to band directors, “Hey, what’s new that you like? What did you find this year?” They
usually have certain pieces that they like to. So certainly communicating with other
directors is a good way too.

-Still for me, I like to see the score. It’s important for me to the score. There the
recordings are great, but I like to see the score. I want to see harmonically what it does in
writing. I want to see what parts are lacking interest for young players because if I’m
going to sit there with a saxophone section that’s bored to death that’s not good. And
sometimes to even look at the parts, look at the tuba part, look at the trombone parts, look
at the sax parts, the trumpet parts. Who has the interesting part there? Are they going to
enjoy that? I try and find music that’s interesting for everyone. That’s not always the
case, sometimes you find music that you think is a great piece of music and they should
play no matter what.

-There’s nothing better for learning new music than at Midwest. All of the publishers are
there. You get to hear some great performances. Some of the bands that go there are the
best bands in the world, basically. You hear them play these pieces and it can be
misleading, because it will be easier for them to do than for you. But a lot of times it just
give you an idea that it will work well for you ensemble.

6. What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule,
variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?
Choosing music for concerts I try to choose variety. One thing that I struggle with is finding marches that I like for young bands. I haven’t found that many that I really enjoy. Even though I really believe that marches are an important part of what we should be doing with kids, I tend to shy away from because I haven’t found very many that I like.

-I try to think opener, closer, middle number. We tend to three to five or six pieces of music in each group. Unless, like last year, they went to ASBDA conference, so we did I think eight pieces of music in that performance. In a case like that, this was suggested by Mark Kelly, they perform every piece before the conference. I had them perform one of those pieces in the fall concert, two more in the December/Holiday concert, and then other ones in the concert in February before the conference.

-In general, I try to choose things that are right for them and will inspire them to practice, will inspire them to go to the next level. Occasionally, I do things such as The Raven. The piece was based on Edgar Allan Poe’s poem The Raven. We studied the poem, we studied a little bit of Edgar Allan Poe, and then we tied that into our piece. We even had them make artwork to go along with the piece and displayed that during the concert on a projection device. So sometimes I want to do things like that.

-Occasionally, I want to do something that’s fun for them. They love to do movie music. Every year, I have someone ask me to do James Bond, I’ve never done it. I’ve not found good arrangements for that for young bands. Pirates of the Carribean is popular now as well, and we have done that.

-We did an arrangement of Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantasique “March to the Scaffold.” Calvin Custer did an arrangement of it. I actually thought it was a pretty nice arrangement. I had some other band directors I respect that said the same thing. The kids absolutely loved it. It’s program music, it told a story, there was a nice little clarinet solo towards the end.

-I do tend to stay away from playing poor arrangements of some of the classics. But at the same time, for a younger band, you could ruin a great piece of music, or you could ruin a lousy piece of music.

7. How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?

-I don’t know that I look to for a balance but rather I want to pick a piece of music because it is a great piece of music. Sometimes I choose music for the students, sometimes for the audiences, and sometimes I choose it for me. For instance, I found this arrangement of Black is the Color of My True Love’s Hair. I thought it would be a good piece for me to teach dynamics, different scoring, and conduct in different meters. And actually, I was surprised, the students ended up liking the piece and we performed it on a concert.
Several years ago, I worked with Marilyn Shrude, a composer from BGSU, to write a piece for my eighth grade band. It had really different textures, a number of solos, mixed meters, and different, contemporary harmony. That was a piece that the students learned a lot from and loved playing. There was something special about having music written for them. And also, the music was different than anything they had played before. I had students asking me about that piece well into them being in high school.

Sometimes I might choose a piece that will allow me to teach better and make me a better musician. I might pick a piece that I will work on phrasing. Or I might pick a piece that is a chorale style to teach more lyrical playing.

We play a lot of music, and a lot of music that we won’t perform. I would say with the eighth grade band we play 30-40 pieces of music throughout the year. I think it’s important for them to read music.

8. What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?

-Know your band, know what your strengths are, and know what you need to develop. I picked a piece that is working on developing my seventh grade percussion section.

-Use supplemental materials like method books to develop skills required for the literature

-I think it’s also important with middle school students to build slowly at the beginning. It is better to do a lot of repetition of skills at the beginning rather than push them through a lot of music that they will struggle with

-It’s important to take interest in the students as people. The more you know about what your students like, dislike, what plans they have for the future, the better you will be able to aid in their development musically and otherwise.

9. What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?

-Teaching Music through Performance in Band can a be a great reference. I like how some of the articles really dig in to the history, analysis and performance problems in a piece of music. Although, some of the analyses aren’t as interpretive as I would like. So for that reason, I would encourage directors to look beyond one person’s opinion.

-Always look for growth in your students

-Listen to really good music. College bands, professional musicians. We can become too accustomed to the sound of our band, we need to listen to other bands, really good bands. The students need to hear advanced musicians play. Play recordings for them. I’m always upset when I take our band to contest and I see a band that comes in plays their program,
goes to sight-reading, then gets on the bus once they get their rating. Those students and directors never hear another band. It’s important for us, and it’s important for them to hear other bands.

10. Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.

-It is rare that I figure it out quickly. And I would add that sometimes you don’t make the right decision. I remember one year we were working on All the Pretty Little Horses by Anne McGinty. It was a great piece of music, but it was just too hard for us at that time. You probably learn more from your mistakes than you do from your successes.

-Sometimes I’ve been to concert and heard a piece by a composer I liked and then made contact with him. I think we could be doing more commissions from quality composers. Commissioning a piece, if you catch a composer that is younger, can be a pretty good deal versus a lot of money for a more accomplished composer.

Rob Cebriak

1. What musical criteria (i.e., melody, harmony, form, style) do you use to determine quality of band repertoire?

-I look for variety. It’s easy to get stuck to the same sort of things and the same composers, so variety of composer, variety of form, those are all important.

-I like to see things, especially at the middle school level, that are idiomatic of the band repertoire, things that sound like the standard band literature should sound, but also things that might perk our interest or be a little unusual, things push the envelope a little bit. We’re currently doing a piece by Ralph Hultgren in my eighth grade band that sort of has a free form in the middle. It’s not a clear ABA or a march form or anything like that, it just plays around with a hymn melody a little bit. So that’s good to hear, and it also has some unusual harmonies, so I’m excited to use that one.

-Things that are well written for all of the instruments are important. So, I don’t want to get the trombone players bored playing whole notes all of the time. Things that have not just been written with large percussion sections in mind. There’s a lot literature that’s coming out now that’s bugging me because it provides parts for eight different percussionists and the percussion parts are not essential and they are way too busy, so I try to stay away from that sort of thing.

-Things that I would enjoy listening to

-Every concert we do I try to have some different styles on there, almost every concert I try to do a march with each group, because I think that’s one of the most important things for them to play. It’s good for the development as well. I try to do things with different forms. I try to do some sort of lyric piece, or at least a piece that has a large lyric section,
not only for variety but so we can work on that style. And sometimes, but not always we’ll do some sort of novelty piece.

-I try to do things that have interesting harmonies or interesting melodies. If they are overly predictable and there are some composers that do that. Or seem to always have things in modes, sort of modal harmony. I try and stay away from those. If they sound like a “teaching piece” rather than a real piece of music.

-I also try to reach back and do some things that are historic. Either older band pieces at the middle school level by Ployhar or Osterling, or I’ve got some old Harold Walters stuff. I do that because they’re often very musical, but written in a different way that challenges the kids, or maybe takes them into ranges or divisions they’re not used to. I also try and do at least once a year some sort of transcription, and then we can listen to the original. Right now in the eighth grade band we’re looking at an arrangement of some themes from the Planets, a couple of years ago we did some things from Pictures at an Exhibition.

2. **What musical criteria (i.e., technical demands, range) do you use to determine the difficulty and appropriateness of the repertoire for your ensemble?**

-Probably the first thing I do look at is range. For a middle school group, there are going to be some limits on what my brass players can do, and to some extent my clarinets. At the same time, I also want to make sure that range is not too easy. Especially in clarinet parts, which over the years have been dumbed down a little bit and have the kids playing lower and lower. I want to find some things that push our clarinet players well up into Bs, Cs, and into altissimo type registers. Range is a big thing.

-Endurance can be big at the middle school level. Every once and a while I’ve been caught in the mistake of programming things that just didn’t give enough rest and so the kids we out by the end of the concert.

-And then just shear, physical speed. Too many runs and things that they’re going to feel overwhelmed and not successful on that concert.

-I also look for a variety of meters, making sure we get a good dose of cut time, 6/8, and some mixed meter if we can find it.

-Percussionists at the middle school level, mostly I try to stay away from pieces that involve the timpanist having to change pitches during the middle of the piece. If it does happen, maybe once when he’s got some time to get it done. I haven’t found anything at the level that my other players can play is too challenging for my percussionists. But I want to make sure those parts are interesting as well, that they’re not too low. And that’s the problem sometimes with some of the older music, is that you’ll have very simple boom chuck boom chuck kind of parts.
- Also, I look at part division. With the seventh grade band, I’m reluctant in most situations to do things that divide my trombone parts into three parts, just because it gets too confusing for them. Definitely when I’m looking at jazz band literature if an arrangement is heavy into four part division, those trombones don’t get to play in unison sometimes and that can be a problem for those guys.

3. **What considerations do you make to determine if the music is appropriate for the educational needs and musical development of the ensemble?**

- We’ll continue to push range demands as we go through seventh grade and eighth grade. We’ll continue to do more with meters. The seventh graders are just getting into cut time, so we’re going to make sure that we have some sort of piece that’s cut time related, and then continue that and 6/8 and things through the year with the eighth graders

- We want to increase the technical demands and rhythmic demands, making sure that we get a variety of sixteenth note rhythms in the eighth grade year to reinforce what was done in seventh grade. There’s a sixteenth eighth sixteenth thing somewhere, that there are things where we’re doing the Scottish snap.

- Once again, checking all the parts, from flute down to percussion to make sure that everybody is getting some challenges

- Largely, I don’t count on the sheet music to really teach those things, but to reinforce it. We have method books for all three years including eighth grade and most of the teaching of new concepts is done through there to help reinforce those.

- Through all that, we’re also looking for music that really has some variety in terms of dynamics and orchestration. I love finding pieces where they’ve put different combinations of instruments together that are a little unusual or some of the pieces that do things with sections that are just woodwind choir and sections that are just brass choir.

4. **How do you balance performing standard repertoire and newly composed repertoire?**

- I don’t really try to balance it because when you’re dealing with the middle school level, there isn’t nearly as much established repertoire. This repertoire seems to be recent. It’s always the new stuff that’s out there, so I work really hard to find older things that I think are of value, but I don’t try to consciously think of balance. I know the new stuff is there that we can look at but I’m always trying to say ok, what can I do?

- We do an eighth grade district concert every year, where we combine eighth grade bands from our three different middle schools into one large band. We always make sure in that one that we do ‘the golden oldie’ of some sort. This year it was Frank Erickson’s Balladair.
- There’s some of that stuff out there, obviously there’s some standard middle school repertoire, but if you’re talking grade 2, grade 1 1/2, there isn’t nearly as much I think.

- I look for composers like that whenever I can. Those big landmark ones, like some of the easier Clare Grundman stuff, I definitely try and keep them in the programming rotation. We’ll do those every three or four years.

- At the same time, I’ll try and look for some new stuff that I think can end up being the next classic

5. **What resources do you use to find this repertoire?**

- For the new stuff, you get all of the promo recordings, so I’ll listen through those.

- A couple of different clinics that I’ll go to, I’ll go to the Ohio Band Directors Clinic sometimes at University of Akron, that’s a good place to hear stuff. Capital University and Bowling Green State University have their reading clinics. Those are good places to find things

- Talking to other directors and talking to the guys down at Stanton’s. Just getting as much information if somebody says ‘Oh there’s this great piece’, then I’ll go check it out and it’s become a lot easier with some of the publishers putting full scores or at least a couple of pages on the score on their websites.

- Capital University also has the Summer Band Director’s Clinic. Every year that they do that, they have every director submit a couple of pieces that he’ll say ‘these are great pieces that we’ve recently played,’ and everybody gets a copy of what that is.

- I’ve got a number of different places either in my filing cabinet or my briefcase from jotting down, ‘Oh this is a good piece of music, check this out.’

- As far as the old stuff, the *Teaching Music through Performance in Band* series is really good, and I’ve used that. Thomas Dvorak’s has his *Best Music for Young Band* that I’ve used.

- I talked to my Dad a lot, who is a retired band director and some other band directors

- Once again, other people’s concerts, or going to hear something at OMEA, you hear something and write it down

- Sometimes I’ll even go back to my old programs from when I was a kid.

6. **What types of programming concerns (i.e., concert length, rehearsal schedule, to variety) do you address in selecting repertoire?**
-Every middle school concert we do has a minimum of two bands performing on it, and often times it’s three, so we’re a little limited as to how many pieces we can do, how much time each band can take, which is fine, because it really helps with endurance factors with middle school band. Even if those kids are playing in two bands, if it’s an eighth grader who is playing in the eighth grade band and then has to go play in the jazz band on the same concert, you don’t have to worry about any section being too long. That kind of takes care of the length problem.

-Variety is huge because I don’t want to have a concert where every piece sounds like every other piece. There will always be a march, there will always be something that’s lyrical, and then from there who knows?

-Obviously, rehearsal schedule is more of a concern with how challenging the pieces are. I had a director, she’s more of a string person who is also a band person, that told me she always tried to have five pieces in the folder. Two or three of them would always be about where the kids are, one would be a real challenge, and one or two of them would be easier than where the kids are. That’s sort of a good way to program a concert as well. I try to have not all four pieces at the same level. We’ll have one thing that is going to really push them and stretch them. I’ll have at least one piece for each group that is just a sure fire, this isn’t going to take a lot of rehearsal, they’re going to sound great on it, and they’ll play it musically. I’ve often times programmed too hard and then we don’t really get to the musical aspects as much as I’d like and we end up doing too much technical work and trying to work out the parts. That’s something I always have in the back of my mind to be careful of.

-When we get down to contest time, I take the eighth graders to large group, so that dictates a lot of what that program is going to look like, although for that concert which is usually a week or two later, I also try and have one or two extra pieces that we’ll add in along with what we did for the judges.

-Rehearsal schedule is not a big problem because I don’t usually have many interruptions to my rehearsal schedule. The seventh graders do have one big chunk of time in between concerts. They have early November concert and then their next concert isn’t until early March, the eighth graders don’t have that time. Sometimes I’ll throw pieces out to the seventh grade during that time that we’re not going to perform. We’ll work on them and put them away and maybe we’ll perform them, maybe we won’t.

-Every once and a while, I try to do a concert that has some sort of theme. This concert, I haven’t decided yet what the title is going to be, it might be “Oh the places you’ll go.” So every piece that we’re doing with the seventh and eighth grade band somehow ties into a different place. We have one with an Australian composer. We’re doing March of the Irish Guard. We’re doing Arabian Dances. Everything has something different including one called In a Quiet Place and that medley of themes from the Planets, so it ties the concert together in a fun way and it gives us good PR.

7. **How do you balance student appeal, audience appeal, and educational importance of the music?**
-If I can’t get excited about the piece I’m not going to be able to get the kids about it probably, and the same goes with the audience. If I like it and find it interesting and I can be excited about it in front of the kids, I’ll program it if it’s within their grasp. If it’s too hard or too easy, the appeal won’t be there either.

-There’s very little that I’ll program on a concert that I think ‘well this isn’t really a great piece of music or it doesn’t appeal to me, but they’re going to love playing it,’ like you hear on those promotional recordings “You’re kids will ask to play this again and again.” We’re probably not going to do that one.

-That changes with the level. With the sixth grade I’ll do things that are novelty numbers, where it’s something where the trombones get to play a glissando or something like that. There’s a little bit more of that at the sixth grade level, just because we’re so limited in what we can play. With the seventh and eighth grade, if I like it and I can convince the kids, then the audience will come along too.

-And sometimes, I’ve been surprised at what the kids will be most excited about playing. And it may change. There have been a couple pieces that I passed it out and the kids say “I hate playing this piece” but by the time we get to the concert and they’ve mastered it they’ll say “I love this thing.” Or, we have all these exciting pieces, and then we have this pretty, lyrical short piece, and the flute player next to me is saying ‘Oh good, that’s my favorite piece of the concert.’

-But if I can’t get excited about it, I’m not going to program it.

8. **What are some important things young band directors should know about the repertoire selection process?**

-The music publisher is only one source of information. The music publishers generally want to sell you new music, so don’t just listen to your promos.

-There are other directors out there who would love to share what they think are great pieces with you, especially if you can find some older directors who have been around for several decades and know some of the old literature that is good.

-As far as your selection is concerned, use every resource that’s at your disposal.

-I think when you’re programming for your groups, don’t just say “These are three or four pieces I’m going to play for my concert, and this is all we’re going to work on for the next couple months.” Try and have a backup of each piece. If you’re going to do a march, maybe have two marches in the folder, because one might turn out to work better for your group than the other. After you get into it you might say “Musically this is just a better march.”
-And I don’t know too many people that are experts on selection, including myself. I’m always finding things I thought we’re going to work and then they didn’t, so just be ready to make adjustments

-And finally, it takes a lot of time. It takes a lot of thought, a lot of listening to figure out what you’re going to do.

9. **What are some ways young band directors could be better educated in the repertoire selection process?**

-I think the couple of times that OMEA or somebody else has put on a clinic that’s called “Grade 2 literature you should know,” I think those kinds of things undergraduates should really be encourage to go attend. Highlight that particular thing, go see it, and save the packet.

-On occasion, I know Ohio State did this years ago, and I’m sure some other colleges have had reading bands, not at a reading clinic, but just a once a week in the evening everyone presents a piece. Or we’ll do five different pieces tonight, and they need to be at this level

-Unfortunately, I think when we’re in college studying to be band directors, we spend all of our time playing this really advanced stuff in our bands and being excited about it, but there isn’t always an opportunity to go back and say “Ok, what’s the good Grade 2 stuff?, what’s the good Grade 1 ½ stuff?, what’s it feel like to play this?, what are some good composers?”

-If I didn’t have the background I did with my Dad, and some of the other directors that I knew, I would have stepped into my first middle school job and just not known what to program because I wouldn’t have seen it in school

-I think we’re really short-changing people on this level of literature, and that’s probably why there’s just new stuff all the time and the older stuff falls out of print. There’s a lot of composers we just don’t hear about anymore. There’s not a lot of Erickson being played, or Claude T. Smith being played. There’s a lot of great music there, but I don’t see it getting programmed very much.

-We just did McBeth’s *Canto*, and I don’t think there’s a lot of groups doing that anymore. *Canto* I like to bring back every four to five years. There’s *A Little English Suite* by Grundman that I will try to bring back if I’ve got the kids to do it because it’s pretty tough for this level. We often read Erickson’s *Sonatina for Band* even if we don’t perform it. A lot of it has to do with instrumentation, we’re a small middle school, so the bands tend to be smaller, and I might not have the clarinet section to handle *English Suite*, or I may not want to do something with three trombone parts.

10. **Describe any other criteria or methods you use in your repertoire selection process.**
-Find composers you think do a good job. You don’t put 100% stock in that, because every composer can write stuff that’s just not great, but there are certain composers I can go to as a start. And when I do a program, I will try and mix a lot of different composers in there because their approach is different. I think it’s amazing when I go to concert and I hear three pieces all by the same composer.

-Variety is my biggest thing