

A RHYTHM A WEEK

for Band

52 Rhythm Units in Unison using Major and Minor Scales

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INTRODUCTION

To teach our students to play instruments well, we must analyze the necessary skills and present them in a methodical way. We are indeed fortunate to have many fine method books to use. Additional resources such as *Teaching Wind and Percussion Instruments: A Course of Study* (MENC, 1991) provide excellent models of what skills should be taught and when to teach them. However, many middle school and junior high school teachers spend very little time teaching students technical skills. Instead, they often neglect the teaching of technique, mistakenly thinking that they don't have time because of the rehearsal time necessary to learn concert music.

This point of view is misleading. We should carefully consider the relationships between the two basic segments of class time—teaching and rehearsal. Skills should be *taught* during the teaching time and *applied* during rehearsal. Rhythms, scales and tone quality are best taught to the entire class at the same time, using a unison approach in a book that proceeds sequentially. The more students learn during the teaching time, the less time is needed for rehearsal. The teacher who thinks there is not enough time to teach skills because rehearsal takes so much time is trying to re-teach skills that should have already been learned. Usually, this process is frustrating, not only for the teacher, but also for the more advanced students. Also, the process of repeated drill on sections of the concert music takes away some of the aesthetic enjoyment that both the teacher and the students should feel.

Teachers who invest time in teaching technical skills in a systematic way find that rehearsals are more enjoyable and that significantly less time is needed to learn the music. Instead of having to fix problems, they prevent them. They find that ten minutes of quality teaching time will eliminate at least twenty minutes needed for rehearsal.

TEACHING SUGGESTIONS

Consider organizing your class time into a routine such as the following:

Warm-up and tuning

Teaching

Scales

Rhythms

Other technical skills

Rehearsal of concert music

Write the routine on the board and encourage students to put their music in order as soon as they come into the room. *A Rhythm a Week* should be used as part of the teaching time specifically devoted to the teaching of rhythms.

It's a good idea to think through the approximate amount of time you intend to spend on teaching and on rehearsal. Generally, the time distribution changes as students progress. In a beginning class, you might devote almost all of the time to the teaching of technique. During the second and third years, a distribution of approximately 50% teaching and 50% rehearsal is the most effective. By high school, rehearsal of concert music will take most of the class time.

UNIT 1

Practice Rhythms

1. 2. 3. 4.

Scale Rhythms

C
Bb*
Eb
F
B.C.

*Tenor Saxophone *Opt. 8^{va}* (*Opt. 8^{va}* means you may play the exercise an octave higher).