MARCHING BAND PHILOSOPHY

Unfortunately, in many schools the marching band is the end - not the means to the end. A good, solid marching band is a part of a well rounded curriculum, which should also include concert band, jazz band, solo and ensembles, and private instruction. All of these aspects go hand in hand to create a well rounded student musician.

The style of marching band that you put on the field is not important as long as the band is an educational tool with the goal of producing quality student musicians. From a musical standpoint the marching band can be (an should be) used to teach the following musical fundamentals:

**Tone quality**
Proper breathing, support, posture, embouchure, as well as proper, characteristic tone quality.

**Balance and Blend**
Students can learn to play in and be a part of a "band sound". The balance pyramid can be presented, and reinforced.

**Intonation**
Listening skills are developed, reinforced, and refined as ensemble playing is perfected.

**Articulation**
Students must learn to perfect various styles of articulation using proper technique.

**Technical fluency**
Student growth in the area of technical skill is promoted through the selection of music which is challenging, and accessible. The use of proper band warm-ups will also help in this area. This is especially true for the woodwind section in the corps style marching program.

**Accuracy and Precision**
All elements of ensemble performance are stresses and emphasized. This includes tempo and rhythmic accuracy.

**Musicality**
This includes all aspects of a "musical presentation". Dynamics, style, phrasing and expression should be emphasized in order to make music on the field.

These aspects of individual and ensemble performance are passed on to the student musicians through the selection of a quality musical program, and the proper use of ensemble warm-ups.

Other factors which go along with the musical education of the students that are a result of the nature of this type of ensemble include:

**Physical coordination**
An emphasis is placed on playing and marching. For many students this motor skill will be very difficult to achieve, but upon accomplishment it will lead to an individual who has a skill to use and become more productive to society.

**Physical conditioning**
With current trends in marching band, students must maintain good physical conditioning in order to perform the physically demanding maneuvers that many shows incorporate into their performances.
Work Ethic

Students learn the value of hard work and applied effort. The rewards are not monetary, but rather a sense of satisfaction that is rarely gained from other experiences.

Attendance and Punctuality

Students are taught the value of attendance and punctuality, and must face the consequences of their actions.

Team work

Students must work together in order to produce a successful musical and marching performance. They are taught that there is no "I" in team.

Discipline

Both self discipline and group discipline is stressed in the ensemble. Students are prepared for life outside the school community and are able to function at a higher level with this type of training.

Pride

When an emphasis is placed on pride, students tend to take more time in personal preparation, motivation, responsibility, and execution of the field show.

In order to develop a positive philosophy regarding the marching band, some external factors must be considered:

Size of community and school district

Population characteristics of the school and community

School attitude and philosophy toward band program

Population characteristics of the band program

Feeder program

Rehearsal schedules

Pre-season training opportunities

Financial resources and support

Parental interest and support

Student leadership

Student desire

Administrative support

Faculty support and cooperation

Football schedule

Performance factors (number of performances per season)
Once these factors are researched, the director can come up with a philosophy that will lead to a positive experience for all those who are involved in the band program.

After the director has developed a philosophy, it is time for the implementation of this philosophy. The director should live and teach by the established philosophy in order for these ideas to grow and prosper. This leads to credibility for the director and for the goals of the marching band program.
MUSIC SELECTION AND ANALYSIS

I. Music Selection

A. All selections should be good literature. Care should be taken that music fundamentals can be taught through the tunes.

B. The program should have a musical line moving through moods and textures creating interest through good variety. Be careful not to play all tunes in the same key.

C. The music must fit the band.
   1. The strengths and weaknesses of the group must be considered.
   2. The band must be able to "sell" the musical effects.
   3. Program for soloists.
   4. The range limitations of the group must be considered.
   5. The abilities of the drumline and guard must be considered.

D. Music Sources

   1. Stock Arrangements (These can be "doctored" to sound more like a custom arrangement than a stock chart.)
   2. Listen to complete albums of top pop groups/performers.
   3. Jazz ensemble music
   4. Radio
   5. Music history teachers/Other faculty members
   6. Drum corps publications
   7. Marching contest printed programs
   8. College marching band recordings
   9. Other directors/Other marching bands
  10. Original charts for the marching band
  11. Other student's suggestions
  12. Movies
  13. Classical music/Concert Band Literature
  14. Television
  15. Broadway musicals
  16. Background music from plays
  17. Country and Western
  18. Folk music
  19. Nationalistic music (Latin, Spanish, Irish, English, American, etc.)
20. Commercials
21. Religious music

E. Continuity in the selection is very important. The adoption of a theme will aid the process.

F. Special arrangements have a variety of benefits.
   1. They can be customized to fit your group
   2. They allow easier development of a theme
   3. Specials avoid hearing your tunes played by other groups

G. Proper timing of selections
   1. Show length should never exceed 10 minutes. 7 - 8 minutes is a good length. When choosing a show, consider timing regulations for competitive performances.

II. Music analysis

A. Obtain a recording of the music exactly the way you plan to perform it. Utilize tape splicing when necessary.

B. Spend a minimum of 4 hours listening to the music. Total absorption must take place prior to analysis.

C. Fill out music analysis sheet/count sheet - the more time spent on the analysis sheet, the better the drill design will be.

D. Emotion graph. A self check of the variety used in the music selection. It will aid in making cuts and changes in dynamic contrast.
   1. Down sections should last no more than 30 seconds to maintain audience appeal.
   2. The show must contain highs and lows from selection to selection and within each selection.
   3. Do not overlook the fact that you can produce highs and lows in the music that may not exist in the published arrangement.

III. Rescoring published music

A. Reduce and bring down to piano sized score, so you can play and hear lines.

B. Look at common instrument groupings- rescore if there is a weak section in the band.

C. Rescore length of piece.

D. Eliminate duplication of vertical structure.
E. Balance instrument groupings.
F. Look at voice leading.
   1. Avoid large skips
   2. Stay with in student range
   3. Balance out relative strength of instrument groupings
G. Transfer to full score after all is on piano score.

MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

I. Static Commands
   A. Attention-work both with and without instruments
   B. Parade Rest
   C. At Ease
   D. At Rest
   E. Dress Right (left, center)
   F. Ready Front
   G. Close Order Dress Right (left, center)
   H. Count Off

II. Static Commands with Turns
   A. Left Face
   B. About Face
   C. Right Face

III. Organizational Commands
   A. Fall In
   B. Fall Out
C. Dismissed

NOTES:

A. Smooth motion vs. snap motion.

B. Location of rehearsal/ensemble form during rehearsal.

C. Set proper tone/discipline for season.

D. Begin to determine and dictate style of band.

E. Work on things in fundamentals that you will use in show.

F. Do some stretching.

IV. Motion Commands

A. Mark Time
   1. High Mark Time
      a. leg mark time
         1. 4 count breakdown
         2. 3 count breakdown
   2. Low Mark Time
   3. Other Mark Time
      a. prance step
      b. half-prance
      c. other
   (NOTE: watch for phasing and drifting)

B. Halt

C. Forward March (basic 8 to 5 step)
   1. 4 count breakdown
   2. 3 count breakdown
   3. 4 count straight roll

D. Forward March from Mark Time
   1. Mark time 4 counts - freeze 1/2 count - put left foot out.

E. Mark Time from Forward March

F. Backward March
   1. Push and extend on step
   2. Glide and Prance Step

G. 4's and 4's - - - 4's and 8's
   1. Put the band in a block formation using intervals that the show will use.
   2. Work step size (various)
      a. smaller the step, the more style needs to be emphasized
      b. lower center of gravity on extended steps
   3. Work starts, stops, phasing, drifting.
H. Drag Turns
   1. Drag left, right, rear

I. Combine playing with forward marching
   1. Whole note/rest exercises with 4's and 4's
   2. Increase complexity as ensemble gains confidence and execution

V. Change of Direction Commands

   A. Left Flank
   B. To the Rear
   C. Right Flank
   D. Left Slide
      1. Forward and Backward
   E. Right Slide
      2. Forward and Backward
   F. Hip Shift
   G. Change of step size
   H. Other

THE PROCESS OF DESIGN

I. Three Methods of Drill Design

   A. Method 1
   B. Divine Inspiration
   C. The Other Way

II. Needs of the Designer

   A. Understanding of design fundamentals
   B. Catalog of ideas
C. Understanding of charting techniques
D. Evolution of development of design
E. Understanding of movement energy in design

III. Process of Design Communication

A. Content
   1. What is the central effect of the music? What is the central effect of the show?

B. Development
   1. What is the sequence and organization of the action? The movement phrases must flow from one to the next.

C. Performance technique
   1. Actual performance of the individual on the field. The audience will accept and appreciate performance technique, especially if it is good. If the show is too difficult, then the performance technique will not be as good as it should be.

D. Projection
   1. Controlled by the performer, this is the final step in the audience viewing what you have done. THE BAND HAS GOT TO WANT IT!

IV. The Creative Process

A. Three steps
   1. Doodle - don't do it in relationship to the music. This gets the mind to work and begins to get the creative process happening. (forced creativity)
   2. Sketching - put your ideas down on paper to see how it will look in perspective to the field.
   3. Chart - put the forms exactly where you want on the page.

DESIGN FUNDAMENTALS

I. General rules

A. A combination of asymmetrical and symmetrical design should be used. Symmetrical design should be used for power resolution.
C. Kinetic/push - pull/mechanistic

Any drill move should contain at least two types. The strongest moves should contain all three.

V. Logical resolution to motion

A. Symmetry
B. Connections
C. Mass change
D. Interval change
E. Shapes
   1. When you get stuck, just make a shape that people will recognize

VI. Formulas

A. Length of a line = (No. of people minus 1) x (interval)
B. To find the interval used in a arc or circle:
   (Draw with a compass)
   \[ \text{Interval} = 2\pi \times \frac{R}{\text{No. of people}} \]
   \[ \pi = 3.14 \]
   Round off to the nearest 1/2 step.

C. To find the radius used to draw an arc or circle:
   \[ \text{Radius} = \frac{\text{No. of people} \times \text{interval}}{2\pi} \]
   Radius is in steps
   Round off to the nearest 1/4 step.

D. To find the number of 6:5 steps a marcher can go using 8:5 grid:
   No. of counts x 1.3 = Number of steps
   example: 8 counts x 1.3 = 10.4 - 8:5 steps (round off to nearest whole number)

VII. Instrument placement

A. Strongest players should be in the center of the section when using segregated placement.
B. Integrated placement - place brass players in choirs.
C. For best balance, place instruments in score order from the outsides in.
D. Assign a number to each person in every section for drill teaching purposes and following instrumentation as you write the drill.
E. Use different colored markers to chart pictures. Maintain the color sequence as you design.

VIII. Horn direction considerations
A. Loudest
B. Next Loudest
C. Color Direction
D. Soft
E. Softest

VIII. General Design Rules
A. Avoid complex pictures - simple pictures sell best.
B. Avoid too much mark time.
C. Include all elements when designing pictures.
D. Vary pictures.
E. Work to capture the mood of the music in the design.
F. Don't depend on gimmicks to sell the show.

IX. Elements of Visual Effects
A. Coordination of all elements
B. Visualization of all elements
C. Spot lighting (focus)
D. Staging
E. Sectional presentation
F. Section integration ex. alternate flutes and clarinets to produce an effect later in the program.
G. Utilization of space (density)
H. Sensible highlighting in relationship to size and numbers (flags highlight a soloist)
I. Continuity
J. Color - uniforms and silks
K. Variety of equipment
L. Tempo variety

X. Show Development

A. The very best shows evolve. The continued input of judges, students, and directors can improve any show. Don't be afraid to make revisions, especially if they are simplifications.

B. When making rewrites be sure to consider future placement, and avoid making anyone have to learn the program over.

C. If there are musical problems which are drill related, change the drill first.

D. Carefully note how the crowd responds to each performance and learn to use both their positive and negative responses to improve your program.

E. Don't expect all your ideas to work out perfectly.

F. Encourage your students to become involved in the creative process.

G. Don't change for everyone. Carefully weigh their input and then decide what to change.

H. Include places in your program that can vary for weekly football performances.
BASIC FORMS

I. Line Concepts
   A. Single straight - any line that you can construct where you don't have to pick up your pencil.
   B. Single curvilinear
   C. Double straight - any straight line form where you can pick up your pencil once.
   D. Double curvilinear
   E. Combined straight and curvilinear
   F. Double straight and single curvilinear
   G. Double straight and double curvilinear

II. Functional Forms
   A. Power Forms
   B. Relaxed forms

III. Form Continuity and Balance
   A. Density
   B. Unity
   C. Repetition
   D. Alternation
   E. Harmony
   F. Graduation
   G. Contrast
   H. Balance
   I. Stability
FREE FORM DRILL CHARTING FUNDAMENTALS

I. Straight Lines
   A. Straight lines moving down field and across field.
   B. Straight lines moving on the diagonal moving down field and across field.
   C. Pinwheel
      1. Radius in steps x 1.5 = No. of steps to pinwheel 90 deg. with a center pivot.
   D. Gateswing
      1. Radius in steps x 1.5 = No. on steps to gate 90 deg.
   E. Double pinwheels from a single straight line.
      ___________________________ TO

   F. Double gateswings from each end of a straight line.
      ___________________________ TO

   G. Double gateswings with a center pivot from a straight line.
      ___________________________ TO

   H. Straight line with expanding or contracting interval.
   I. Chevron to straight line with same interval. End points set the line.
J. Chevron to straight line. Line placement also moves as straight line is formed.

K. Floating straight line to a diagonal line.
   1. Constant interval
   2. Changing interval

II. Curvilinear Lines

A. Curvilinear line moving down field and across field.

B. Pinwheel

C. Gateswing

D. Double pinwheel with center pivot points on each arc.

E. Double gateswing from a center pivot.

F. Curvilinear line to a circle. Must use whole step intervals.
III. Contour Evolution

A. Straight line to curvilinear line with the same interval.

B. Straight line to curvilinear line with evolving interval.

C. Curvilinear line to straight line with same interval.

D. Curvilinear line to straight line with evolving interval.

E. Line to arc - adjusted step.

F. Line to pre-arc to arc - adjusted step to set step size.

G. Line to arc - same step size. (Very shallow arc-will take a long time to develop.)

H. Line to pre-arc to arc - adjusted step to adjusted step.

I. Inversion of curvilinear line.
   1. Gateswing with center pivot
   2. Interval condenses and expands (adjust).
   3. Interval remains constant (flex).

IV. Flow files (Follow the leader)

A. Straight line to straight line.

B. Straight line to curved line.
FORM AND DESIGN EVOLUTION

"The worst thing is facing the blank page ... get that first picture on the page!"    David Rollins

Drill design is the process of motion that occurs between the pictures. Good drill design will have logical transition with strong motion. Avoid great pictures with poor motion.

I. Motion Catalog
   A. Line Motion
   B. Squad Motion
   C. Individual Motion
   D. Form Movement
      1. Whole forms
      2. Like forms
      3. Unlike forms
   E. Expansion / Contraction
   F. Rotation
   G. Combinations of Above

II. What to do with a form
   A. Duplicate form
   B. Segment form
   C. Manipulate form (addition to/subtraction from form)
III. Technique Catalog
   A. Push (Unison movement)
   B. Gate (Rotation)
   C. Adjust (float)
   D. Flex (burst)
   E. Follow the leader
   F. Scatter (Random drill)
   G. Mark Time
   H. Combinations of A - E

IV. Other
   A. Transparencies
   B. Sequential movement
   C. Choreography

V. A quality show has:
   A. Contrast - highs and lows, colors, etc.
   B. Variety - styles, shapes, sounds, scoring
   C. Quality - music and drill
   D. Appeal - enduring value of music and drill (G.E.)
   E. Pace - how the show moves along
   F. Continuity - how individual tunes fit together as an entire presentation.

VI. Four Factors in any drill movement:
   A. Interval
   B. Step Size
   C. Path Pattern
D. Velocity

VII. Questions to ask yourself:

A. What do I want to do with the movement?
B. What shall I do with the movement?
C. What do I have to say?
D. What is my motivation?
E. Will it serve my purpose to:
   1. repeat it
   2. vary it
   3. reinforce it
   4. make fun of it
   5. change its mood
   6. caricature it (absurd imitation)
   7. extend it
   8. divide it into parts
   9. develop it into a sequential form by introducing another theme
  10. throw it away and start all over

The movement belongs where you finally decide to put it. Your decision is made in terms of motive, experience, and discrimination. After trying it in relation to other movement themes it will become apparent that it belongs here rather than somewhere else. The desperate alternative is to put it anywhere and trust your luck.

PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPLICATIONS IN DESIGN

I. Lines

Strong Vertical Lines - give a feeling of nobility, vigor, aspiration, and grandeur.

Straight Horizontal Lines - normally indicate strength, formality, order, and dignity.

Curved Lines - suggest warmth, softness, ease, informality.
Diagonal Lines or Broken Lines - connotes anxiety, uncertainty, nervousness, foreboding.

II. Mass

Large Mass - gives a feeling of firmness, strength, resolution.

Small Compact Mass - gives a feeling of firmness, strength, indecisiveness, ineffectuality.

III. Form

Regular or Symmetrical Form - with elements evenly spaced and neatly balanced has connotations of formality, order, rigidity.

Irregular Form - where the elements are distributed in an orderly but not carefully measured arrangement has a connotation of informality, relaxation, naturalness.

Diffuse Form (Scattered) - where the elements are scattered about with no apparent plan or pattern has a connotation of confusion, disorder, disarray. (Even disorder, of course, must be planned in order to give the desired effect.)

IV. Color

The brighter the color the more weight it will seem to have, since brighter colors have a greater attention-getting ability than duller or darker colors.

Colors have more emotional effect on the audience than line, mass, and form.

Bright Colors - especially reds and yellows connote gaiety, warmth, good humor. Bright blues and greens will lack the warmth and good humor of the reds and yellows.

Pastel Colors - generally have a connotation of neutrality, passivity, indecisiveness. they make no positive statement.

Dark Colors - Such as blues, browns, purples, or grays have a connotation of gloom, austerity, foreboding, danger.