



Plays Well with Others: Practical Applications for Chamber Music in Your Band Program

Presented by Adams State University Department of Music Faculty:

Dr. Beth Robison, Director of Choral Activities

Dr. Angela Winter, Director of Brass and Bands

Dr. Tracy Doyle, Music Education and Flute

Dr. James Doyle, Percussion and Music Business

Otoña en Buenos Aires from *Danzas Latinoamericanas* by Jose Elizondo

<http://www.joseelizondo.com/>

“All too often we are giving young people cut flowers when we should be teaching them to grow their own plants.”- John W. Gardner

“The greatest sign of success for a teacher is to be able to say, The children are now working as if I did not exist.” - Maria Montessori

“Give the ones you love wings to fly, roots to come back, and reasons to stay.”- Dalai Lama

What is Chamber Music?

- It is everything you think it is (string quartet, woodwind, quintet, brass quartet), but more broadly it is two or more musicians playing without a conductor in a self-guided musical experience.
- Value what you know, but also value what you have and what you can do with what you have. (Love the one you're with!)



Musical Benefits

- To state the obvious, chamber music builds individual performance levels while developing the whole musician, encourages independent music making, self-evaluation, accountability, listening skills, playing without a conductor, and improved intonation, balance, and blend.
- It makes the world a better place (better humans, better musicians), fosters the lifelong ability to participate in music, provides teaching opportunities (soloist vs. ensemble member), fuels creativity and confidence, provides opportunities for musical decision making, exposes students to literature and performance practices, can develop arranging skills, encourages individual practice, and group practice.
- Provides equal opportunity for those who may get lost in the cracks.
- Can benefit small programs in particular by serving varied ability levels and working with unbalanced instrumentation. Offers visibility, especially for programs without athletic bands, and can meet the needs of programs with limited resources.

Other Benefits

- Things your administrator will love include differentiated instruction, meeting individual needs of students in your ensembles, authentic and individualized assessment, building 21st century skills and prepared graduate competencies, while addressing state and national standards for music education.
- Building community relationships and increasing program visibility, in addition to support for your program and music education in general.
- Interpersonal skills, including empathy, effective communication, compromise, patience, responsibility, ownership, accountability, teamwork, collaboration, leadership, and decision making.
- Intrapersonal skills, including pride, empowerment, confidence, creativity, resilience, equal parts soloist and collaborator (musical skills that translates to important life skills).
- Advocacy - Engaging and educating the public about music education has far reaching influence, locally and beyond.
- Service learning opportunities could include recruiting elementary/middle school students for high school ensembles. Providing a service to hospitals, nursing homes, veterans homes, etc. which provides opportunities for student to present themselves and interact with the community, as well as providing a global understanding of the world in which they live.
- Community inroads with local businesses can translate to financial support for your program.



Challenges and Solutions

- Instrumentation - Look at what you have. It is flexible! You don't need to have prescribed instrumentation. You can use traditional literature with different instrumentation, or flexible arrangements (see resources below).
- Limited time and space - This can be one of the biggest challenges to incorporating chamber music in your program. Some thoughts on overcoming these obstacles include: Using chamber music within usual performance ensembles as a warm up, etc., incorporating chamber music into rehearsals using flexible band instrumentation, using a portion of longer large ensemble rehearsals (last 15 minutes of class, for example) to devote to chamber music, consider provide a structure for student led rehearsal time (see handout), utilize recordings for self-assessment to be turned in via Google doc or private YouTube channel for feedback and assessment, partnerships with local musical organizations to procure assistance with coaching, use every possible space and be creative. Don't underestimate the value of having multiple groups in one room. You can float.

Performance Opportunities

- Beyond Solo & Ensemble Festival, consider hosting a public chamber music recital, providing community outreach, playing at school functions, collaboration with community groups, peer performances in class, and posting to digital media (YouTube, Instagram, Facebook, school district website).

Resources

- Prescribed Music Lists
 - Texas <https://www.uiltexas.org/music/pml>
 - Missouri <http://gvlabs.com/festivalmanager/mshsaa/src/top.htm>
- Last Resort Music <http://www.lastresortmusic.com/>
- Magnolia Music Publications <https://magnoliamusicpublications.com/>
- Marina Music <https://marinamusic.com/>
- MusicaNeo <https://mschottenbauer.musicaneo.com/>
- Schott Music <https://en.schott-music.com/advance-music/flexible-instrumentation/>



Example Handout for Guided Student-Led Rehearsal

Read

Read through entire piece or movement. Only stop when someone is lost. Do not fix problems yet. Get a birds-eye view of the work.

Analyze

What are the sections of the piece? Where are the phrases? What is the character, mood, and/or style?

Plan

In our given rehearsal time of _____ minutes, our goal is to play measures _____ through _____ with the following: (Be sure to allow the final portion of time allotted for a run through of your work.)

Circle all that you intend to accomplish in the given time:

Steady Pulse

Rhythmic Accuracy

Nice/Appropriate Tone

Attention to Dynamics

Good Blend and Balance

Good Intonation

Increase Tempo

Polished Performance

Other: _____

Evaluate

Play through the passage or passages worked on during rehearsal at the end of allotted time and answer the following:

What improved in the passage we worked on today?

What progress still needs to be made to have a successful performance of this passage?

What can I do in my individual practice to accomplish this goal?

What will we as a group work on during our next rehearsal?