

Music Repertoire Project

Pieces for Listening

1. *Veni Sponsa Christi* – Chant, 0:22 &
Veni Sponsa Christi by Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina, Live Performance at
Libby Gardner Concert Hall – November 9, 2006, 3:23

Played as a pair, these two pieces serve a double purpose. *Veni Sponsa Christi* is a wonderful example of chant and can be studied alone. Adding the Palestrina not only shows historical progression of Medieval to Renaissance music, but also demonstrates how chants were used in masses.

2. *This Marriage* by Eric Whitacre, Live Performance at Libby Gardner Concert Hall
– November 9, 2006, 4:04

This piece is an excellent example of 20th century choral music. It is especially effective as a contrast to the previous piece because it highlights the progress choral music has made over hundreds of years while demonstrating that there are many similarities between the two. I like the comparison because it shows how far choral music has come while still retaining the characteristic timbre and overall concept.

3. Brindisi from *La Traviata* by Giuseppe Verdi, Pavarotti Plus, 3:27

An excellent example of vocal music, this wonderful example of virtuosic singing exhibits both the soloist and the chorus from an opera. No listening list is complete without an opera and this is an exciting introduction to such a rich art form. This piece is also a great example of vocal music compared to the previous choral music.

4. Movement 1 from *Cello Suite No. 1* by Johann Sebastian Bach

Bach's solo suites are excellent examples of instrumental solo work. This particular piece is also a fabulous introduction to basic music theory as it is a set of arpeggios that outlines a basic chord progression very clearly.

5. Movement 4 from *Octet in Eb, op. 103* by Ludwig van Beethoven, Beethoven:
Septet; Rondino; Octet, 3:33

While the last piece demonstrated solo instrumental music, this piece is a perfect example of chamber instrumental music. The Octet is a typical example of Classical Era Music and is also a good introduction to woodwind instruments for the beginning music student.

6. Nimrod from *Enigma Variations* by Edward Elgar, Enigma Variations/Introduction
& Allegro, 4:14

Since I've been progressing historically, I thought it was important to add a lush Romantic Era piece to the list. Not only is this a great example of dynamics, but it's also an introduction to theme and variations when played in the whole set. Although not a typical example of theme and variations, it can be used as an approachable introduction.

7. Overture to *Candide* by Leonard Bernstein, Bernstein Conducts *Candide*, 4:31

This piece is primarily on the list because of the mixed meter Bernstein employs, but can also be used to demonstrate the full orchestral sound. The jazzy solos that pass from instrument to instrument introduce call and response as well as exhibiting most of the brass instruments.

8. *You Don't Know Me* by Cindy Walker, Ray Charles: Genius Loves Company, 3:57

The outstanding jazz rendition of this piece by Ray Charles and Diana Krall is enjoyable to listen to while still presenting many of the important characteristics of jazz and popular music. I think this is an especially good choice for a listening list because it is a jazz cover of popular music and allows both to be explored simultaneously.

9. *Penny Lane* by The Beatles, *Magical Mystery Tour*, 3:03

Rock music should never be ignored by musicians, especially particularly influential groups like The Beatles. Music is a reflection of culture, and this is a reflection of a specific time in history: one where music changed forever. The students will enjoy it immensely and the teacher gets the opportunity to draw a comparison to how important this music was in changing history: just like its Classical predecessors.

10. Main Title/Rebel Blockade Runner from *Star Wars IV: A New Hope* by John Williams, *Star Wars: Episode IV - A New Hope*, 2:14

Film music is being heralded by many music critics as the Classical music of today, and as such should not be neglected. Unarguably one of the great masters of film music, this piece will be accepted by the students enthusiastically. Little do they suspect that this piece is a great introduction to musical form as well as another chance to emphasize that as culturally important as *Star Wars* is today, so was Classical music in its day.

Pieces for Performance

1. *Tritsch Tratsch Polka* by Johann Strauss Jr. and arranged by Alfred Reed, C.L. Barnhouse Inc.

No wind library is complete without transcriptions as they are one of the founding pillars of band music. Although there are many typical transcriptions, I'm fond of this one because it exposes band members to a Viennese Waltz, an experience they don't get from band music. This is second or third band level piece.

2. *The Gathering of the Ranks at Hebron* by David Holsinger, TRN Music Publication Co.

David Holsinger writes extremely rhythmic pieces that are very exciting. This is a great piece to work on if your group is struggling with rhythm or listening to each other. Ordinarily these types of pieces can be tedious but Holsinger writes excellent individual parts so the students will be excited to rehearse it. This is a second or third band piece.

3. *Irish Tune from County Derry* by Percy Grainger, Carl Fischer LLC

Not only is *Irish Tune* an excellent example of a slow piece (something that band students don't experience often enough), but it also introduces the students to folk music. This could be used in tandem with a folk unit in music history or just by itself to enrich their musical vocabulary. Add in the fact that Grainger is one of the standard composers for wind music and it's obvious why this is one of my favorite pieces.

4. *Blue Shades* by Frank Ticheli, Manhattan Beach Music

Another opportunity band kids don't get often enough is to play jazz music. Although not pure jazz, this piece incorporates many jazz elements and offers the chance to showcase a particularly good jazz soloist. Although the part is written for jazz clarinet, it could easily be written or improvised for any willing jazz musician. This piece is meant for the advanced group.

5. *Free Lance March* by John Philip Sousa, Theodore Presser Co.

No band student should go through three years without playing some sort of a march, and NEVER six years. Sousa was one of the founding fathers of band music and should be played by all bands proudly. This is a great intermediate high school group march.

6. *American Salute* by Morton Gould, Alfred Publishing Co.

A great introduction to Civil War popular music, this band piece is challenging and is definitely for the top group. (Four bassoons!!! Who in their right mind writes for four bassoons?) Morton Gould was a master at orchestration and his pieces are perfectly suited for stretching wind players' limits.

7. *Second Suite in F* by Gustav Holst, Boosey & Hawkes

This piece is an absolute essential for any wind library and should be played regularly in rotation with Holst's *First Suite* and Vaughan William's *Folk Song Suite*. It is demanding but can be managed by an advanced ensemble.

8. *High Flight* by Stephen Bulla, Curnow Music Press

Written for a trumpet trio, this is a well-written showcase piece. It works

well on a pops concert but could easily be fit into a standard program or a showcase night. While the trumpet parts are difficult, they are not impossible and could be played by soloists from the advanced band or surrounding private teachers. The accompaniment is fairly simple and so could be played by the intermediate or advanced high school ensemble.

9. *Russian Christmas Music* by Alfred Reed, Sam Fox Inc.

While there are many crummy arrangements of Christmas music available, this piece has become a band staple for many reasons. It features not American but Russian celebratory music and is definitely programmatic. It's definitely for the advanced band but will give each section a chance to shine. It has one of the biggest endings possible and is the perfect way to end a concert.

10. *Olympic Fanfare and Theme* by John Williams and arranged by James Curnow, Warner Tamerlane Pub.

Every list needs a piece that the students will beg to play, and this is it. Although it's a bit on the poppy side, it's a well-known piece and very exciting to play. It's also challenging and well-written so it will make your group sound good while improving them.

Summary

Although it's frustrating compiling any list of performing pieces for wind groups, I must admit that finding a variety of pieces for high school is considerably easier than doing the same for junior high. I was able to use more 'Classical' music on my listening list because I could represent jazz and international/folk music much better through high school music. Wind music is still dismally low on variety, employing far too many pieces that sound the same and have little depth to them, but luckily, the more advanced you get, the better music is discovered. I think my listening list is okay as far as variety is concerned but I didn't like using a live performance. When I heard it, I knew it had to be on my next list because it's so perfectly suited for beginners. I also didn't like that I couldn't really find any holiday music except Christmas, and really bad arrangements at that. Wind music covers folk music well because of its English roots, but is sadly lacking in seasonal music. I think if I were to do it again I'd also include something like *Variations on a Korean Folk Song* because it includes international music, which I didn't realize how much I lacked until I examined my list.