

Colorado Bandmasters Association
Concert Band Festival
Guidelines for Programming, Performance and Music Selection

Jack Yonce, CBA Concert Band Chairman, December 2021

Program Length / Time Limits

Although CBA Festivals are generally scheduled with bands performing every 30 minutes, **your stage performance time should be at or less than 20 minutes**. This 20 minutes includes your introduction (the announcement of your group), the performance of all literature, and any transition time between pieces. *To keep the festivals running on time, there needs to be at least 10 minutes between groups to reset the stage and get the next group set up and ready to start.*

"It is better to leave them wanting more than wishing they had heard less"

Literature Selection

We do not have required lists or music in Colorado. We do have recommended music, however! See the Concert Band page of the CBA Website for guidance and lists:

<https://www.coloradobandmasters.org/our-story>

When selecting literature, please consider the following:

1. CHOOSE THE BEST POSSIBLE MUSIC YOUR BAND CAN PLAY.
 - Use resource lists and then carefully listen to and study scores to make an informed decision.
 - Be sure to consider "standards" and "classics" - great band music that has stood the test of time.
 - While you can certainly choose something new, avoid "jumping on bandwagons" or selecting music that you do not know, or who's composer has not *consistently* produced quality music. Do not let the publishers choose your repertoire! Run your selections by a colleague for input.
 - Consider the rehearsal time you have to prepare and do not overprogram! If you are "chasing notes" up until the performance, you will never have the time to address the MUSICAL and ARTISTIC aspects of the music you have chosen. It would be better to select something a little too easy than a little too hard.
 - Ask yourself if your band's sound, skill level, instrumentation, soloists, and section strengths / weaknesses can accurately represent the music you have chosen.
 - If you are going to spend several months on this program, it should have some depth to it - pick great music!

2. CHOOSE A PROGRAM WITH VARIETY
 - "Back in the day", directors would program a march, something lyric, and something meaty. The concept of that kind of variety and contrast in styles is still good today.
 - Consider pairing something newer with a standard. Generally, avoid playing multiple pieces with the same "sound", tonality, form, compositional technique, style or tempo.
 - Not everything on your program needs to be the same level of difficulty. Select something easier that you can focus most of your time on musical aspects.

3. CHOOSE A PROGRAM THAT CHALLENGES YOUR STUDENTS AND HELPS THEM GROW, YET IS WITHIN THE SCOPE OF THEIR SKILL LEVEL, REHEARSAL SCHEDULE, AND YOUR TEACHING ABILITY.

- Be sure the music helps you challenge and develop the technical skills and artistic aspects of your student's playing, yet will be 100% playable well before the festival.
- Map out the rehearsals the two months prior to the festival and create a plan that includes short, medium, and long term preparation goals.
- Create exercises and drills based upon the technical challenges of your literature and put them into your daily fundamentals routine.

4. BE SURE TO HAVE DEDICATED FUNDAMENTALS TIME IN EVERY REHEARSAL.

- Always be working on sound and listening! Long Tones, Remingtons, Tuning exercises, etc.
- Have a technique curriculum that develops your student's playing skills and musicianship over the course of the entire school year. In addition, have specific and timely exercises that help your students to prepare to play the music you have chosen (i.e.: key centers, rhythms, technical passages).

CBA Policy for the **State Concert Band Festival** states "Your ensemble's state program must include new repertoire from your regional program. Swap a piece, add a piece or movement - but remain at or under 20 minutes".

Music Scores

Be sure you have 5 original scores for each piece you are performing: 3 for the judges, 1 for the clinician, and 1 for yourself. Full scores are preferred (vs. condensed) if they are available. *Be sure the measures are numbered!!*

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Audience Time / Listening Assignments

An integral part of the CBA Festival experience is the assigned audience time. Schools that do not complete their audience listening assignments will not receive judges commentary, a plaque, ratings or judges sheets. We realize securing reliable bus transportation in Colorado can be difficult, but we are asking you to plan ahead and plan in extra time for known potential problems, like traffic jams. We are also suggesting that you confirm your transportation multiple times before the date of the festival.

In addition, please talk with your students about being a great audience. Students should be attentive, supportive, appreciative, and sincere. No phones, talking, slouching, etc. If you can get a program ahead of time and talk with your students about what they are to hear, that is great.

Check out the "Ideas to Maximize the Possibility of a Great Performance" handout.