

Tradition - Thoughts on Precision Military Marching Band

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Texas Bandmasters Association Clinic
San Antonio, Texas
July 27, 2014

A Short History of Precision Drill

The development of military style (precision drill) marching has been generational – handed down, particularly in the East Texas area.

The first college band to present a halftime show was the University of Illinois in 1907. While early presentations utilized scatter drill, the Illinois Band later used 6 to 5 stride until the 1970's.

Prior to use of yard lines (6 to 5 or 8 to 5 stride), band members simply guided left and right and did not pay any attention to the yard lines. Show band style was widely accepted and featured formations such as a moon while performing selections such as “Shine on Harvest Moon.” High school bands might turn out the lights during their halftime performances and employ devices such as black lights and dancing. It was common for bands to utilize jazz selections for most musical selections.

Military style bands developed in East Texas following World War II. Military marching and playing are a spin-off of the armed services.

Those credited with the early development of military style bands in East Texas include:

E.V. Adams – Texas A&M University

Jimmie Hudgins – Stephen F. Austin State University

Alto Tatum – Gladewater High School

Oklahoma has been mentioned as deserving a great deal of credit in the development of precision style marching through

both the Tri-State Music Festival in Enid and through the efforts of Pete Long, Director of the Ponca City High School Band.

Ed Lumpkin, band director at Pine Tree High School, is credited as one of the first band directors to bring 6 to 5 marching to East Texas. Around 1955 or 1956, the Pine Tree Band marched in a company front, hitting the yard lines every six steps. It has been described as revolutionary.

6 to 5 style started out simple and became more intricate and complicated with time. In the beginning, the music had virtually nothing to do with the marching drill. Some of the early drills have been compared to a postage stamp moving around on the field.

UIL Required Marching Maneuvers and inspections had an enormous effect on marching band expectations and style before they were discontinued around the late 1960's.

Another pioneer in the development of the 6 to 5 marching style was Kenneth Green at Bossier City, LA High School (later at Stephen F. Austin State University). His 1960 performance at the Sugar Bowl was broadcast on television, displaying his innovative 6 to 5 drill design. His marching was very dignified; utilizing many Kenneth Alford marches, with a marching cadence of around 96 beats per minute.

The use of 6 to 5 marching style with the Stephen F. Austin State University Band under both Jimmie Hudgins and Kenneth Green had a major influence on a generation of band directors who adopted this style for their own public school band programs in the East Texas area.

Influences related to 6 to 5 style during the 1960's included:
Neil Grant – Troup, White Oak, & Longview High Schools
Eldon Janzen – Irving High School
Vince DiNino – University of Texas (through 1975)
E.V. Adams -- Texas A&M University through his retirement in 1972, and replaced by Joe Tom Haney
Bill Swor - LSU

There are two directors that achieved the upmost respect for their high school marching bands during the 1970's & 1980's utilizing the military style:

Waymon Bullock at Lufkin High School was a pioneer in the development of intricate 6 to 5 drill design

Pete Kunkel at Longview High School – his band has been described as “in a class of its own.”

Other descriptors:

Intensity	Precise
Energy	Wall of Sound
Total Machine	Superior in all aspects
Class act in every way	

In 1979, the National Association of Military Marching Bands was formed to promote the military style of marching. They hosted first an exhibition and later, the NAMMB marching contests to promote this style of marching.

At present, East Texas remains the only area of the state (or nation) that continues to promote this marching style in the public schools. Texas A&M University is the only remaining college band that marches exclusively in the 6 to 5 style.

MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

General Comments

- Fundamentals are those things that provide a foundation – a basic skill set
- The goal of military marching fundamentals is for all band members to do everything exactly the same way – total uniformity – everything is about the group – individuals are anonymous
- There is no right or wrong way to teach military marching fundamentals - it must be something with which you are comfortable
- Fundamental terminology – less is better – the more vocabulary, the more difficult to get the concept across
With the Aggie Band, will only teach a marching fundamental when it is needed for an upcoming drill. This provides more time to better refine basics.
- If band members have good command of marching fundamentals and have good stride, you should be able to teach a marching drill rather quickly.
With the Aggie Band, we change the drill and music every week, usually teaching the drill footwork in two days.
- If things are correct with the feet and fundamentals, it should not affect the sound of the band.

MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

Some Definitions

Carriage – anything from the waist up – how you look when you are moving with the horn

Stride – anything from the waist down

Uniformity – exactness

Pivot Point – placement of the foot at a change of direction

Peripheral Vision – seeing everything while looking straight ahead

The Position of Attention

Aggie Band uses this for fall in at the beginning of every rehearsal

- Military marching is completely centered on the position of attention. It can be compared to sitting correctly in the chair in a concert band. Until this position is refined, there is no need to begin any movement.
- One of the best examples to emulate is a Marine at a ceremonial funeral or Ceremonial Guard at the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier
- Look straight ahead at all times – eyes slightly above level
- No movement
- Stand tall, chin up, shoulders back (Pride & Dignity)

- Hand cupped – left hand aligned with the stripe on the pant, if applicable

You must make decisions regarding the following:

How to fall in – position of attention, parade rest, at ease?

How to start – kick off, lift, etc.,?

How to stop – drag halt, smooth halt?

Present and order horns – number of counts, one whistle per movement, one whistle for multiple movements, etc.?

Types of whistle and vocal commands for each movement and position?

Stride

- Six equal 30” steps between yard lines while remaining at attention
- Just walk – march from the waist down (no wobble) – emulate rockers on a rocking chair (heel first, foot rolls, toe is last to leave the ground – as toe is leaving, other heel is hitting)
- Takes time to develop – repetition is the best teacher – lots of sweeping the field
- Think of a glass of water on the head – march between the yard lines without it falling off while maintaining an intensity of forward motion
- While moving, you must be able to play your instrument to the best of your ability with no restrictions

- The smoother the head, the easier to play an instrument – plumes should move up and down smoothly in rhythm if the stride is consistent

Foot Placement on the Yard Line

Which part of the foot - toe, middle or heel hits the yard line? I have seen all work with success. You must select the one you feel will work for you.

Toe – we have used this with the Aggie Band for 50 years having great success, but keep in mind that people have different foot sizes -- which can be an issue

Middle – seems to be preferred by many – center of gravity comes through the middle of your head down between the insteps of your feet – this puts everyone’s center line on the center of a yard line

Heel – I did this in high school and do not remember any major issues, but it does create problems with establishing a consistent pivot point

Changes of Direction

- Only a few basic direction changes in military marching. You must always address what happens to both the body and the instrument during a change of direction.
- You must avoid moving pivot points at any change of direction. One foot in front of the other at the pivot is of great assistance. On countermarches, slide the foot under the person in front of you.

- The best way to pivot is precisely on the beat – foot hits the ground as you quickly turn on the beat – if you pivot really fast, you may have to hesitate before taking the next step.
- Body square as you turn – no leaning – body remains straight up and down
- Always take a full 30” step in the new direction. Your marching fundamentals may include a kick off in the new direction.
- Crossover (wrap) turns are more difficult to clean and refine.
- Direction of the countermarch (right or left) does not really matter. Some directors only want to countermarch away from the press box, but you now have two fundamentals to refine as opposed to one.

Small Details

Everything must be the same

- Chin posture is very important – never too low
- Instrument angles – check the clarinets – brass parallel to the ground – percussion stick heights uniform
- Hats must be worn correctly – plume is straight up and down – 2 fingers in the bow of the height to check for proper fit

- Make sure that uniforms fit correctly – DO NOT OVERLOOK CORRECT PANT LENGTH

FROM ELDON JANZEN:

The most important part of teaching military style marching is that drills are designed that define the exact position of each band member on every count of the drill – 64 30” steps from side to side and 144 30” steps from goal to goal. Everyone has to be somewhere on the grid, if not, they can be corrected. Correct posture and discipline is defined and expected.

TEXAS AGGIE BAND MARCHING FUNDAMENTALS

STAND AT ATTENTION (fall in position)

Heels together

Toes pointed at a 45-degree angle

Fingers curled at the seams of the trousers

Erect posture – shoulders back, head up, eyes straight ahead

No movement

PARADE REST (also a form of attention)

Command is given from attention

Right foot remains stationary

Heels 12 inches apart

Posture remains erect – remain at attention

Do not look at the ground

Left hand is placed in the small of the back

STAND AT EASE

Command may be given from “attention” or “parade rest”

Stand casually with the right foot remaining in place

Relax the arms and knees

You may not move out of your position

No talking

FACING MOVEMENTS (we spend minimal time on facing movements)

LEFT FACE (two count movement)

Turn on the ball of the right foot & heel of the left foot 90 degrees
Your position on the field will remain consistent
Immediately recheck alignment
*Half left face is the same, only 45-degree movement

RIGHT FACE (two count movement)

Turn of the ball of the left foot & heel of the right foot 90 degrees
Your position on the field will remain consistent
Immediately recheck alignment
*Half right face is the same, only 45-degree movement

ABOUT FACE (three count movement)

Step forward ½ step with the left foot
Turn 180 degrees on the toes of both feet
Bring left foot even with the right foot in the position of attention

STEP OFF/6 TO 5 STRIDE

30" step – normal stride – walk down the field
Maintain proper posture during the step off – don't lean forward or anticipate the command – always step off with left foot (lift left foot on "&" – step on beat 1)
Head up, shoulders back, don't look at the ground – upper body remains at attention
Movement is from the waist down
Utilize peripheral vision to maintain alignment
Hit the yard line with the ball of the foot
Normal arm swing (don't think about it)

HALT

Halt on the right foot, on the next beat pull the left foot up to the proper position of attention
Make sure to halt in tempo – avoid rushing

THE 4-STEP COUNTERMARCH (CM to the right – teach on a yard line)

Right foot on the yard line

Execute a right flank on the left foot – ½ step past the yard line

Step to the right ½ step (right foot)

Take ½ step with the left foot and execute another right flank off the left foot

Take a full 30” step with the left foot off of the yard line following the countermarch

*We also teach a 2-step CM to the right and a CM to the left when/if needed

- Composed of four distinct movements
- Flanking movements must be crisp
- Maintain posture throughout countermarch – rigid body
- No bounce
- Maintain consistent rhythm

GENERAL

Never change pivot points

Always check alignment – cover down front to back & side to side

Take a full 30” step in any new direction

When marching sideline to sideline, march parallel to the yard line

When marching sideline to sideline, the right foot is always on the yard line

OBLIQUE MARCHING

30” stride remains consistent

8 equal steps between yard lines

At the oblique point, there is no delay or lift of the body

When you oblique left, guide to the left

When you oblique right, guide to the right

FLANKS/CROSSOVER

Left Flank – 90 degree turn off of the right foot – followed by a full 30” step in the new direction with the left foot

Right Crossover – 90 degree turn by crossing the left leg 30” inches to the right around the stationary right foot

* We teach right flanks and left crossovers only as needed

TO THE REARS

Left – right foot hits the ground directly in front of the left foot – turn 180 degrees to the left on the toes of both feet – full 30”step in the new direction.

Right – left foot hits the ground directly in front of the right foot – turn 180 degrees to the right on the toes of both feet – full 30”step in the new direction.

Proper horn carriage, present horns, and horns down are all taught by section officers in instrumental sections since they are specific in nature. This also applies to the movement of instruments during countermarches.

MUSIC SELECTION

- The staple literature of this style of marching is the traditional military march (quickstep), played with lots of energy, enthusiasm, and spirit
- Original purpose of marches was to move troops
“If you want to go to battle, you certainly don’t want to go with someone playing a bad legato style march.”
Barry Johnson
- *“There is no excuse to play a bad march – there are so many good ones – always pick the highest quality pieces of music.”*
Jim Hagood
- Consider picking at least one march that will challenge and build technique, but remember there is a fine line between music that challenges while still able to achieve success.

- Certainly select marches that show off your best sections and players.

SUGGESTED MARCH LITERATURE FOR THE FIELD

COFFMAN, JAMES

Marches by Fred Jewell, J.J. Richards, Karl King

Cyrus the Great – Karl King
 Garland Entrée – Karl King
 Glorious America – Karl King
 Golden Bear – J. J. Richards
 Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
 Lt. Commander – Karl King
 Men in Gray – N.K. Brahmstedt
 Neddermeyer Triumphal – Karl King
 Northwind – Paris Chambers
 Purple Pageant – Karl King
 Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
 Radio Waves – Fred Jewell
 Robinson's Grand Entrée – Karl King
 Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
 Santiago – Karl King
 Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford

DURHAM, HARVEY

Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
 Drum Major – J.S. Taylor
 E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
 Gladiator's Farewell – Hermann Blankenburg
 Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
 Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
 Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
 Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
 St. Julien – A.W. Hughes

HAGOOD, JIM

German/Prussian marches – really vertical – scoring is lean – usually just a single countermelody – not a lot going on – very difficult to balance on the field

English marches – work well outside – more complex – thicker countermelodies

Circus marches work very well – thicker – more countermelodies – less vertical

All Marches by Karl King
American Red Cross – Frank Panella
Anchors Aweigh - Zimmerman
Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
Battle of Shiloh – Charles Barnhouse
Battle of the Winds – Charles Duple
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
BB & CF – J. Ord Hume
Billboard – John Klohr
Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Bravura – Charles Duple
British Eighth – Zo Elliott
E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Hail to the Fleet – Richard Maltby
Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
Independentia – R. B. Hall
Invercargill – Alex Lithgow
Joyce’s 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
Mad Major – Kenneth Alford
Marine’s Hymn – Phillips
National Emblem – E.E. Bagley
Northwind – Paris Chambers
Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
Our United States – Ventre
Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
Purple Carnival – Harry Alford
Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
Rifle Regiment – John P. Sousa
Royal Bridesmaid – John Casto
Royal Decree – William English
Semper Paratus – Van Boskerck
Soaring Eagle – John Klohr
Standard of St. George – Kenneth Alford
Tent City – William English
Tenth Regiment – R.B. Hall
Tripoli Temple – Charles Barnhouse
U.S. Air Force – Crawford/Bennett
U.S. Field Artillery – Sousa
Under the Double Eagle – J.F. Wagner
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford
Wellington – Wilhelm Zehle

JOHNSON, BARRY

American Red Cross – Frank Panella
Barnum & Bailey’s Favorite – Karl King
Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Chicago World’s Fair – Carl Mader
Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
Northwind – Paris Chambers
Robinson’s Grand Entrée – Karl King
Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
Viking – Karl King
Woody Van’s – Karl King

KUNKEL, PETE

Marches in Eb, Ab, and Db are favorites. Db is best – you get a darker sound.
Stays away from 6/8 marches – don’t really drive, they swing

Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Independientia – R.B. Hall
Trombone Section – Paris Chambers
Trooper’s Tribunal – Henry Fillmore
Under the Double Eagle – J.F. Wagner

LAWLER, DON

Karl King marches are great for young students.

Battle of the Winds – Charles Duble
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Chicago Tribune – Paris Chambers
Northwind – Paris Chambers

RHEA, TIMOTHY

MORE DIFFICULT

Action Front – H.L. Blankenburg
Army of the Nile – Kenneth Alford
Attorney General – Karl King
Barnum & Bailey’s Favorite – Karl King
Battle of Shiloh – Charles Barnhouse
Battle of the Winds – Charles Duble
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Bolivar – Karl King
Boys of the Old Brigade – Paris Chambers
Bravura – Charles Duble
Burr’s Triumphal – Russell Alexander
Canto Aero Club – Karl King

Caravan Club – Karl King
Carrollton – Karl King
Circus Bee – Henry Fillmore
Colonel Bogey – Kenneth Alford
Colossus of Columbia – Russell Alexander
Cyrus the Great – Karl King
Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
Emblem of Freedom – Karl King
Entry of the Gladiators – Julius Fucik
Flag of Victory – Frank von Blon
Flying Eagles – H.L. Blankenburg
French National Defile – Rauski/Seredy
Front Section – E.E. Bagley
Garland Entrée – Karl King
Gentry's Triumphal – Fred Jewell
Gladiator's Farewell – H.L. Blankenburg
Golden Bear – J.J. Richards
Honey Boys on Parade – E.V. Cupero
Hostrauser's – Paris Chambers
Idaho – Charles Barnhouse
Invictus – Karl King
Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
Melody Shop – Karl King
Mystic Call – Karl King
National Emblem – E.E. Bagley
Neddermeyer Triumphal – Karl King
Northwind – Paris Chambers
Our Gallant Infantry – Austyn Edwards
Our United States – Frank Ventre
Ponderoso – Karl King
Porter's Catalina Band – Dwight McCaughey
Pride of the Illini – Karl King
Purple Pageant – Karl King
Quality Plus – Fred Jewell
Radio Waves – Fred Jewell
Robinson's Grand Entrée – Karl King
Rolling Thunder – Henry Fillmore
Royal Decree – William English
Samson – Karl King
Screamer – Fred Jewell
Standard of St. George – Kenneth Alford
Tent City – William English
Tripoli Temple – Charles Barnhouse
Trombone Section – Paris Chambers
Trooper's Tribunal – Henry Fillmore
Under the Double Eagle – Joseph Wagner

Viking- Karl King
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford
Woody Van's – Karl King
LESS DIFFICULT
America First – Frank Losey
American Legion – Charles Parker
American Red Cross – Louis Panella
Americans We – Henry Fillmore
Big Four – Karl King
Billboard – John Klohr
Black Jack – Fred Huffer
Bombasto – O.R. Farrar
British Eighth – Zo Elliott
Brooke's Chicago Marine Band – Roland Seitz
Chicago World's Fair – Carl Mader
Columbian – Karl King
Crosley – Henry Fillmore
Days of Glory – John Cacavas
Drum Major – J.S. Taylor
E Pluribus Unum – Fred Jewell
Gloria – Frank Losey
Glorious America – Karl King
Grandioso – Roland Seitz
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
Henderson Field – Karl King
Home Town Boy – Karl King
Imperial – Karl King
Independentia – R.B. Hall
Invercargill – Alex Lithgow
Kiefer's Special – William Kiefer
Klaxon – Henry Fillmore
Little Champ – Ted Mesang
Lt. Commander – Karl King
Men in Gray – N.K. Brahmstedt
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
New Colonial – R.B. Hall
Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
On the Square – Frank Panella
Our Glorious Emblem – Joseph DeLuca
Parade of the Champions – Paul Yoder
Peacemaker – Karl King
Queen City – W.H. Boorn
Royal Bridesmaid – John Casto
Salute to Washington – William Kiefer
Sells-Floto Triumphal – Karl King
Shriner's Parade – Joseph DeLuca

St. Julien – A.W. Hughes
Strategic Air Command – Clifton Williams
Them Basses – G.H. Huffine
Trombone King – Karl King
United Nations – Karl King
University of North Dakota – Karl King
Zacatecas – Genaro Codina

ROSE, VAL

Aces of the Air – Karl King
American Legion – Charles Parker
Attorney General – Karl King
Battle Royal – Fred Jewell
Carrollton – Karl King
Colossus of Columbia – Russell Alexander
Crimson Flush – Russell Alexander
Eagle Squadron – Kenneth Alford
Emblem of Freedom – Karl King
From Tropic to Tropic – Russell Alexander
Gloria – Frank Losey
Golden Bear – J.J. Richards
Great Little Army – Kenneth Alford
In Storm & Sunshine – Charles Heed
Invictus – Karl King
Joyce's 71st New York Regiment – Boyer/Lake
Lt. Commander – Karl King
Melody Shop – Karl King
Mighty Mite – Ted Mesang
Olympia Hippodrome – Russell Alexander
Rifle Regiment – John P. Sousa
Screamer – Fred Jewell
The Southerner – Russell Alexander
True Blue – Karl King
Voice of the Guns – Kenneth Alford

BENEFITS OF PROGRAMMING MARCH LITERATURE

- A great format for teaching – contains four basic musical components related to style and balance – bass line/after beat pulse, countermelody, harmonic line to melody, melody
- Good for the development of embouchure and tonality
- Great from the standpoint of finger dexterity and technique – marches are full of scales

PLAYING ON THE FIELD

“I had only one style of teaching and rehearsing music, whether it be for concert or marching band. This included a clear and identifiable band sound achieved by the balance and blend of individual voices within the brass and woodwind choirs, as well as the percussion ensemble. Primary concern was always a characteristic band sound, not volume.”

Eldon Janzen

- Marching band is a concert band on the field – playing contest on the football field
- Correct air support is the number one key to playing a wind instrument. Don’t confuse volume with intensity. The sound must be intense, but controlled – not just loud. The most immature sounds are caused by not putting enough air in the instrument.
- Air must remain consistent to the end of every note.

- You want to achieve the same ensemble sound marching as standing and playing.
- There is absolutely no difference between playing fundamentals in marching and concert bands.
- Sound must never be forced – each instrument must always produce a characteristic sound.
- Fundamental core of ensemble sound must always remain the priority.

MARCH STYLE

- Style involves the modification of printed notes – correct march style is achieved through 1) note weights and 2) note lengths
- All notes are not the same – energy and drive is achieved from an emphasis on the main notes of a phrase – the bigger the note, the more weight it receives
- The whole note is generally the biggest sound (more push, air, volume) – the quicker the notes, the lighter you play – EXAMPLE: basketball, volleyball, tennis ball
- Note weights are generally associated with air as opposed to articulation – they should be approached with a lifted style
- Fast notes with too much weight result in the sound experience of a jackhammer.
During his tenure at Longview High School, Pete Kunkel neither completely slurred or articulated fast technique,

but instead utilized “tongue 2, slur 2” to achieve clarity and avoid edge to the sound. He always used a “D” articulation syllable as opposed to a “T.”

- William Revelli (University of Michigan) compares notes weights to how we speak using the term inflection – how we speak and stress syllables makes the spoken word come alive – this is also true in music.
- Correct note length in marches – I try to avoid the word short, instead using the term detached. There should be space between the notes, but retaining enough length for a body of sound on each note.
- It is possible to think of note lengths for detached style in fractions:
 - 1) leave off $\frac{1}{4}$ of the note value for appropriate length
 - 2) $\frac{4}{5}$ sound with $\frac{1}{5}$ silence between notesToo much space between notes results in a very choppy sound.
- Full value notes are typically not played unless within a sustained passage of music – trios are good examples. During more sustained approach – no breath on the bar lines, push through the phrase, and don’t cheat the air at the end of the phrase.
- Each strain of a march may require a different approach to style. It is possible to have two styles (sustained melody with detached pulse) present at the same time.

OTHER MUSICAL CONSIDERATIONS

- Make certain to tune your flutes – bad flute intonation quickly distracts from the overall band sound.
- You must play with total rhythmic accuracy. Be aware of 3:1 and 2:1 note ratios. When playing four consecutive eighth notes, make certain the last two are not too close together.
- When playing four consecutive notes of the same value, make sure the final note is always lifted – not clipped.
- Use of dynamics is extremely important. Nothing is more boring than a single volume band for eight minutes.
- In regard to balance, don't cover moving lines with long sounds.
- It is a positive thing to hear the woodwind section on the field.
- Consider rewriting French Horn parts in quickstep marches. You have snare drums covering the after beats. Utilize the horns to double euphoniums or lower trumpet harmonic parts as appropriate.
With the Aggie Band, I rewrite every horn part in standard marches.

MUSIC PROGRAMMING ADDITIONAL THOUGHTS

Military marching is a style – it is an option to branch out musically as long as the formations and marching remain in the military scheme.

Dee Hood – Pine Tree High School in the 1970's & 1980's
Moorside March, Firebird, Beethoven #9

Larry Ward – Kingwood & Atascocita High Schools
Victory at Sea, Light Cavalry Overture, Armed Forces Salute

At Texas A&M, we include a traditional march in every halftime, but have used the following with great success:

Ballad of the Green Berets
Battle Hymn of the Republic
Cathedral Chorus (Slavonic Folk Suite)
God Bless America
Great Gate of Kiev (Pictures at an Exhibition)
Hill Country Theme
March America (My Country Tis of Thee)
March from "1941"
March from "Midway"
Marche Slave
Parade of the Charioteers (Ben Hur)
Service Medley
The Sinfonians
Theme from Patton
When Johnny Comes Marching Home
Yellow Rose of Texas

Many of the above were custom arrangements that I did specifically for the Aggie Band to compliment our instrumentation and marching style.

DRILL DESIGN

We have progressed a long way from the days of back and forth down the field playing only to the end zones. In the beginning of 6 to 5 style, there tended to be little connection between the music and the drill – it was almost like watching a band in a parade.

Today, we recognize that the drill should always fit the music. The music dictates the drill and should include formations that compliment moments in the music. You will have impact moments, as well as quieter moments. As we have a mission to entertain, you must consider the audience in your drill design.

DRILL DESIGN BASICS

- Never design a drill that compromises the playing of your band – incorporate some interesting things, but consistency of band sound is always the most important factor.
- Percussion should remain close to the middle of formations – the closer to the low brass and low woodwinds, the better.
- Try to keep the brass and percussion centered, spreading the woodwinds out on the ends.
- Try to keep instrumental sections together as much as possible – mixing instrumentation for the sake of a formation is not smart. Considering charting your drill in colored pencils to assist in keeping track of instrumentation. Always keep in mind the position of your stronger players.

- Always keep in mind what direction horns are facing from an acoustical standpoint. Multi directional movements tend to have a detrimental impact on ensemble sound.
- The smaller the band, the more important to keep everything close together – both for security and ensemble sound. Block band drills tend to provide greater security for smaller bands, while larger bands lend themselves more to company front marching.
- When playing marches that require a great deal of technique, try to keep the band close together.
- Use the hash marks for reference at all times. Consider their importance when designing your drill.

DRILL DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

- Avoid chopping up the music when designing your drill (play a strain – 8 counts of drums – another strain – 16 counts of drums – followed by another march in a totally different key). The drill should fit the music – not vice versa.
- 6 to 5 makes it difficult to work with musical phrases at times, but it can be done through well crafted drill design.
- Begin and end facing the stands – let the audience hear the band. Consider facing the stands at impact moments.
- Sudden change in the music = sudden change in the drill.

- For opening fanfares – 2-step side to side/4-step front to back interval is good for sound production.
- Experiment with concert type formations.
- A good technique for designing a drill is determining where you want players at the end and work your way backwards.
- Marching to the backfield (especially empty stands at marching contest) produces a great sound and allows your players to open up the sound.
- Consider featuring a group, such as the woodwinds, during your drill. If you do, make sure you design a drill that has them out front.
- Try never to cross the 50-yard line twice in the same formation – always look for a way to change the picture.
- Two approaches to drill – you only have these choices – go somewhere, then someplace different OR go somewhere and come back to the same place (not as effective)
- Symmetry tends to be very pleasing to the eye – audience can easily relate.
- Two types of movement in drill – instantaneous and sequential. Instantaneous provides a quick change in patterns and tends to be more exciting. Flanks tend to be more effective than columns. You have to be very careful with columns due to the individual sounds they tend to project. To the rears tend to be more effective than

countermarches. You might consider flanks and to the rears if you do not always want to wait for something to develop. Instantaneous movement also tends to better keep instruments all facing in the same direction.

- Keeping in mind the fundamental changes of direction, your major choices in drill design or variation of interval by rank, file, or individual.
- With the Aggie Band, we have found that the use of short silence within a drill is a very effective drill design option.

Always three places that are “shock and awe” when designing a drill - something that grabs attention.

Pete Kunkel

In the 1980's, Pete Kunkel introduced gate turns into his drills at Longview High School. I found them to be a great addition, proving to very effective in drill design.

In the 1990's, several schools began adding percussion features to their military drills, feeling it important to the development of their percussion sections. It is important to consider the role of auxiliaries (percussion, twirlers, flags) in your drill design. This is very much an individual decision.

BENEFITS OF MILITARY MARCHING

Coffman, James

Tremendous educational teaching format of the traditional march
Detail oriented – precision – exactness – attention to detail – provides for great accountability – esprit de corps providing lessons for life

Durham, Harvey

Educationally sound
Tradition
Set up to encourage a disciplined, precise atmosphere

Grant, Neil

Heritage and history of the military bands as related to the service bands
Marches build players – especially in areas lacking in private lessons
Esprit de corps – pride and dignity – want to perform well – determined to commit
(word not used much these days)

Hagood, Jim

Appealing - if done well, the audience will react
March literature – advantageous for woodwinds – builds technique
Presents all types of educational opportunities – helps in the event you do not have a private lesson program to build individual players

Janzen, Eldon

It has never lost its appeal, simply because the viewing public recognizes what they hear in march music and discriminate and appreciate something as simple as straight lines, constant movement, and interesting patterns

Kunkel, Pete

Students worked hard with a different attitude than today's marching band competitions
6 to 5 is more of how people walk

Johnson, Barry

Medium of the march does the fundamental teaching for you
Woodwind parts build better musicians
Discipline – “one for all”
Students work hard and develop a great deal of pride

Lawler, Don

Heritage – important to know where we came from
Helps develop a great understanding of pulse and rhythm

Rose, Val

Tradition

Our heritage

March music originally written for moving people

Ward, Larry

Holds students highly accountable for the way they play – accept nothing less than their best

Tradition – style is very appealing and entertaining to the crowd - it's our heritage

All students doing the same thing – high sense of discipline is required – very unforgiving style, easy to see flaws

Students develop confidence because they have to function very independently

Teaches strong fundamental concepts

TEACHING & GENERAL COMMENTS

- Bands are a reflection of their director
- You must always remember that there is more than one way to do things
- Teaching is communication. You provide the correct information, but they have to be listening. You must hold students accountable for doing exactly what you have told them to do – if not, stop and correct it, otherwise it becomes accepted.
- Music is 2/3 of a contest rating. Make sure your students individually pass off their music. You will find things you missed in full rehearsal. It also provides you an opportunity to edit parts for individuals.
- The better you play the music, the easier it is to march. If you can't play the music and you add the marching, you have just doubled the obstacles. Stay in the rehearsal hall and get the music memorized before you go outside and begin marching.

- Take full advantage of sectionals – it is easier to discover and identify solutions with fewer players. Sectionals can be arranged by instruments groups or by similar parts within a march.
- A band should play something every day – even if a day to learn drill.
- Consider starting all rehearsals with exercises that emphasize fundamentals, both playing and marching. Scales, long tones, and chorales are a great way to progress to musical passages that need attention. A fundamental block is a great way to begin marching.
- Bring in those with no prior marching experience prior to everyone else for fundamental instructions. Consider using instrumental section squads with experienced upperclassmen to teach the new marchers. The upperclassmen should pass off all fundamentals to a director prior to providing any instruction.
During his tenure at Longview High School, Pete Kunkel took time out of full rehearsals one day a week (usually Thursdays) and let the seniors refine fundamentals. He monitored from the sideline.
- When you see or hear something wrong in a rehearsal, correct it immediately – not two weeks later.
- The larger the band, the more that intonation problems are hidden. In smaller marching bands, intonation is generally a negating issue and must be constantly addressed.

- The three important areas of military marching are stride, carriage, and execution. (from Neil Grant)
- Record your marching music indoors and work with the recording outside over an amplified system. This allows everyone to focus solely on the marching in the beginning.
- Rehearse your drill in musical segments. If planned correctly, there is no need to run the full drill more than once or twice most days – if at all.
- Mark changes of direction (turns/assignments) in the music. Learn turns with the music as opposed to counts. It is difficult to count, play, and march at the same time. Eliminate the counting. Turns coordinated with the music also allow for the elimination of whistle commands, which can become distracting if overused.
- Drill sheets are of great assistance with eligibility. They can be kept in a notebook and pulled out and immediately handed to an alternate if needed.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Eldon Janzen
Larry Ward
Pete Kunkel
James Coffman
Barry Johnson
Don Lawler
Neil Grant
Jim Hagood
Val Rose
Harvey Durham
Jerry Payne

Dr. Timothy Rhea is Director of Bands & Music Activities at Texas A&M University. Beginning his twenty-second year at Texas A&M, he serves as administrative head of the Music Activities Department (1300 students), conducts the University Wind Symphony, and serves as Director of the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band. He holds degrees in Music Education and Conducting from the University of Arkansas, Texas Tech University, and the University of Houston.

Under his direction, the TAMU Wind Symphony has performed at the Texas Music Educators Association Convention (four times with a fifth appearance scheduled for February of 2015), the Midwest International Band & Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, the Western International Band Clinic in Seattle, the American Bandmasters Association Convention, the College Band Directors National Association (twice), the Meyerson Symphony Center in Dallas, and Carnegie Hall in New York. Five European tours have included performances in England, Ireland, Germany, Austria, Italy, and the Czech Republic. Through Mark Records, the TAMU Wind Symphony has released internationally more than twenty recordings conducted by Dr. Rhea.

Having been associated with the Fightin' Texas Aggie Band since 1993, Dr. Rhea continues to be active in overseeing all performances associated with this 440-member marching band. The Aggie Band is a complete team effort with Lt. Colonel Jay Brewer and Travis Almany also serving as directors.

Dr. Rhea has produced more than 200 arrangements, compositions, and editions for both concert and marching bands, with almost 50 publications. He was recently elected Vice President of the American Bandmasters Association and continues to serve on the Board of Directors of the John Philip Sousa Foundation. Dr. Rhea serves as a conductor, clinician, and adjudicator throughout the nation.

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