

USING MARCHES TO TEACH FUNDAMENTALS

One advantage that military style marching bands have is not only growing stout brass players, but also great woodwind players during marching season. The new UIL judging format has forced all bands to quit ignoring their woodwinds and to begin giving them more important musical parts in their shows. Of course, good directors were already doing this. However, I still believe that military bands have a great advantage because of the technical demands built into most marches. Many military groups have even begun to feature percussion!

Marches, by their very nature, require good fundamental command of major and minor scales, arpeggios, and control in all ranges. Balance, blend, intonation, and articulation are critical elements also. Precision in playing a march is almost a given. A well chosen march should include good variation in style, contrast in dynamics and a feature or two. Of course the discipline of memorizing for marching season is a great learning tool to really nail down fundamentals because of the sheer drill involved.

These are some of my favorites:

Queen City (Boorn) – Good ranges. Hits the ground extremely well. Technically challenging, but reachable by most groups.

Mighty Mite (Mesang) – Good minor key. Great low brass sounds. More technically challenging for upper woodwinds.

Henderson Field, Peacemaker, Trombone King (King) – Basically the same formula with each getting a bit more difficult.

Olympia Hippodrome – This will grow your brass players and teach great march style.

Big Four (King) – Great, solid (yet forgiving) march.

Lieutenant Commander - (King) – Solid top half with a wonderful trio.

The following marches will add a bit of contrast, spice or to showcase certain sections of the band:

Americans We (Fillmore)

Them Basses, Zacatecas, Under the Double Eagle – great tuba parts

Melody Shop (King)

The Drum Major (Taylor)

Our United States

Chicago World's Fair Centennial Celebration 1933

Solid developing band marches (all by Karl King):

General Lee (Great for developing low brass)

General Grant

Monterey

Miss Liberty

Valley Forge