

EMBRACE GRADE ONE

*Moving Beyond Notes & Rhythm to Musicality
for the Junior High Orchestra*

Presented by:

Joliet Public Schools District #86 Orchestra Directors

Andrew Davis, Clifford Hunt, Linda Pierson, Melissa Schoonover

Demonstration by:

Joliet All-City Orchestra

Saturday, January 31, 2015 @11:00 am

PROGRAM

- **Audience Performance Critique** – presented by Andrew Davis ●

Petite Overture.....Elliot Del Borgo

Joliet All-City Orchestra

- **The Ten Steps** – presented by Linda Pierson ●

American Patrol.....F.W. Meacham, arr. Caponegro

Joliet All-City Orchestra

- **Applications for Common Core Standards & Comprehensive Musicianship**

presented by Melissa Schoonover ●

Aspen Glow.....Susan Day

Joliet All-City Orchestra

- **Literature List & Teaching Points** – presented by Andrew Davis ●

- **Questions & Answers** ●

Antagonist.....Larry Clark

Joliet All-City Orchestra

WHY “EMBRACE GRADE ONE”?

In the quest to improve note reading, rhythm counting and technique, many junior high string teachers choose to challenge their students with more advanced levels of music – works bearing the somewhat arbitrary labels of Grade 2, 3 or 4 . This is not necessarily a bad thing since most developing string players need some impetus to learn how to play in upper positions, 6/8 time and the flat keys, as well as develop accurate left hand technique at various tempos.

But by completely overlooking compositions with notes, meters and key signatures with which students are familiar and comfortable, i.e. music they can sight read, we may be taking away the best opportunity we have for moving beyond notes, rhythm and technique to musicality.

“Embrace Grade One” is an idea designed to encourage more junior high string teachers to teach and perform **quality** literature often overlooked as being “too easy”; selections specifically written in the junior high student’s comfort zone – the keys of D or G, and in common time with a reliance on vertical harmony and rhythm – to enable the student to move beyond note reading and counting, and incorporate elements such as optimum tone production, dynamics, bow style, balance, vibrato and even pitch perfect intonation, into their performance of a piece.

In addition, by having a head start on the tasks of learning notes and rhythms, more time is available to address Common Core Standards and incorporate elements of Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance into rehearsals. The value of understanding a musical composition beyond the way it sounds, cannot be overemphasized for both the depth and nuance it adds to any performance.

THE TEN STEPS

- 1) Are you playing the right notes?
- 2) Are you playing the right rhythms?
- 3) Are you playing up to tempo?
- 4) Do you have good intonation?
- 5) Are you using appropriate bowings?
- 6) Are you using the proper bow style?
- 7) Are you playing with dynamics & expression?
- 8) Is your part balanced and blending with the orchestra?
- 9) Are you listening for melody, countermelody, harmony & bass?
- 10) Are you watching the conductor?

BEYOND THE TEN STEPS

Are you making use of alternate fingerings or playing in upper positions?

Are you using vibrato?

APPLICATIONS TO COMMON CORE STANDARDS & COMPREHENSIVE MUSICIANSHIP

Lesson Plan for Grade 1 Composition

Title: Aspen Glow

Composer: Susan H. Day

Instrumentation/Voicing: String Orchestra

Publisher: Grand Mesa

Grade : 1.5

<http://www.jwpepper.com/sheet-music/media-player.jsp?&type=audio&productID=10312063>

Analysis

Broad Description: This is a waltz with a soaring melodic line.

Type/Genre: Programmatic music

Background Information: According to included program notes, this piece was “written to evoke images of Colorado’s high country and the radiant fall colors of the aspen...” The composer lives in Colorado.

Definition of Aspen from the Merriam-Webster Dictionary: “Native to the Northern Hemisphere, aspens are known for the fluttering of their leaves in the slightest breeze. Aspens grow farther north and higher up the mountains than other *Populus* species. All aspens have a smooth, gray-green bark, random branching, rich green leaves that turn brilliant yellow in fall, and [CATKINS](#) that appear before the leaves in spring.”

From the City of Aspen Chamber of Commerce: “Ahhh, Aspen, where do we start? It is a world-class destination with outdoor adventures from skiing to biking, with a flair for arts and culture, but still maintains enough small-town charm for year round residents to call it home. Aspen truly is a unique diamond nestled in the rough of the Rocky Mountains that has a knack for bringing big city features to you in a way that defies ordinary.

In the late 1940s, skiing arrived in Aspen as did modern day founders Walter and Elizabeth Paepcke. With a vision for the community that focused on Mind, Body and Spirit, the Paepckes helped Aspen begin a civic and cultural renaissance - one that continues to this day...we call it "The Aspen Idea." Learn more about Aspen's historical past.

That idea drives the internal energy of Aspen. Forget what you think you know about our mountain town, come and experience "The Aspen Idea" for yourself. Enjoy a day on the mountain in the winter or a bike ride along the Rio Grande Trail in the summer, fantastic food, incredible environment, but most of all great people...that's what Aspen is all about."

Additional Choral/Instrumental Information: The second violin part is doubled in the viola part.

Elements of Music

Form: This piece has 4 basic sections in the following order: ABCABDDCDA

Rhythm: This piece is in $\frac{3}{4}$ meter and contains primarily half and quarter notes with some eighth notes and dotted half notes. Ties combine eighth and half notes in the cello part. The waltz feel alludes to the falling of the leaves in autumn.

Melody: The initial melody occurs in the 1st violin part beginning at the anacrusis to measure 9 and continuing to measure 25. The melody later appears in the cello and bass.

Harmony: While it is written in G Major, there are F naturals in the penultimate measure. Perhaps this is the sound of the last leaf as it lands on the ground.

Timbre: This piece possesses a warm sound which can be brought out through the use of position work.

Texture: Written in 4 part polyphony

Expression: This piece lends itself well to an ebb and flow. It possesses a lilting feeling that allows for the performer to use nuance with tempo although no tempo variation is indicated save the ritardando in the penultimate measure.

Additional Considerations/Reasons for Performance: Be aware that there are some quick changes between arco and pizzicato.

Heart Statement: The Heart of this piece is the sweeping melodic lines that create the illusion of sun and the breeze through the trees on a fall day.

Outcomes

Skill: Students will play with proper shifting and understand when and why to shift.

Knowledge: Students will identify waltz style.

Affective: Students will explore how the arts can express without words

Strategies

Skill 1: Fingerboard map – given a fingerboard chart, students will first indicate notes in 1st and then in 3rd position for the key of G Major.

Skill 2: Students will practice moving their hands from 1st to 3rd position using various patterns starting with same finger shifts.

Skill 3: Students will play a 1 octave G Major scale with violins and violas playing entirely in 3rd position and cellos and basses shifting.

Knowledge: Students will learn to waltz in a simple box step.

Knowledge: Students will listen to a variety of musical excerpts and identify which are waltzes and which are not.

Knowledge: Using written excerpts, students will identify which are waltzes and which are not.

A: Introduce piece by first viewing the photo above. Have students share what they notice about the photo eventually having them share what emotions the picture evokes.

A: Students will listen to a piece of music and write a story based upon what they hear. After the story, students will write about what in the music lead to their story choices.

A: Students will view a dance piece and discuss what emotions it may convey.

LIST OF SELECTED LITERATURE

Not all Grade 1 – 1.5 literature is appropriate for the Jr. High Orchestra. Teaching points that will advance the ensemble to greater musicality are the major consideration in selecting any composition. Music on the list has been selected with specific learning goals in mind and has been used with success by the Joliet District #86 Orchestra staff.

The titles on this list have also been added to the Music Lists on the J.W. Pepper website. The list name is: Embrace Grade One. No password is necessary to access the list.

TITLE	CATEGORY	COMPOSER ARRANGER	PUBLISHER	GR	YR	KEY & TIME SIGNATURE		TEMPO	TEACHING POINTS
American Patrol	March	F.W. Meacham Arr. John Caponegro	Kendor (POP)	1.5	1984	G Major	4/4	Moderato ♩ = 112	Dotted Quarter Notes , March Style, Marcato Bow, Write Dynamics, Counter Melody,
Antagonist	Contemporary	Larry Clark	Carl Fischer	1	2010	E Minor	4/4	Aggressive ♩ = 144	Attacca Bow Style, Accents, Crescendo
Ash Grove	Folk Song	Arr. Larry Clark	Carl Fischer	1.5	2003	G Major	3/4	Adagio ♩ = 72	Legato Bow, Slurred Eighths Dynamics
Aspen Glow	Contemporary	Susan Day	Grand Mesa	1.5	2012	G Major	3/4	Moderato ♩ = 112	Lyrical Bowing, Bow Speed, Dynamics, Slurred Eighths
Beethoven Lullaby	Contemporary	Brian Balmages	FJH	1	2012	D Major	4/4	Andante ♩ = 80	Legato Bow Slurs, Dynamics, Blend. Balance
Bringer of Joy	Classical	Gustav Holst Arr. Roy Phillippe	Alfred	1	2002	G Major	2/4 3/4	Moderato ♩ = 112 Andante ♩ = 80	Multiple Bowing Styles, Time Change, Tempo Changes, Fermata, Pick-up Notes
Dance of Fire	Contemporary	Frank Hafferty	Kendor	1	2010	E Minor	3/4	Fast With Energy ♩ = 144	Accents, Tremolo, Pizzicato
Dark Visions	Contemporary	Kevin Mixon	Carl Fischer	1.5	2011	E Minor	4/4	Menacingly ♩ = 132	Random Pizzicato, Accents, Attacca, Tremolo, Col Legno, Sul Ponticello,

TITLE	CATEGORY	COMPOSER ARRANGER	PUBLISHER	GR	YR	KEY & TIME SIGNATURE		TEMPO ♩ =	TEACHING POINTS
El Toro	Contemporary	Don Brubaker	Alfred	2	1995	E Minor	3/4	Allegro Vivo ♩ = 60	Programmatic Music, Violin & Cello Cadenza, Spanish Style, D.C al Coda, Conducted in One
Espana Waltz	Classical	Emil Waldteufel Arr. Merle Isaac	Wynn	1.5	1986	G Major	3/4	Allegro con Brio ♩ = 72	Spiccato Bowing, Playable at Fast Tempo, Balance, Counter Melody, Conducted in One
Finlandia	Classical	Jean Sibelius Arr. Jack Bullock	Alfred	1	2009	G Major	4/4	Slow ♩ = 80	Legato Bow, Bow Speed, Dynamics
Gypsy Moon	Contemporary	Frank Hafferty	Kendor	1	2012	E Minor	♩	With Energy ♩ = 96	Lower Bow Style, Slides, Double Stops with Open E
Honor & GLory	Processional	Soon Hee Newbold	FJH	1	2008	D Major	4/4	Majestic ♩ = 120	Smooth March Style, Bow Lifts
Hot Potato	Contemporary	Doug Spata	Highland Etling	1	2007	D Major	4/4	Allegro ♩ = 135	4 th Finger for Violins, Balance, Playing up to Tempo
Into the Sky	Contemporary	Brian Balmages	FJH	1	2009	D Major	4/4	Allegro ♩ = 126	Crossing Open Strings Piano Part Triplet Accompaniment
Mama Don't 'Low	Fiddle Tune	Carrie Lane Gruselle	FJH	1.5	2011	A Major D Major	♩	Moderato ♩ = 94	Fiddlin' Style, Key Change
Mambo Amable	Contemporary	Thom Sharp	Latham	1	2009	D Major	4/4	Mambo ♩ = 132	Latin Style Bowing. Optional Percussion
O Mio Babbino Caro	Classical	Giacomo Puccini Arr. Sandra Dackow	Tempo Press	1	--	G Major	3/4	Allegro ♩ = 160 Andante ♩ = 120	Melodic Line, Lyrical Bowing, Famous Melody
Orpheus in the Underworld	Classical	Jacques Offenbach Arr. Sandra Dackow	Tempo Press	1	--	D Major	2/4	Allegro ♩ = 120	Off-String Bowing, Dynamics, Famous Melody
Rights of Conscience	Shaker Tune	Issacher Bates Arr. Mark Hellem	Kjos	1	2011	G Major	4/4	Andante Moderato ♩ = 88	Historical Background

TITLE	CATEGORY	COMPOSER ARRANGER	PUBLISHER	GR	YR	KEY & TIME SIGNATURE		TEMPO ♩ =	TEACHING POINTS
Sahara Crossing	Contemporary	Richard Meyer	Highland Etling	1	2000	E Minor	4/4	Allegro ♩ = 120	Bb & Eb, Contrasting Dynamics, Contrasting Bowing Styles
Saltarello	Renaissance	Vincenzo Gallilei Arr. Lloyd Conley	Hal Leonard	1.5	2002	D Major	3/4	Allegro ♩ = 132	Spiccato Bow Style, Dance Form, Unusual Time Period
Scarborough Fair	Folk Song	Brian Balmages	FJH	1.5	2012	D Dorian	3/4	Andante Espressivo ♩ = 88	Legato Bow, Bow Speed Unusual Harmonies for Intonation & Blend
Send in the Clowns	Broadway/Pop	Stephen Sondheim Arr. Robert Longfield	Hal Leonard	1.5	2009	D Major	3/4	Slowly ♩ = 44	Legato Bow, Bow Speed, Melodic Line, Phrase Shaping Balance, Voicing
Shenandoah	Folk Song	David Shaffer	Lake State	1.5	1988	G Major D Major	4/4	Moderato ♩ = 120 - 132	Bow Speed, Slurs, Dynamics Tempo & Key Change
Slovakian Dances	Contemporary	Al Cechvala	Kendor (POP)	1.5	1969	G Major	2/4	Allegretto ♩ = 126	Bow Style, Accents, Tempo Changes
St. Anthony Chorale	Classical	Franz Josef Haydn Arr. Sandra Dackow	Tempo Press	1	--	G Major	♩	Moderato	Dotted Quarter Notes, Legato Bowing, Tuning Harmonies
Swallow Tail (Learn to Play in the Orchestra, Vol. II, #44-1)	Irish Jig	Ralph Matesky	Alfred	1	1973	E Minor	6/8	Vivace	6/8 Conducted in 2. Pick-up Notes, Celtic Fiddle Style, Hooked Bowing
Symphony No. 2 (Little Russian)	Classical	Peter Tschaikowsky Arr. Sandra Dackow	Tempo Press	2	--	C Major	♩ 2/4	Moderato Allegro	Contrasted Bowing Styles, Fermatas, Grace Notes, Time & Tempo Change
Wexford Circle	Contemporary	Elliot DelBorgo	Kendor	1	1995	E Minor	4/4	Moderato ♩ = 126	Slurs, Contrasting Bow Styles
Wood That Sings	Contemporary	Kevin Mixon	Highland Etling	1.5	2006	Mixed Modalities	4/4 6/8	Solemnly ♩ = 110	Native American Themes, Improvisation, Chanting, Drumming, Tempo Changes