

HABITS OF A MUSICAL HIGH SCHOOL WIND ENSEMBLE

Sequential Fundamentals that Include an Individualized
and Comprehensive Approach to Sightreading

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HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL MUSICIAN
HABITS OF A SUCCESSFUL BAND DIRECTOR
THE EVOLUTION OF A SUCCESSFUL BAND DIRECTOR



GIA Publications, Inc.

Fundamentals Time: An Individualized and Sequential Approach to Sightreading

Key Concept #1: The need for fundamentals time

- The band director is the bridge from the beginning band student to the consummate musician
- The role of the warm-up is mental, physical, sequential, and performance-based
- Meaningful fundamentals time allows for seamless transfer of concepts to literature
- Effective fundamentals reduces the time needed to prepare for performance
- Some form of sight-reading should be reinforced daily

Key Concept #2: Fundamentals time must have purpose and meaning

- A specific percentage of rehearsal time should be spent on fundamentals
- Stretching and breathing exercises serve a physical and mental purpose
- The "components of playing" are the tools that allow troubleshooting to be taught
- Buzzing exercises for brass should be used to get the chops going and to center pitch
- Warm-up exercises must have intent and not turn into a routine of mindless repetition
- Scale studies: the building blocks for technique
- Tone production and ensemble sonority... *It don't mean a thing if it ain't got that "ring!"*

Key Concept #3: Fundamentals time should include sequential and comprehensive sightreading

- Introduce your desired counting system
- Use rhythm charts reinforced with pitches
- Sightread notes and rhythms with an emphasis on timing
- Sightread at a tempo that insures a successful performance of everything that is on the page
- Sightread with an emphasis on the "components of playing"
- Sightread using the inverse principle
- Musical sightreading must be developed over time with a logical sequence in place

Key Concept #4: The evolution of the fundamentals process must ultimately lead to great music making

- Cross the threshold from the "components of playing" to "thoughts about phrasing and musicianship"
- Use solfege to combat "musical wandering"
- Include music-making exercises as part of the curriculum
- Get off of the podium and let them play
- Strive for an artistic performance

All concepts and examples presented are contained in "Habits of A Successful Musician" by Scott Rush and Rich Moon.

If you have a 45-minute rehearsal block:

- One stretching exercise
- One breathing exercise
- Other specific warm-up exercises
- One scale study to include arpeggio, thirds and technical study
- One chorale
- One rhythm chart to reinforce your counting system
- One rhythm chart with pitches
- One sightreading exercise (notes and rhythms) with an emphasis on timing
- At the appropriate time, add two sightreading examples per day with dynamics and articulations
- At the appropriate time, add phrasing and musicianship concepts with focus towards artistry

If you have a 90-minute rehearsal block:

- Three stretching exercises
- Three breathing exercises
- An entire warm-up curriculum
- One scale study to include arpeggio, thirds and technical study
- One chorale
- Two or three rhythm charts to reinforce your counting system
- One rhythm chart with pitches
- Three sightreading exercises (notes and rhythms) each with a different time signature and key with an emphasis on timing
- At the appropriate time, add two sight-reading examples per day with dynamics and articulations
- At the appropriate time, add phrasing and musicianship concepts with a focus towards artistry
- At the appropriate time, develop a daily ear training curriculum through the use of solfege
- At the appropriate time, include one improvisation exercise per week

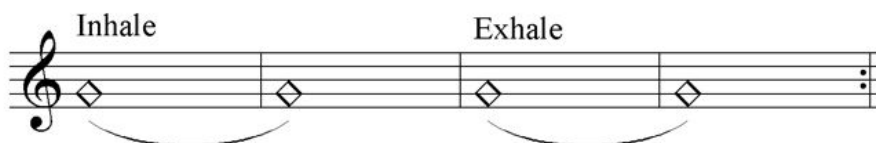
Breathing Exercises

Begin by filling the bag completely, then:

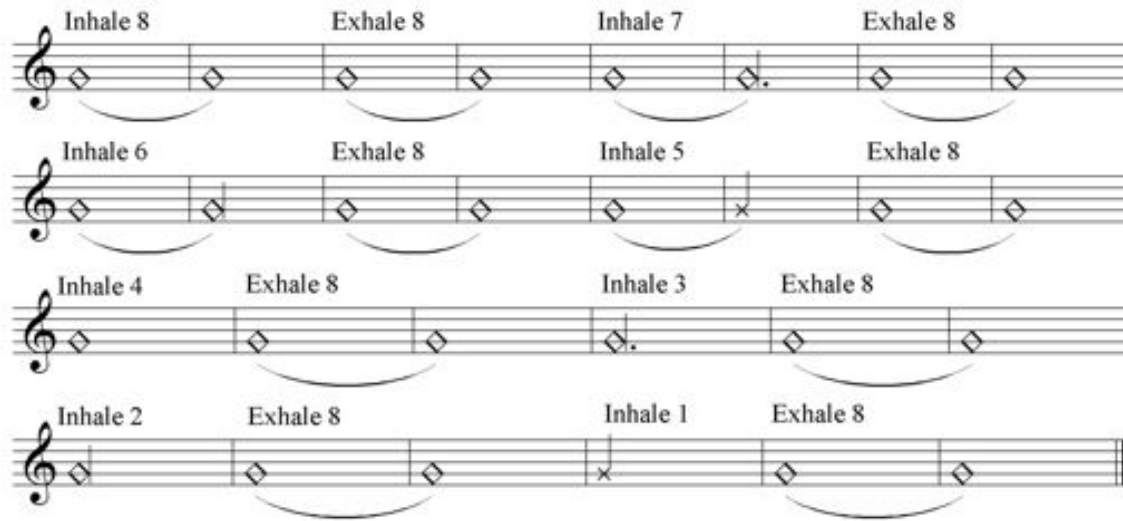
- 1) In for Four, Out for Four (8 times minimum)



- 2) In Eight, Out Eight



- 3) In Eight, Out Eight, In Seven, Out Eight, In Six, Out Eight etc.



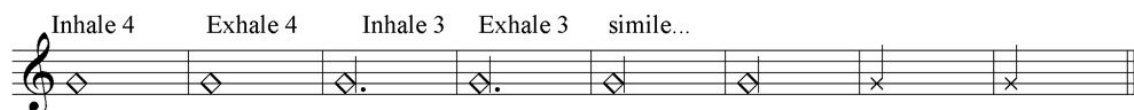
The following exercise begins with no air in the bag. The initial inhalation happens with a two-count breath outside of the bag:

- 4) Duples and Triples (blow out a series of straight eighth notes / then a series of triplets)



Begin by filling the bag with air, then:

- 5) Four, Three, Two, One (In four, out four, in three, out three, etc.)



The Whole Tone Scale

12. Five Step Scale Study

Note: Articulations should vary daily.

Dynamic Exercises

The Components of Playing

1. Tone
2. Timing
3. Tuning
4. Dynamics
5. Phrasing
6. Articulations (staccato, marcato, legato, slurred, various accents)
7. Rhythm
8. Balance
9. Blend
10. Attacks
11. Releases
12. Duration of notes
13. Style
14. Range
15. Technique
16. Tone Color (intensity, color spectrum, clarity, sonority)
17. Control
18. Consistency /Accuracy
19. Musicianship

Scale Studies

The image displays four staves of musical notation for scale studies in B-flat major (two flats). The first staff is labeled *Major Scale* and shows an ascending and descending scale. The second staff is labeled *Arpeggio* and shows the notes of the scale in arpeggiated form. The third staff is labeled *Thirds* and shows the notes of the scale in thirds. The fourth staff is labeled *Technical Study* and shows a series of eighth-note patterns with slurs and ties.

Rhythm Chart

Rhythm Chart (With Pitches)

The Inverse Principle and Rule of 7's

b b b
B C D E F G A B

b b b
B C D E F G A B
#

B C D E F G A B
#

Flats (b) 0 1 2 3 4 5 6
C F B E A D G
Sharps (#) 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

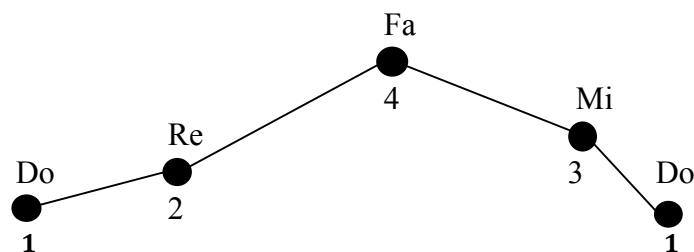
Thoughts About Phrasing and Musicianship

- Long notes should have direction and shape - they should intensify or decrescendo.
- Phrases should have peaks and valleys, arrival points, and weighted notes (agogic).
- You should carry over phrases and don't breath at inappropriate spots.
- If a line is repeated, do something different with it the second time.
- Find tension and release points.
- Musical moments usually take longer to build than they do to pull away.
- In many styles, short notes directionally lead to long notes
- It's what's NOT on the page that makes the music.
- Use "mood" words to establish style and ambiance.
- Assign words to entire musical phrases to help establish meaning and purpose.
- Persichetti said, "Music is either singing or dancing."
- It's what happens from note-to-note that makes the music come alive.
- The music will tell you what to do; the intuitive response creates more than what's on the page.
- Trust your soul to feel and express the music. Tell a musical story with passion and conviction.
- The conductor's blood must drip with musical conviction, both to the players and the audience.
- Discover music in every phrase.
- Unlike a painting or sculpture, music can be re-created again and again, with new meaning and understanding.
- The paper and ink don't make the music, instruments make no sounds on their own – the soul creates the music.
- Music must be interpreted to the point that the performance is said to be *artistic* and the performers, *artists*.

Solfege

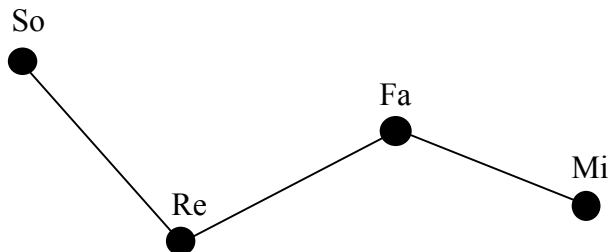
Musical literacy or melodic wandering? It is important that as you learn self-expression that you not only learn to musically interpret what's on the page, but to hear it and understand it. This is true whether done through improvisation or simply hearing an intervallic relationship stated on the printed page. The best way to practice this aural skill is through the use of solfege. Here is a model of how to incorporate solfege into daily instruction.

- A. Solfege exercises with syllables and scale-degree numbers
- B. Solfege exercises with syllables only
- C. Solfege syllables sung to students for playback
- D. Sing or play pitches only for playback
- E. Melodic and rhythmic dictation



Once this process is taught, eliminate the scale degree numbers and just use solfege syllables. This is also the time to begin and end on syllables other than "do."

B. solfege exercises w/syllables only



Once this is mastered, sing solfege syllables to the students and have them play back what you sing. Over time, try to cover each of the diatonic intervals. This is also the time that you want to use examples that have a strong underlying harmonic structure. You should be able to hear the chords underneath what you sing or play.

C. solfege syllables sung to students (sample)

Do – Re – Mi
 Do – Mi – So
 La – Fa – La
 So – Mi – So

Once students master the process of playing back solfege syllables, play or sing pitches only and have students play back what they hear.

D. play or sing pitches only (sample)

Doh - Doh - Doh
Do Re Mi
Doh - Doh - Doh
Do Mi So

Doh - Doh - Doh
La Fa La
Doh - Doh - Doh
So Mi So

Sample Sightreading from "Habits of A Successful Musician"

VI.15

Two staves of music in 2/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a ritardando (*rit.*) marking. The second staff includes an "A Tempo" marking and another *rit.* marking. The music features eighth and sixteenth notes with various articulations like accents and slurs.

VI.21

Two staves of music in 3/4 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff starts with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The second staff includes a triplet of eighth notes marked *f* (forte) and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking. The music consists of eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs.

VI.95

Two staves of music in 6/8 time, key of D major. The first staff has a piano (*p*) dynamic and a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic marking. The second staff starts with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The music features eighth and sixteenth notes with slurs and accents.

VI.106

Three staves of music in 12/8 time, key of B-flat major. The first staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The third staff includes a forte (*f*) dynamic and a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic marking, followed by a ritardando (*rit.*) marking. The music is composed of eighth and sixteenth notes with various slurs and articulations.

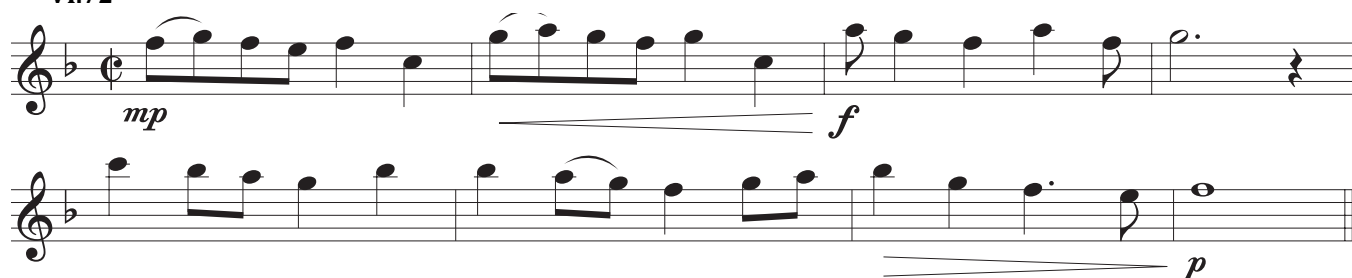
VI.19



VI.41



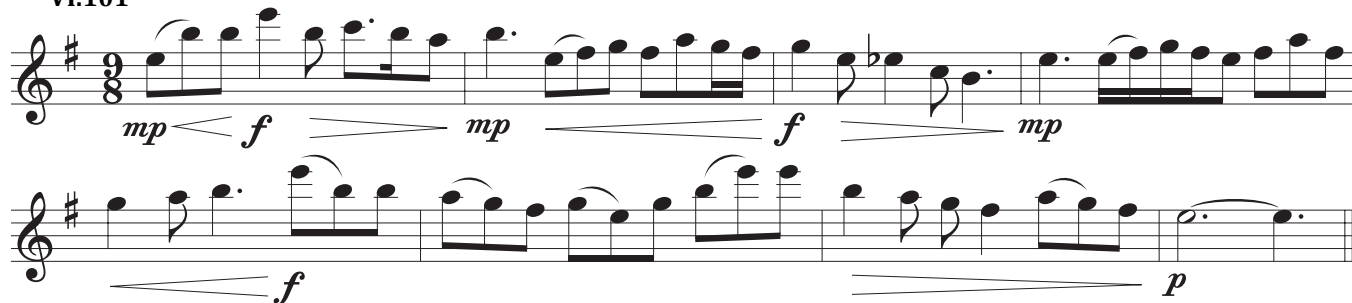
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VI.78

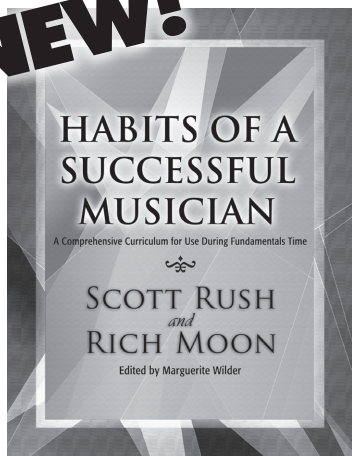


VI.101



"Habits of A Successful Musician" also features mixed meter and much, much more!

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Habits of a Successful Musician is the answer to the very simple question, "What should I be learning during fundamentals time?"

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- Provides material for use during fundamentals time that would promote a comprehensive approach to developing skills necessary to fill the musical toolbox.
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- Includes a sequential format that leads to the mastery of reading rhythms and, ultimately, to musical sight-reading.
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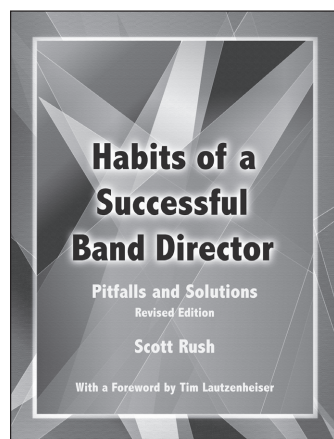
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Habits of a Successful Band Director Pitfalls and Solutions

Scott Rush

Foreword by Tim Lautzenheiser

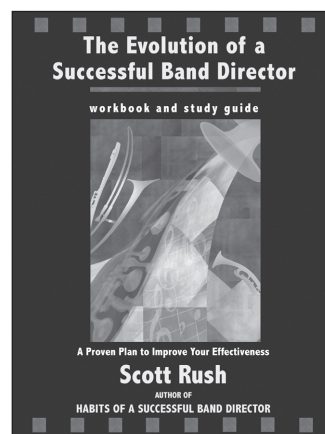


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