

Illinois Grade School Music Association  
Band/Orchestra Adjudication Form  
Karen Yonkers, MUS 352 Sp17 Exam submission

School \_\_\_WACO Jr. High Band\_\_\_ Director(s) \_\_\_unknown \_\_\_\_\_

Selection #1 \_Northpointe Fantasy by James Swearingen\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_ Comments Only      \_\_\_x\_\_\_ Rating and Comments

- 1 = element superior throughout piece
- 2 = element good in spots, a few errors
- 3 = element fair, several errors
- 4 = element poor, rarely correct

### **Tone**

**characteristic sound, warmth, control, support, percussion instrument adjustment and sound**

**2:** Overall tone of individuals was good, especially flute, clarinet, first alto sax and first trumpet. Percussion needs to complement, and not overpower the ensemble. If tempos and rhythms were more accurate the listener could appreciate the tone color more. Chorales, and listening exercises will help in this area. I encourage private lessons for all students. There is only so much that can be addressed in ensemble rehearsal. Stronger individuals means a stronger sound for the entire ensemble.

**Intonation: correct pitches, matching within ensemble, dynamics**

**3:** Matching tempo, style, and articulation are discussed below. Intonation is affected by these things. Listening to one another in all areas: tempo, style, articulation, matching pitches: is important while playing as an ensemble. Intonation would improve also if some dynamic contrasts were observed as the composer wrote them. Working with tuning exercises like: in pairs, play pitch together, listen for "pulsing" which shows out of tune. Play one at a time, and listen for who is higher or lower. Adjust with airstream and embouchure. Have a third person watch a tuner, so that you use your ears and not eyes. The third person can inform the closest player. Then play one at a time again back and forth. Adjust, and play together. This takes time,

but is quite useful for improving listening skills. For the ensemble, tuning tonic and dominant chords is also helpful. Use ears. Finally, the band should have a set of chorals to warm up with. Not simply to “play through”, but to listen to each chord, adjust sound, and fit the sound into one another. Lower instruments, with the root, should be strong.

Some specific spots: Rehearse the introduction, be sure everyone is moving on the eighth notes at the same time. Otherwise, we hear pitches overlapping and this affects the intonation. Try starting softer and crescendo as an ensemble, with no one part predominantly leading the crescendo. If there is a tuba, they should be leading the crescendo. Subdivide the third measure where the ritardando is, and be sure each beat is softer than the one before. This should be slow, careful, work. The same exercise could be done for measures 32-25, which were weak as an ensemble.

At 48, balance good. Needs more lower voices. Clarinets, be careful to play Bb in m. 50. I realize clarinet was missing, but the quarter notes in m. 76 are an important harmonic element there. M. 67, trumpets missed the half note, so were to m. 68 earlier than the rest of the ensemble. In m. 70, trumpets again have the moving quarters which help move the harmonies along. The inner voices (clarinet, altos) should have brought out the quarters in m. 79, moving together with the ritardando. These places can all be rehearsed slowly and carefully, like the choral warm up so ensemble can hear the harmonic changes and how their part fits in.

Overall, more dynamic observance as marked. Everything was played at the same dynamic. The only contrast was made by less or more students playing at once.

**Balance: Parts covered as well as possible, blend, proportion of melody, bass, harmony, etc. Percussion balanced to ensemble, overall ensemble sound**

**3.** Missing the low brass parts here. It sounds like the trombone solo at 20 is being covered by sax, which is good that it's being covered. Wondering why baritone couldn't/didn't play it? That would match the composer's timbre intention better. The baritone didn't sound real sure of his part in this passage, particularly with the dotted quarter, eighths in m. 24 and 25. Is this perhaps a re-written part? The upper wind obligato was cohesive and played well.

One part out of balance was the percussion, particularly the cymbal. Along with being too loud for the size of the ensemble, the cymbal wasn't accurate with his crashes, and missed an important choke in m. 42. The percussionist must “breathe” with a preparatory motion before his crashes in order for them to sound with the ensemble. Also, try holding the cymbals in an almost horizontal plane, and keep one stationary for more control. It sounds like cymbal missed the D.S., but he recovered. Nice timpani solo just before the D.S.

More low brass parts would have helped this sound have a solid foundation. The ensemble sound became thin in places like at 20 and 72. The baritone should have played at 72, he looked like he was going to, but then he didn't. There was no foundation for the flutes there. During soli passages such as 48, the melody sang out in the flutes well. The inner voices could have played piano, as marked, so flutes could play mp, to create a dynamic contrast with the surrounding sections.

### **Rhythm: Correct rhythms, consistent tempo, phasing, precision, appropriate tempo changes executed together**

**4** This was the weakest portion of the performance. It sounded as if everyone was playing their part, with a few exceptions which I will point out. However, everyone wasn't playing at the same tempo, and the conductor is the one who decides what that one tempo will be. Some section work would help first. Know how your part fits in. Know who else has what you have so you can match it up.

In measure 4, trumpets need to breathe on ONE so they don't play early, and then they need to resist rushing the tempo. A couple ideas: play an extra F on the downbeat with metronome set on eighth notes, and double all the quarters into identical eighths: (play F-F-C-A-G-G-A-B-C-C-A-A...) Play all the way from m. 4 until 7, including the dotted half note in m. 7 (as six repeated eighths) Once the tempo is steady, omit the metronome and repeat the pattern, maintaining internal pulse. Once this is even, play as written, making sure to wait until the end of one to begin. Again, breathe on ONE, and there shouldn't be any false starts.

Some other rhythms which need fixing: m. 32 and 33, the ensemble (except Tbone and Euph) ALL have dotted quarter, eighth on beats 3 and 4. Be sure all are following that (trumpets) Flutes, beautiful job on the soli passage after 36. Be careful with the rhythm in m. 61: it is different here: not the half note followed by two eighths, but a dotted quarter, eighth, quarter. This occurs again in m. 77.

At m. 64 it says "con moto", more motion, which would be a nice contrast. Trumpets: count carefully, in m. 67, you didn't hold the half note full value, and rushed into m. 68, so everyone didn't line up with the tutti half/quarter patterns. Clarinet 2 and trumpet, listen at the beginning of the ritardando in m. 70, so that your quarters line up. You help in slowing down the tempo, since everyone else has tied longer notes. Trumpets sounded lost there.

### **Technique :Hand/bow position, tonguing/slurring, fingering ability, ability to play individual parts**

**2** It was difficult to see hands for fingering, etc. I think that students knew their individual parts alright. Fitting the parts together as a whole ensemble needs some work. For articulation, whether to tongue or slur, play as written. For example, it was not clear at the beginning if the trumpets were tonguing or slurring. More definition is in the music with tonguing, this was clearly slurred on the D.S. at the soli on measure 12. In m. 64, trumpets were not articulating each quarter. The allegro before the D.S. needed separation and accents on the ascending chord passage. Overall, this group would benefit from listening and matching articulation. Create some contrasts as the composer has written them in: slurred, tongued, or accented notes. There should be differences on the accents in m. 24 -35, for example. More space, and shorter on the eighth notes.

**Stage Presence: Posture, self discipline, neat appearance, attention to conductor, deportment on and off stage**

**2** Posture was good for most of the ensemble. Consider unifying the outfits. Like-colored pants and shirts is a place to start. I can not speak for the attention to conductor, as I was unable to see the student's faces. Based on the irregular tempos, I do not believe they were as attentive as they should have been. Going from rest position to ready position as the conductor took the podium was good, but there were a few stragglers. I assume by the empty chairs that several ensemble members were missing. It looks like 2 flutes, a clarinet, and no trombones or tuba. There were several more chairs in the back row. Removing empty chairs to bring the ensemble together would be a better presentation. For example, the clarinets were split and there were two empty chairs between the 3 clarinets and 3 flutes in the front. Bringing them centrally together would help them hear the other section and fit their sound together better, and to play as an ensemble.

\_\_\_\_\_ 7-10 = I  
\_\_\_\_\_ 11-15 = II  
\_\_x\_\_\_ 16-28 = III

\_\_\_Karen Yonkers\_\_\_                      Adjudicator Signature