



← The Whole Horn



HENRI SELMER PARIS ARTIST · 30+ YEARS TEACHING

# BUILDING A YOUTH WIND ENSEMBLE

*A Framework for Concert Band Programs — three-tier architecture, instrumentation, staffing, auditions, and 149 pieces of curated repertoire.*

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Editorial Changes Summary

This document is dated June 2026 and is intended as a starting point for educators and administrators. New AI-assisted teaching methods, new resources, and new opportunities for program development are emerging almost daily. Treat this framework as a living document — adapt, supplement, and revise as your institution evolves.

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## INTRODUCTION

There is one non-negotiable truth in music education: **it is only through prolific ensemble experience that young musicians are born.**

A youth wind ensemble program — built with intention, staffed properly, and programmed with quality literature — is among the most powerful things a school can offer its students. Not just musically. Academically. Socially. The evidence is unambiguous: students with years of serious ensemble experience develop critical thinking, discipline, empathy, and leadership at rates that outpace their non-musical peers.

This framework gives band directors at any institution — US public or private schools, international schools, conservatory prep programs — a road-tested architecture for launching or strengthening a tiered concert band program. It covers program philosophy, three-tier structure, instrumentation, staffing, auditions, repertoire, methods, and performance calendar.

The goal is to give you a working blueprint, not a wish list. Everything here can be implemented. None of it requires extraordinary resources — only clarity, commitment, and willingness to hold the bar high from day one.

## WHY ENSEMBLE EXPERIENCE MATTERS

The fostering of empathy, teamwork, and academic excellence is the primary reason music education has been valued by society for generations. Studies proving growth across all major areas of the brain among music students have spurred parents to move mountains to enroll their children in music courses. Music teachers who inspire are, in every meaningful sense, "worth their weight in gold."

Students with years of ensemble experience in a variety of genres and styles are the unique beneficiaries of critical skills:

- An intuitive sense of phrasing
- An aural understanding of harmony
- The ability to blend, balance, and listen intuitively
- An understanding of being in the glorious service of others — and how that service translates into leadership

**It takes a village.** Successful band programs involve teams of teachers, administrators, and parents providing wide-ranging support: fundraising for uniforms, financing performances away from home, and advocating for rehearsal space and time. Band directors who go it alone are doing the work of four or five people. While that is sometimes a bare-bones necessity, it is not a sustainable model.

For school administrators: it is impossible to develop musical talent without access to a rich and comprehensive ensemble experience. The effort and cost of maintaining a strong band program is more than justified by academic excellence, school spirit, and the reputation a school builds as a first-class learning institution. Defunding music programs is a serious blow to the creativity and vibrancy of the next generation — and a documented root cause of declining academic outcomes.

## WHO THIS FRAMEWORK IS FOR

- Band directors launching a new program
  - Directors strengthening an existing single-ensemble program into a tiered structure
  - Administrators evaluating program scope and staffing
  - Conservatory prep programs adding wind ensemble to their curriculum
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## MUSICAL AND PEDAGOGICAL PRIORITIES

Every rehearsal, every repertoire choice, every audition decision should be measured against these standards.

### **Individual and ensemble musical issues:**

- Individual tone
- Intonation
- Balance and blend
- Dynamics, nuance, phrasing, and interpretation
- Rhythm
- Technique

### **Broader program priorities:**

- **Sight-reading** — a non-negotiable weekly skill
- **Listening skills** — students who don't listen cannot play in tune
- **Musical maturity** — the development of an intuitive sense for phrasing takes years; start building it on day one
- **Instrumentation balance** — avoid overpopulating one instrument family; balanced participation is a structural goal, not an afterthought

- **Fundamentals** — expect to spend 50% of rehearsal time on fundamentals in youth ensembles. This is not a failure. Conductors who understand this build the ensemble that lasts
- **Accountability** — individual accountability and student responsibility are the difference between a program that lasts and one that collapses
- **Personal development** — musicianship, leadership, character. These outcomes are not incidental to the program; they are the program
- **Culture of success** — "Winning is being better today than you were yesterday"
- **Parity of esteem** — in a musical ensemble, young musicians are encouraged to recognize each other as equals, challenged only by their musical ability within the context of the group. Young musicians with ensemble experience can act as powerful forces of cultural mediation and social equity. This is not idealism — it is observable

## PROGRAM ARCHITECTURE: THREE TIERS

The program is built on three ensembles, each with distinct repertoire, instrumentation targets, and performance expectations.

TIER	ENSEMBLE	LEVEL
1	Concert Band	Beginner
2	Symphonic Band	Intermediate
3	Wind Symphony	Advanced

This is not merely a graded skill ladder. Each tier represents a qualitative shift in what is demanded of the musician:

- **Concert Band (Tier 1):** Learning to play in a group. Tone, intonation, counting, blending. The fundamentals are everything. Repertoire should be approachable but never trivial.

- **Symphonic Band (Tier 2):** Learning to *listen* while you play. More complex textures, longer musical arcs, stylistic breadth. Students begin to carry individual musical responsibility.
- **Wind Symphony (Tier 3):** Learning to lead within the ensemble. Full-length symphonic literature, transcriptions of orchestral masterworks, original band repertoire of the highest order. Students are expected to arrive prepared to make music, not just play notes.

Advancement between tiers is by audition (see Audition Requirements below). Students who demonstrate maximum commitment and consistent attendance should be identified early as prospects for section leadership and future ensemble roles.

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## INSTRUMENTATION BY TIER

### FULL WIND SYMPHONY / LARGE ENSEMBLE MODEL

The physical setup of the wind ensemble is modeled after the **Eastman Wind Ensemble** — a configuration that centers principal players and organizes the woodwind choir and brass choir together for optimal blend and balance.

#### **Seating layout (from the conductor's left):**

1. Flutes and oboes — first row
2. Clarinets, bass clarinets, and bassoons — second row
3. Horns, saxophones, and euphoniums — third row (euphoniums intentionally in front of tubas)
4. Trumpets, trombones, and tubas — back rows, with principal trumpet and principal trombone centered

**Full ensemble instrument counts** (one standard format among many used by top band directors):

SECTION	COUNT
Flutes	10–11
Oboes	2–3
Bassoons	2–3
Clarinets (all voices)	15–16
Alto Saxophones	4–6
Tenor Saxophone	1–2
Baritone Saxophone	1
French Horns	8
Trumpets	9–11
Trombones	7–9
Euphoniums	3–4
Tubas	4–5

#### NOTE

These numbers describe the Wind Symphony target. Concert Band and Symphonic Band will operate with smaller, more flexible counts. Percussion is additional and scales with the literature being performed. Adjust instrument ratios to your enrollment reality — the priority is proportion, not absolute headcount.

## TIER-BY-TIER INSTRUMENTATION NOTES

**Concert Band (Beginner):** Any reasonable balance of winds and percussion. Do not worry about hitting full counts. Focus on proportion: never more alto saxophones than clarinets; never more

trumpets than the rest of the brass combined.

**Symphonic Band (Intermediate):** Begin working toward the full-ensemble proportions. Add doubling instruments (bass clarinet, baritone saxophone, euphonium) as students become available. These voices matter for harmonic depth.

**Wind Symphony (Advanced):** Target the full model. Oboes and bassoons are not optional at this level — they are structural. If you don't have oboe players, recruit and develop them.

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## STAFF STRUCTURE AND SECTIONAL COACHING

### MINIMUM VIABLE STAFF

A functional tiered program requires three roles:

1. **Musical Director (full-time)** — conducts all three ensembles, oversees programming, auditions, and musical development of the program
2. **Assistant Director / Sectional Coach (full-time)** — leads sectionals, provides individual coaching, covers ensemble rehearsals when needed
3. **Program Coordinator (full-time)** — handles attendance, student and parent communication, music handling and printing, concert promotion and production

A team of two (Musical Director + one additional) can produce measured success. Three is the appropriate staffing level for a 60+ student program across three tiers.

#### ON STAFFING QUALITY

Each of these roles requires extraordinary investment of time, energy, and passion. Compensation structures must be competitive enough to attract and retain top-tier musicians who also teach. Teachers who inspire must be sustainable in their roles — this means benefits, professional

development support, and meaningful compensation. A program is only as strong as the people running it.

## SECTIONALS AS MASTERCLASSES

Sectionals are not mini-rehearsals of ensemble music. They are **masterclasses** focused on specific technical and musical issues:

- Timbre (tone production and quality)
- Technique and finger coordination
- Articulation styles
- Intonation within the section
- Style and musical phrasing

Students who participate in weekly sectionals should be given priority consideration for advancement and placement. This is a structural incentive that reinforces commitment.

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## AUDITION REQUIREMENTS

Students are placed in one of the three ensembles based on ability level, demonstrated through a standard audition:

1. **All twelve major scales** — from memory, at a reasonable tempo
2. **Chromatic scale** — full range of the instrument
3. **Short etude** — selected by the director (appropriate to the level being auditioned for)
4. **Sight-reading** — one passage selected by the director at the time of audition

## AUDITION RUBRIC GUIDANCE

Evaluate each candidate across five dimensions:

DIMENSION	WHAT TO LISTEN FOR
Tone	Characteristic sound for the instrument; consistent quality across registers
Intonation	Ability to play in tune independently; adjusts to the piano or drone
Technique	Scale accuracy, facility, and evenness
Musicianship	Phrasing, dynamics, expressiveness in the etude
Sight-reading	Accuracy, rhythm, composure under pressure

#### FIRST-YEAR PROGRAM NOTE

If you are launching a program from scratch and your student pool is uniformly inexperienced, use the audition to establish baseline and place students strategically — not to exclude. The Concert Band is the entry point. Nearly every student qualifies for the Concert Band; the audition places them optimally within it, and calibrates the Symphonic and Wind Symphony bars for future cycles.

## REPERTOIRE BY TIER

### HOW TO USE THIS LIST

This is a curated listening and discovery list for band directors. Scores and parts are acquired through legitimate channels — JW Pepper, Hal Leonard, publisher direct, and similar distributors. No piece on this list is available from the author.

**YouTube links** are provided as reference recordings for your own study and for student listening. Links marked *[verify]* are highly-probable canonical recordings included in good faith — confirm the

URL is still live before sharing. Links marked [*YouTube reference recording — to verify*] indicate pieces from the original 2020 inventory that lacked a link; add one after your own research.

**Grade levels** follow the standard 1–6 band literature grading scale (1 = early beginner, 6 = professional/college).

## TIER 1 — CONCERT BAND (BEGINNER)

### WHERE TO START — 5 PIECES FOR A NEW DIRECTOR'S FIRST CONCERT BAND CONCERT

1. *Yorkshire Ballad* — James Barnes (lyrical, students love it immediately)
2. *Novena* — James Swearingen (accessible, melodic, satisfying)
3. *Toccata for Band* — Frank Erickson (rhythmic energy, works at beginner level)
4. *Sparks* — Brian Balmages (modern, engaging, easy win)
5. *Joy* — Frank Ticheli (short, musical, introduces expressive playing early)

### WARM-UP MATERIALS

PIECE	COMPOSER	NOTES
<i>36 Chorales for Band</i>	Aaron Cole	Essential daily chorale work; builds blend and intonation
<i>Eight Chorales for Elementary Band</i>	James Swearingen	Accessible entry-level chorale set

### CORE REPERTOIRE

PIECE	COMPOSER	GRADE	LISTEN
<i>Yorkshire Ballad</i>	James Barnes	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Novena</i>	James Swearingen	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Toccata for Band</i>	Frank Erickson	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Encanto</i>	Robert W. Smith	1–2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Sparks</i>	Brian Balmages	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Australian Up-Country Tune</i>	Percy Grainger / Bainum	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Joy</i>	Frank Ticheli	2	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>

## ALSO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Sinfonia VI</i>	Timothy Broege	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording — to verify</a>
<i>Land Between</i>	Jay Dawson	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording — to verify</a>
<i>Air for Band</i>	Frank Erickson	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording — to verify</a>
<i>The King Across the Water</i>	Bruce Fraser	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording — to verify</a>

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Into the Storm</i>	Robert W. Smith	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Variation Overture</i>	Clifton Williams	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Whispers</i>	Larry Clark	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Two Grainger Melodies</i>	Percy Grainger / Kreines	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Little English Suite</i>	Clare Grundman	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Courtly Airs and Dances</i>	Ron Nelson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Declaration Overture</i>	Claude T. Smith	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Portrait of a Clown</i>	Frank Ticheli	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Flourish for Wind Band</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Early English Suite</i>	William Duncombe / Finlayson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Suite in Minor Mode</i>	Dmitri Kabalevsky / Seikmann / Oliver	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Fanfare, Ode, and Festival</i>	Bob Margolis	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Ave Verum Corpus</i>	W.A. Mozart / Kreines	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Korean Folk Song Medley</i>	James Ployhar	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Air and March</i>	Henri Purcell / Gordon	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Polly Oliver</i>	Thomas Root	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Hymn for Band</i>	Hugh M. Stuart	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Three Ayres from Gloucester</i>	Hugh M. Stuart	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>For the New Day Arisen</i>	Steve Barton	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Ginger Marmalade</i>	Warren Benson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Walls of Zion</i>	Greg Danner	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Ballad for Peace</i>	Frank Erickson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Caprice</i>	William Himes	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>American Riversongs</i>	Pierre La Plante	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Sang!</i>	Donna Wilson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>

## TIER 2 — SYMPHONIC BAND (INTERMEDIATE)

## WHERE TO START — 5 PIECES FOR A NEW DIRECTOR'S FIRST SYMPHONIC BAND CONCERT

1. *First Suite in E-flat* — Gustav Holst (canonical; every intermediate band should play this)
2. *Loch Lomond* — Frank Ticheli (lyrical, expressive, builds musicianship)
3. *October* — Eric Whitacre (modern, gorgeous, immediately motivating for students)
4. *Chorale and Shaker Dance* — John Zdechlik (contrast of styles, pedagogically excellent)
5. *Chant and Jubilo* — Francis McBeth (introduces students to original band literature of real substance)

## CORE REPERTOIRE

PIECE	COMPOSER	GRADE	LISTEN
<i>Jubilant Overture</i>	Alfred Reed	3	YouTube reference recording
<i>First Suite in E-flat</i>	Gustav Holst	4	YouTube reference recording
<i>A Scottish Rhapsody</i>	Clare Grundman	3	YouTube reference recording
<i>Abracadabra</i>	Frank Ticheli	3	YouTube reference recording
<i>Prelude, Siciliano and Rondo</i>	Malcolm Arnold / Paynter	4	YouTube reference recording
<i>Loch Lomond</i>	Frank Ticheli	3	YouTube reference recording
<i>Florentiner March</i>	Julius Fučík	3	YouTube reference recording

PIECE	COMPOSER	GRADE	LISTEN
<i>Fairest of the Fair</i>	John Philip Sousa	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>October</i>	Eric Whitacre	3–4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Bravura</i>	Duble / A.J. Diller	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Ye Banks and Braes O' Bonnie Doon</i>	Percy Grainger	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Chorale and Shaker Dance</i>	John Zdechlik	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Sheltering Sky</i>	John Mackey	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>True Blue March</i>	Karl King / Swearingen	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Torch of Liberty March</i>	Karl King / Swearingen	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>On a Hymnsong of Philip Bliss</i>	David R. Holsinger	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Festive Overture</i>	Shostakovich / Hunsberger	4–5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Second Suite in F for Military Band</i>	Gustav Holst / Matthews	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>An American Elegy</i>	Frank Ticheli	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Orange Bowl March</i>	Henri Fillmore	3	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>

## ALSO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Overture for Winds</i>	Charles Carter	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Overture in B-flat</i>	Caesar Giovannini	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Fantasy on American Sailing Songs</i>	Clare Grundman	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Chant and Jubilo</i>	Francis McBeth	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Festivo</i>	Vaclav Nelhybel	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Emperata Overture</i>	Claude T. Smith	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Old Churches</i>	Michael Colgrass	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>A Tribute to Grainger</i>	Percy Grainger / Ragsdale	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>An Irish Rhapsody</i>	Clare Grundman	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Undertow</i>	John Mackey	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Moon by Night</i>	Jonathan Newman	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Pageant</i>	Vincent Persichetti	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Jubilant Prelude</i>	Claude T. Smith	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Shenandoah</i>	Frank Ticheli	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Mensch, beweine dein' Sünde groß</i>	J.S. Bach / Grainger	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Prelude and Fugue in D Minor</i>	J.S. Bach / Moehlmann	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Blessed Are They</i>	Johannes Brahms / Beuhleman	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Contre qui, rose</i>	Morten Lauridsen / Reynolds	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Chorale</i>	Vaclav Nelhybel	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Ukrainian Folk Songs</i>	Halsey Stevens / Schaefer	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Rhosymedre</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams / Beeler	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Symphonic Dance No. 2 "The Maskers"</i>	Clifton Williams	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>My Jesus, Oh What Anguish</i>	J.S. Bach / Reed	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Chorale and Alleluia</i>	Howard Hanson	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>
<i>Alleluia</i>	Randall Thompson / Buckley	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>English Folk Song Suite</i>	Ralph Vaughan Williams	<i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i>

## TIER 3 — WIND SYMPHONY (ADVANCED)

### WHERE TO START — 5 PIECES FOR A NEW DIRECTOR'S FIRST WIND SYMPHONY CONCERT

1. *Angels in the Architecture* — Frank Ticheli (major original band work; programmable, deeply musical)
2. *William Byrd Suite* — Gordon Jacob (excellent transcription, rich historical content)
3. *Hammersmith* — Gustav Holst (the pinnacle of Holst for band; benchmark your ensemble against this)
4. *Armenian Dances, Set 1* — Alfred Reed (Tokyo Kosei recording is definitive; students will love discovering this piece)
5. *Blue Shades* — Frank Ticheli (jazz-inflected, modern, immediately engaging for advanced players)

### CORE REPERTOIRE

PIECE	COMPOSER	GRADE	LISTEN
<i>William Byrd Suite</i>	Gordon Jacob	4–5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>O Magnum Mysterium</i>	Morten Lauridsen / Reynolds	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Aegean Festival Overture</i>	Andreas Makris / Bader	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>

PIECE	COMPOSER	GRADE	LISTEN
<i>The Planets</i>	Gustav Holst / Patterson	5–6	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a> [verify]
<i>Entry March of the Boyars</i>	Halvorsen / Fennell	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Amparito Roca</i>	Jaime Texidor	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Shepherd's Hey</i>	Percy Grainger / Rogers	4	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Elsa's Procession to the Cathedral</i>	Wagner / Caillet	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Angels in the Architecture</i>	Frank Ticheli	5–6	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>"Buckaroo Holiday" from Rodeo</i>	Aaron Copland / Megan	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Hammersmith</i>	Gustav Holst	6	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Blue Shades</i>	Frank Ticheli	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a>
<i>Armenian Dances, Set 1</i>	Alfred Reed	5	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a> [verify: <i>Tokyo Kosei Wind Orchestra</i> ]

## ALSO HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>English Dances, Sets I and II</i>	Malcolm Arnold	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a> — to verify
<i>Four Scottish Dances</i>	Malcolm Arnold / Paynter	<a href="#">YouTube reference recording</a> — to verify

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Variants on a Medieval Tune</i>	Norman Dello Joio	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>"Finale" from Symphony No. 9</i>	Antonín Dvořák / Hindsley	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>American Salute</i>	Morton Gould / Lang	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>"March" from Symphonic Metamorphosis</i>	Paul Hindemith / Wilson	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Carmina Burana</i>	Carl Orff / Krance	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Symphony for Band</i>	Vincent Persichetti	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Fantasia in G major</i>	J.S. Bach / Goldman	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Molly on the Shore</i>	Percy Grainger / Rogers	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Introduction and Fantasia</i>	Rex Mitchell	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Suite Française</i>	Darius Milhaud	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Pacific Celebration Suite</i>	Roger Nixon	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Laboring Songs</i>	Dan Welcher	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Elegy</i>	John Barnes Chance	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Colonial Song</i>	Percy Grainger / Rogers	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>La Fiesta Mexicana</i>	H. Owen Reed	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Capriccio Espagnol</i>	Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov / Winterbottom	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Chester</i>	William Schuman	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Sketches on a Tudor Psalm</i>	Fisher Tull	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Appalachian Spring</i>	Aaron Copland / Patterson	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Symphony for Band "West Point"</i>	Morton Gould	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Symphonic Metamorphosis</i>	Paul Hindemith / Wilson	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Symphony in B-flat</i>	Paul Hindemith	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Feste Romane</i>	Ottorino Respighi / Patterson	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Selections from Requiem</i>	Giuseppe Verdi / Patterson	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>"Profanation" from Jeremiah</i>	Leonard Bernstein / Bencriscutto	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Symphony No. 3</i>	Vittorio Giannini	<i>You Tube reference recording</i> — to verify

PIECE	COMPOSER	LISTEN
<i>Music for Prague 1968</i>	Karel Husa	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Dionysiaques, Op. 62</i>	Florent Schmitt	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>...and the mountains rising nowhere</i>	Joseph Schwantner	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify
<i>Till Eulenspiegel's Merry Pranks</i>	Richard Strauss / Hindsley	<i>YouTube reference recording</i> — to verify

## BAND METHODS: BEGINNER CURRICULUM CHOICES

The method book you choose for Concert Band shapes everything. These are the proven options. All are widely used; each has a different emphasis. Choose based on your ensemble's learning pace and your own teaching style.

*Scores and parts are available from JW Pepper, Hal Leonard, publisher direct, and major music retailers.*

METHOD	PUBLISHER / YEAR	NOTES
<b>Sound Innovations</b>	Alfred Music, 2010	Co-authored by four educators including a multiple Grammy winner. Strong emphasis on varied musical styles and creative exercises. Well-sequenced. <a href="#">Publisher site</a>
<b>Tradition of Excellence</b>	Kjos Music Press, 2011	Comprehensive and methodical. Strong theory integration. Works well for programs with a rigorous academic culture.

METHOD	PUBLISHER / YEAR	NOTES
<b>Essential Elements 2000</b>	Hal Leonard, 2001	Possibly the most widely used band method in US schools. Accessible, teacher-friendly, excellent pacing. Strong online resources in the current edition.
<b>Standards of Excellence</b>	Bruce Pearson / Kjos, 1993	Solid foundational method. Familiar to many band directors trained in the 1990s–2000s. Reliable.
<b>Accent on Achievement</b>	John O'Reilly / Alfred, 1997	Multi-cultural content integrated throughout. Good for diverse student populations.
<b>Best in Class</b>	Bruce Pearson / Kjos, 1982	Older but still widely used. Straightforward pacing, minimal complexity in approach. Good backup option.
<b>Learning Unlimited</b>	Art Jenson	Focuses on comprehensive musicianship alongside technical fundamentals. Less common but worth examining for programs with strong theory goals.

## VENUE, REHEARSAL SPACE, AND PERFORMANCE CALENDAR

### WHAT YOUR REHEARSAL SPACE MUST PROVIDE

A wind ensemble at any tier requires a dedicated, acoustically appropriate rehearsal space. This is not optional. Forcing wind and brass players to rehearse in untreated, ill-equipped rooms sends an unmistakable message to students about the program's priorities.

#### Non-negotiable room requirements:

- Sufficient square footage for the largest ensemble (Wind Symphony)
- Sound system (for playback and recordings)
- Music stands (one per player minimum)

- Chairs appropriate for wind players (no arms)
- A piano
- Percussion instruments appropriate to the literature
- Proper acoustic treatment or at minimum parallel-wall dampening
- Natural traffic flow that allows large groups to enter and exit quickly

**Reference:** *Planning Guide for School Music Facilities* (MENC / NAFME publication) — the standard reference for administrators planning or evaluating rehearsal spaces.

## REHEARSAL SCHEDULING

Suggested weekly rehearsal times (in order of preference for a supplementary/conservatory-prep context):

1. Saturday mornings — 9:00–11:00 am with a break
2. Saturday afternoons — 12:00–2:00 pm with a break
3. Saturday late afternoon — 2:00–4:00 pm with a break
4. Any weekday evening — 4:00–6:00 pm with a break
5. Any weekday late evening — 5:30–7:30 pm with a break

For school-integrated programs, the scheduling model will follow the school's period structure. The principle is the same: **minimum one 90-minute rehearsal per week per ensemble**. Anything less does not produce sustained growth.

## ANNUAL CONCERT CYCLE

A functioning tiered program targets **two full-length concerts per year per tier**:

SEASON	CONCERT
Fall	Late November — full-length program, 40–45 minutes of music

## SEASON

## CONCERT

Spring

Late February or March — full-length program, 40–45 minutes of music

### Concert programming principles:

- 40–45 minutes of diverse styles and genres per concert
- Every program should include: a transcription, at least one march, a major lyrical work, and at least one piece that challenges the students' musical maturity
- Chamber music and lighter selections from important composers round out the program
- Cross-tier collaboration concerts (combined Concert Band + Symphonic Band; or full combined program) are high-value events — plan at least one per year

## CROSS-TIER EVENTS

Cross-tier concerts serve multiple functions:

- Advanced students model musicianship for beginners — this is mentorship in the most direct possible form
- Beginner students see what the program can become — this is recruitment and retention
- The combined ensemble creates a sound and scale impossible in a single-tier program
- Administrative audiences (principals, boards, parents) see the full scope of what has been built

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## A NOTE ON THE MULTI-INSTRUMENTALIST PRINCIPLE

This document focuses on the concert band as an ensemble. But the best wind ensemble programs produce musicians who can move across the woodwind family — saxophonist who doubles on

clarinet and flute, clarinetist who doubles on saxophone for jazz ensemble. This flexibility is a professional-grade skill and a lifelong musical asset.

If your program includes woodwind students serious about a conservatory or university music track, consider introducing the doubling concept early. The companion document *The Study of Saxophone: A Nine-Year Course of Study for the Modern Saxophonist-Doubler* addresses this dimension of woodwind training in detail — including saxophone, flute, and clarinet in an integrated multi-year framework.

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## CLOSING

Build the program in tiers. Hold the audition bar. Choose repertoire that treats your students as musicians, not just beginners. Run sectionals like masterclasses. Put your ensemble in a room worthy of them.

The rest will follow.

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## EDITORIAL CHANGES SUMMARY

This document was originally drafted in March 2020 as a program proposal to the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music (LHNCM) in Beirut. It was researched and written by Thomas Hornig, who served as Professor of Saxophone at the LHNCM from 1995 through 2020.

The following changes were made for this 2026 universal edition:

CHANGE	ORIGINAL (2020 LHNCM)	THIS EDITION (2026 UNIVERSAL)
<b>Institutional references</b>	Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music (LHNCM),	All removed. Document is universal — applicable to any school band program worldwide

CHANGE	ORIGINAL (2020 LHNCM)	THIS EDITION (2026 UNIVERSAL)
	Beirut, Lebanese context throughout	
<b>Venue references</b>	Salle "S" at LHNCM, specific room	Generic "dedicated rehearsal space" with requirements framework
<b>Repertoire categories</b>	"Available" and "Score Only" — internal LHNCM inventory categories	Both categories collapsed into a single "Core Repertoire" list per tier; no possession or availability language
<b>Score availability language</b>	"I have the score," "score available," "Score Only" throughout	Entirely removed. Replaced with JW Pepper / Hal Leonard / publisher-direct framing
<b>Compensation section</b>	Detailed compensation discussion with specifics	Structural principle preserved ("must attract top talent"); all specifics removed
<b>Named local staff</b>	Mr. Saba and other named local staff mentioned	All named local staff references removed
<b>YouTube links</b>	Existing links from 2020 preserved as-is	All 2020 links retained; unlinked pieces given <i>YouTube reference recording — to verify</i> placeholders; a small number of highly probable canonical recordings included with <i>verify</i> annotation
<b>"Where to start" callouts</b>	Not present in original	Added for all three tiers — 5-piece starter lists for new directors
<b>Grade levels</b>	Not present in original	Added throughout repertoire tables
<b>Band methods</b>	Listed with minimal annotation	Expanded with one-line pedagogical annotation per method
<b>Doubler / cross-doc reference</b>	Not present	Added closing reference to <i>The Study of Saxophone</i> companion document

CHANGE	ORIGINAL (2020 LHNCM)	THIS EDITION (2026 UNIVERSAL)
<b>Disclaimers</b>	Not present	2026 edition disclaimer and affiliate disclosure added
<b>Spelling / attribution corrections</b>	Several composer name and title misspellings in original	Corrected throughout (Frank Ticheli [not Tichelli], Malcolm Arnold [not Malcom], Randall Thompson, Ralph Vaughan Williams, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, Halsey Stevens, ... <i>and the mountains rising nowhere</i> [Schwantner], <i>Sketches on a Tudor Psalm</i> [Fisher Tull, not Turina/Reed])

### Confirmed corrections applied (2026 edition):

1. *The Planets* (Holst / Patterson) — URL verified active. Updated to the full-work playlist of "The President's Own" US Marine Band, Merlin Patterson transcription, conducted by Maj. Michelle A. Rakers (2016).
2. *Introduction and Fantasia* — composer corrected from "Rex Maxwell" (2020 source typo) to **Rex Mitchell**.
3. *Sketches on a Tudor Psalm* — composer corrected from "Joaquín Turina / Reed" (2020 source error) to **Fisher Tull**.
4. Several "Also Highly Recommended" pieces lack YouTube links entirely. These carry *You Tube reference recording — to verify* placeholders — a focused link research pass would complete the document.
5. Grade levels for "Also Highly Recommended" pieces were not assigned in this draft (to keep the tables readable); adding grades is recommended before final publication.
6. *Portrait of a Clown* (Frank Ticheli) appears twice in the Concert Band section of the original — included once in this edition.
7. *Symphony in B-flat* (Paul Hindemith) appears twice in the Advanced section of the original — included once in this edition.

# *Building a Youth Wind Ensemble: A Framework for Concert Band Programs*

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Henri Selmer Paris Artist · Boston, Massachusetts



## THE WHOLE HORN

Saxophone pedagogy, woodwind doubling, jazz, and wind ensemble frameworks from Thomas Hornig — Henri Selmer Paris artist and founder of the SOFRA app.

## DOCUMENTS

The Study of  
Saxophone  
  
Jazz Performance  
Syllabus  
  
Wind Ensemble  
Framework

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