

Concert Marches for class MC Bands / Random thoughts by Tina Laferriere

Please use the march to open your program on stage at MPA. Not only is it traditional to do so, but also the purpose of the march is to serve as a warm up for your ensemble. This allows you and your group to become accustomed to the acoustics of the venue. The adjudication sheet is set up to put less weight on the march, and more on the 2 selections from the FBA music list. Performing the pieces in some other order will not result in the opening piece counting for less and the march, when performed later, counting for more.

Don't select a march that will overtax your ensemble. Save their chops for the 2 FBA List selections.

Make sure the march you do select allows your ensemble to showcase their grasp of good march style. Additionally, be sure that you are performing the piece in the appropriate tempo and style. (Many European marches are meant to be performed in a controlled, stately manner; American marches are usually brighter and crisper; while circus marches have strong personalities, often showcasing flashy ornamentation, complex yet clean articulation and very quick tempos)

Avoid anything that is a "medley" of march tunes
(*Marches of the Armed Forces, A Sousa Spectacular, The Marches of John Williams* etc)

Avoid TV and Movie theme marches
(*Theme from Star Wars, Raiders March, Peter Gun, Hogan's Heroes, SpongeBob SquarePants* etc)

Avoid Pop Tunes and football stand music
(*Yellow Submarine, The Hey Song, The Pink Panther, We Will Rock You* etc)

Avoid watered down, easy version arrangements, "trio from" and "theme from" marches
(*Theme from the Trio of Stars and Stripes Forever* etc)

Traditional quickstep marches usually are published with only a condensed score that does not show the percussion parts at all. Seek marches with full scores.

Always check all parts against the score and each other for misprints before handing out parts to the students.

Number all measures and require students to do the same.

Use only 1 snare drummer for clarity. Bass drummer should have a fat fluffy mallet and a light touch. Use dark concert crash cymbals, not small light bright timbre marching cymbals. When tympani doubles bass drum part, each should be only 1/2 as loud.

A short, and by no means complete, list of appropriate marches for MC Bands:

Badge of Honor by Harris
Colonial March by Kinyon
Copper Creek March by Edmondson
Crown Point March by Pearson
Dolittle's Raiders by Edmondson
The Double Eagle by Swearingen
Eagle Command March by Hilliard
Gallant March by Sweeney
The Gold Medallion by Edmondson
Golden Panther March by Sheldon
Greenbrier March by Edmondson
Honor Guard March by Geysler
Hoosier Pride by Edmondson
Juno Beach by Edmondson
Kingsbury March by Elledge
March of Freedom by Edmondson
March of the Irish Guard by Ployhar
March of the Patriots by Edmondson
March To Castle Rock by Hodges
Melbourne March by Edmondson
Mount Rushmore March by Edmondson
Norland March by Edmondson
Northwoods March by Hodges
Patriots on Parade by Harris
Red Oak March by Gorham
River's Band March by Pearson
Sherman Oaks March by Kinyon
Ocala March by Kinyon
Stony Creek March by McGinty
Twin Cities March by O'Reilly
Winchester March by Edmondson
Yorktown March by Edmondson

When your ensemble is ready to explore traditional quickstep marches, these are good ones to start with:

Activity March by Bennett
Alamo March by King
Bunker Hill by King
Flying Cadets by King
Little Champ by Mesang
Mighty Mite by Mesang
Monterey by King
New Frontiers by King
Rough Riders by King
Success by Bennett

A short list of Grade 1 pieces that have worked well for my MC Bands:

Amazing Grace by Bullock (pretty harmonies)
Dance of the Thunderbolts by Clark (interesting percussion parts, articulation study)
Song for the Winter Moon by Cummings (modal, try flugalhorns instead of trumpets)
A Song For Friends by Daehn (lyrical 3/4 time without the oom pah pah)
Silvergate Overture by Edmondson (safe and predictable)
Maranatha by Harbaugh (VERY difficult for grade 1, lots of independent moving parts)
Fantasy on an Irish Clogging Tune by Kinyon (strong woodwinds, not much brass)
Little Brazil Suite by Ballent (check score for misprints, 3 movements)
Chorale and Canon by McGinty (notes/rhythms very easy to teach, tricky balance issues)
American Folk Trilogy by McGinty (good student conductor piece)
English Folk Trilogy by McGinty (good student conductor piece)
In Quiet Times by Swearingen (lyrical and elegant)
A Song of Hope by Swearingen (lyrical and inspirational)
Imperium by Sweeney (powerful and invigorating, many independent percussion parts)
In Dulci Jubilo by Zdechlik (good for theme/variation/style)

A short list of Grade 2 pieces that have worked well for my MC Bands:

Anthem by Edmondson (lyrical with interesting harmonies)
Beyond the Meadow Green by Farmer (awesome, needs euphonium or tenor sax soloist)
Heart of a Patriot by Farmer (inspiring, performed at MPA by special permission)
Outback Rhapsody by Feldstein/Clark (great for teaching 6/8 meter and style changes)
Fireworks Music by Handel/Gordon (OOP, great for teaching 4 bar phrases)
A Childhood Hymn by Holsinger (beautiful, but issues with balance and flute intonation)
Wind Chimes by Kinyon (interesting, pentatonic, triplets)
Praises by McBeth (powerful, needs lots of percussion, clean articulation)
Sea Song Trilogy by McGinty (interesting melodies, reasonable ranges)
Magic Flute Excerpts by Mozart/Taylor (OOP, orch bells obbligato, worth the work)
Orpheus Overture by Offenbach/Conley (OOP, clarinet cadenza, worth the work)
Korean Folk Song Medley by Ployhar (interesting tonalities and unusual phrasing)
Artifact by Schoendorff (contemporary harmonies, unusual tonalities, complex concept)
American Hymntune by Sheldon (beautiful arrangement of Amazing Grace, euphonium)
Eagle Mountain Overture by Sheldon (great piece, but key sig. misprint in flute at coda)
Two Hebrew Folk Songs by Ward (OOP, minor keys, accidentals)
Sandcastle Sketches by Sheldon (needs trumpet soloist, attention to details in low brass)

Pieces commissioned for my Bands with access to the composers' web pages:

Eagle Mountain Overture by Robert Sheldon
Golden Panther March by Robert Sheldon
www.robertsheldonmusic.com

Folk Song Triptych by Jim LeBon
Rosewood Overture by Jim LeBon
Poinciana by Jim LeBon
www.emperormusicpress.com

Beyond the Meadow Green by George Farmer
Heart of A Patriot by George Farmer
Howey-In-The-Hills by George Farmer (to be completed in Spring of 2008)
www.georgefarmermusic.com

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