

# National Catholic Band Association

Established 1953

[www.catholicbands.org](http://www.catholicbands.org)

NCBA Newsletter | September 2021

**So will I give you thanks with music.**

(Psalm 72:22)

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

**“Oh, the things you can think up if you only try.”**

One of my many mentors that I encountered along the way gave me a piece of advice. Find out what is possible and try to do it. Of course, all things are not possible, especially in these COVID times. We are in a period that requires us to rethink what we do and how we do it. Creativity is needed more than ever. We need to set about finding out what is possible and then find a way to do it. When considering options, consider them all, some are good, some are bad, some are better or worse than others. Even the bad ideas can morph and generate into something good. But know that we do have options. My buddy Dr. Suess says “Think left and think right and think low and think high. Oh, the things you can think up if you only try.” With every passing day, we move closer to getting back to normal. However, the new normal will hopefully benefit from our new creativity, so get to thinkin’!

How did you cope? What changes did you make? What were your creative solutions? We can all learn by sharing. Send your ideas along to our newsletter editor Larry Stoffel at [stoffel@csun.edu](mailto:stoffel@csun.edu).

I will be attending the Midwest Conference in Chicago December 15–18. Let me know if you'll be in town. I'd love to meet you.

Stay safe.

— **George Pinchock** | President, NCBA

**It's Time to Renew Your Membership in the NCBA. See the Back Page of this Newsletter.**

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### IMPROVING TONE QUALITY OF THE ENSEMBLE

by **Chip De Stefano**

<http://www.mccrackenband.com/resources/articles/>

## POTENTIAL MATERIALS FOR ENSEMBLE WARMUP

Tim Loest's **Warmups and Beyond**

<https://www.fjhmusic.com/band/bb203.htm>

David Newell's **Bach and Before**

<https://kjos.com/band/technique/bach-and-before-for-band/bach-and-before-for-band-book-1.html>

Ed Lisk's **The Creative Director: Alternative Rehearsal Techniques**

[https://creativedirectorseries.org/The\\_Creative\\_Director\\_Series.html](https://creativedirectorseries.org/The_Creative_Director_Series.html)

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## **CHOOSING THE RIGHT CHORALE FOR THE RIGHT TIME**

**Begin with simple chorales to allow students to focus on tone, pitch, balance and blend**

- Homophonic
- Key Signatures the students are familiar and comfortable with
- Very few, if any, accidentals

**As the students' skills and sound develop, gradually increase the difficulty**

- Increased independence of parts
- Suspensions and passing tones
- Minor Keys (Young Bands do not have enough opportunities to play in minor keys!)
- More accidentals, more complex harmonic structure

**Change chorales as often as reasonable**

- Every 3–6 weeks or parallel with the band's performance schedule.
- Once you reach a point of "diminishing returns" the students are better off working the same concepts on different material
- Choose a variety of major and minor keys for the chorale rotation
- If students are having difficulty (particularly with pitch) with certain repertoire, choose a chorale in the same key as the problem work.

**Rehearse the chorale with as much variety as possible. Keep it interesting for the students so they stay engaged!**

- Variety of tempos, dynamics and articulation
- Subdivided in 8<sup>ths</sup> & 16<sup>ths</sup>
- "Bopped"
- Brass on mouthpieces
- Singing
- Backwards
- etc...

## **GROUP BREATHING EXERCISES**

Do a variety of breathing exercises every day!

### *Exercise #1*

1. Mouth in the shape of "Whoa"
2. "Look at your hand"
3. Hand/arm serves as gauge for the amount of air in lungs.
4. All the way Out = lungs empty
5. All the way In = lungs completely full
6. Demonstrate what a full breath sounds like
7. No whistling
8. No added resistance from lips and tongue
9. One easy breath in. One easy breath out. Relax.
10. Play the chorale using this type of breath

### *Exercise #2*

Similar to Exercise #1 (Mouth shape, hand as gauge)

1. Three breaths in, three breaths out, relax
2. Play the chorale, beginning with three breaths in

### *Exercise #3*

Similar to Exercise #1 (Mouth shape, hand as gauge)

1. Use opposite hand to create resistance
2. Straighten hand, perpendicular to face
3. Nose touching second knuckle of first finger
4. Side of hand touching center of lips
5. One easy breath in. One easy breath out. Relax.
6. Follow with Exercise #1.

### *Exercise #4*

1. Empty lungs
2. Place lips against back of hand creating suction
3. Inhale
4. “Pop” hand away from face, filling lungs instantly. Relax.

Additional resource: **The Breathing Gym** by Patrick Sheridan and Sam Pilafian

<https://www.focus-on-music.com/products/the-breathing-gym-book-only>

## **SUBDIVISION**

In addition to providing a strong rhythmic foundation, rehearsing the chorale subdivided can have a positive impact on tone quality

- Keep the air moving, and the 16<sup>th</sup> “fat.”

## **BRASS ON MOUTHPIECES**

Buzzing the mouthpiece connects the brain to the music.

- *Look* for a “fat” buzz, with as much lip vibrating as possible.

## **INNER HEARING**

### *Exercise #1*

1. Students press “record” in their brain.
2. Conductor Claps a simple 4 or 5 note rhythm.
3. Students press “play” in their brain and hear the clapping rhythm in their head exactly as it was performed.
4. Repeat with different rhythm.

### *Exercise #2*

1. In absolute silence, students — listening to their imagination — hear the chorale in their head exactly as they want it to sound:
  - “The most beautiful sound.”
  - Perfect intonation, attacks, and phrasing
2. Students perform the chorale while hearing the perfect performance in their head.

This outstanding “Improving Tone Quality of the Ensemble” outline is from our special guest contributor, **Chip De Stefano**, who received both his Bachelor of Music in Trombone Performance and Master of Music Education Degrees from Northwestern University. While at Northwestern, he studied conducting with John P. Paynter, Steve Peterson, and Don Owens, trombone with Frank Crisafulli and Art Linsner, and music education with Bennett Reimer, Donald Casey, Jim Kjelland and Peter Webster. Mr. De Stefano is currently in his 18th year as Director of Bands at McCracken Middle School in Skokie, Illinois. Under his direction, the McCracken Middle School Symphonic Band has received first division ratings at all district and state organization contests of the Illinois Grade School Music Association and has made multiple appearances at the Illinois Music Education Association All-State Conference, University of Illinois Superstate Concert Band Festival, and NAFME North Central Division Conference. In 2006 and 2013 the Symphonic Band received an invitation to present at concert at The Midwest Clinic International Band & Orchestra Conference. In the Spring of 2007, the John Philip Sousa Foundation awarded the McCracken Symphonic Band the prestigious Sudler Silver Cup.

### HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BANDS STOMP AT NEBRASKA STATE FAIR

by Brandon Summers

(reprinted with permission from Grand Island Independent)

[https://theindependent.com/news/local/high-school-marching-bands-stomp-at-nebraska-state-fair/article\\_074fa362-0a10-11ec-8f3d-bf082b1ce270.html](https://theindependent.com/news/local/high-school-marching-bands-stomp-at-nebraska-state-fair/article_074fa362-0a10-11ec-8f3d-bf082b1ce270.html)

Marching bands from high schools across the state are bringing their talents and energies to the Nebraska State Fair throughout its 11-day schedule. The **Bishop Neumann Catholic Cavaliers** from Wahoo (NE) were the first to perform Monday. Director **Bill Kellett** called it a great honor.

"We've had parents and grandparents come out and watch us, and it's always great to have a chance to come out to Grand Island and enjoy the fair," Kellett said. Aside from state competitions, the band does not get to travel the state much. The different venue Monday provided a unique challenge for the school's 32 marching band students, Kellett said.

"It's different than what we do on the marching field, when we do our shows," he said. "It's good fundamental practice for marching skills and gives us a chance to get out and play." Marching band offers the best of two activities, Kellett explained. "It combines both the artistic side of music and the physical side of sports," he said. "It also is a great chance for people to come out and see the band perform, and really appreciate that."



Bishop Neumann Catholic Cavaliers practice their routine early in the morning before being the first of several high school marching bands to perform at the Nebraska State Fair.

### SERRA BAND SHOW HAS ROMANTIC, SPANISH FLAVOR

by Bonnijean Cooney Adams

(reprinted with permission from Bonnijean Cooney Adams and The Tube City Almanac)

<http://almanac.tubecityonline.com/almanac/?e=2425>



Band director Jesse Bush (on tower) and color guard director Susan Frank supervise Serra Marching Band members during the first week of camp.

matador portrayal. And while there is a bullfight at the climax of the show, Bush said he hopes the students and audience view it as more of a love story than a Spanish-themed show. Senior flute soloist Paige Rock is the beautiful lady in the crowd who catches the matador's attention. As the heroine of the story, she begs the matador to spare the bull's life. Rock said she likes the music and use of marching band members to tell a story.

Bush said Serra Catholic grads Natalie Makovics and Jackie Moon are painting backdrops and guard flags. Serra history teacher Ryan Raible is the band's drill writer, a talent he shares with neighboring McKeesport Area High School Marching Band.

"After last season, I'm excited for our students to experience a normal band season with parades, away games, band festivals and actually being able to watch other high school bands," Bush said. "We will be marching at Kennywood on Saturday, Aug. 21.

Surprises and finishing touches still were being tweaked as **Serra Catholic High School's** (McKeesport, PA) marching band students and adult personnel completed the first week of camp for 'El Matador.' "This year's show is about a matador who falls in love with a beautiful lady in the crowd," band director **Jesse Bush** said. "There is of course a bullfight in the show, and hopefully a really awesome ending that I don't want to spoil... The music is all original," Bush said. "It is written and arranged by Randall D. Standridge. The music is fantastic!"

Drum major Joe Crossen, in addition to his musical talents, is tasked with bringing the story of the matador to life. Crossen said he does not have acting experience, but will use props and accessories to assist in his



Learning drills and music, Serra Marching Band students prepare for their competition show, "El Matador."

*It's been 45 years since the...*

**1976 N.C.B.A. Annual Conference  
Oak Brook, Illinois  
Charles Winking, President**

# NATIONAL CATHOLIC BANDMASTERS' ASSOCIATION

1976  
ANNUAL CONFERENCE

UNISON VOICES  
TOWARD A MORE MU-SI-CAL BAND!

B<sup>b</sup> TRUMPET I

B<sup>b</sup> TRUMPET II

TROMBONE I

TROMBONE II

TIMPANI D-A

President:

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Quincy College  
Quincy, Ill. 62301

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Notre Dame, IN 46556

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Bishop Luers High School  
Fort Wayne, IN 46816

August 5, 6, and 7  
Sheraton Oak Brook  
Oak Brook, Illinois



## CATHOLIC IDENTITY



Orazio Gentileschi (1563–1639)

### Our Musical Saints: St. Cecilia

This saint, so often glorified in the fine arts and in poetry, is one of the most venerated martyrs of Christian antiquity.

The oldest historical account of St. Cecilia is found in the “Martyrologium Hieronymianum”; from this it is evident that her feast was celebrated in the Roman Church in the fourth century. Cecilia, a virgin of a senatorial family and a Christian from her infancy, was given in marriage by her parents to a noble pagan youth Valerianus. When, after the celebration of the marriage, the couple had retired to the wedding-chamber, Cecilia told Valerianus that she was betrothed to an angel who jealously guarded her body; therefore Valerianus must take care not to violate her virginity. Valerianus wished to see the angel, whereupon Cecilia sent him to the third milestone on the Via Appia where he should meet Bishop (Pope) Urbanus. Valerianus obeyed, was baptized by the pope, and returned a Christian to Cecilia. An angel then appeared to the two and crowned them with roses and lilies. When Tiburtius,

the brother of Valerianus, came to them, he too was won over to Christianity. As zealous children of the Faith both brothers distributed rich alms and buried the bodies of the confessors who had died for Christ.

The prefect, Turcius Almachius, condemned them to death; an officer of the prefect, Maximus, appointed to execute this sentence, was himself converted and suffered martyrdom with the two brothers. Their remains were buried in one tomb by Cecilia. And now Cecilia herself was sought by the officers of the prefect. Before she was taken prisoner, she arranged that her house should be preserved as a place of worship for the Roman Church. After a glorious profession of faith, she was condemned to be suffocated in the bath of her own house. But as she remained unhurt in the overheated room, the prefect had her decapitated in that place. The executioner let his sword fall three times without separating the head from the trunk, and fled, leaving the virgin bathed in her own blood. She lived three days, made dispositions in favour of the poor, and provided that after her death her house should be dedicated as a church.

Medieval pictures of the saint are very frequent; since the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries she is given the organ as an attribute, or is represented as playing on the organ. In this way the saint was brought into closer relation with music. When the Academy of Music was founded at Rome (1584) she was made patroness of the institute, whereupon her veneration as patroness of church music in general became still more universal; today Cecilian societies (musical associations) exist everywhere.

*(from The Catholic Encyclopedia, 1908)*

### Music in Our Liturgical Worship

“The celebration of Mass ... is the center of the whole of Christian life for the Church both universal and local, as well as for each of the faithful individually. For in it is found the high point both of the action by which God sanctifies the world in Christ and of the worship that the human race offers to the Father, adoring him through Christ, the Son of God, in the Holy Spirit... As to the other sacred actions and all the activities of the Christian life, these are bound up with it, flow from it, and are ordered to it. To that end, he should also be vigilant in ensuring that the dignity of these celebrations be enhanced and, in promoting such dignity, **the beauty of the sacred place, of the music, and of art** should contribute as greatly as possible.” *(from GIRM, paragraphs 16 & 22)*

## From the Chaplain: “Hope For New Beginners”

Having lived in Rhode Island for most of my life, I have been keenly aware that the state’s motto is “hope.” It is inspired from scripture: “We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure” (Hebrews 6:9). With the pandemic still in our midst, we now begin a new school year, and if listening to the new guidance for band performance, we may be ready to begin our programs anew, but with much caution. At least that’s where I am at this point.

With all the precautions in place, I’m hopeful that as time passes, the young in my care will be given the opportunity to be vaccinated and that those who have experienced the virus themselves may recover fully and for those

who have undergone loss may find emotional healing.

I recall my summers studying for a degree in Worship at the University of Portland, Oregon, where I served as organist at their Chapel of Christ the Teacher. In Matthew’s writings we read about the one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. For those of us who have been called to be teachers, as Jesus was, we are entrusted to become His hands and voice in the time and place where we find ourselves.

May we courageously sow the good seed, God’s glorious gift of music, in the fields of our music rooms.

*Lord God, your spirit of wisdom fills the earth and teaches us in your ways.  
Look upon us as we strive to share our knowledge  
with gentle patience and endeavor always to bring the truth  
to the eager minds of our students.  
Grant that we who serve in Catholic schools  
may love you much, may love one another, and may never forget why we came.  
Fill us with hope and fortitude  
to accept the challenge of teaching during these difficult times.  
Amen.*

– **Philip Desrosiers** | NCBA Chaplain

### **“It’s September. Time to renew your membership in the National Catholic Band Association!”**

**Keep your membership active by paying your dues right away!  
Please use the form found on the next page, or go online at  
[www.catholicbands.org](http://www.catholicbands.org).**

**Membership year is from September to August.**

**For those wanting a CORPORATE/BUSINESS Membership in the NCBA, please submit online:  
[www.catholicbands.org](http://www.catholicbands.org).** Dues for Corporate/Business membership in the NCBA are \$100/year.

**Benefits of a Corporate/Business membership include:**

- ◆ A subscription to the NCBA Newsletter (4 times year)
- ◆ A “Thank You” acknowledgment in our newsletter
- ◆ Your logo will appear on the front page of NCBA website.



# National Catholic Band Association

Office of Music Activities, Villanova University, Villanova, PA 19085-1699

## INDIVIDUAL Membership Application

PLEASE PRINT

or submit online: [www.catholicbands.org](http://www.catholicbands.org)

Keep receiving the NCBA Newsletter throughout the year!  
Dues-paying members will always receive the print newsletter.  
Don't miss out — Renew today!



Title (circle): Dr. Mr. Mrs. Miss Ms. Fr. Sr. Br.

First Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Town: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone: ( \_\_\_\_\_ ) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Website: \_\_\_\_\_

### School(s) Where You Teach:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Address</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

### Type of Ensembles Directed:

Concert \_\_\_\_\_ Marching \_\_\_\_\_ Jazz \_\_\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_

Are you willing to serve on an NCBA Committee (circle): Yes No

Dues are \$40/year and are payable to "NCBA" at the above address.

Membership year is September to August.

