



Literature Selection 201

GREAT LITERATURE EVERYWHERE, BUT NOW WHAT? HOW DO WE FIND
THE BEST LITERATURE FOR OUR ENSEMBLES?

What we already know...

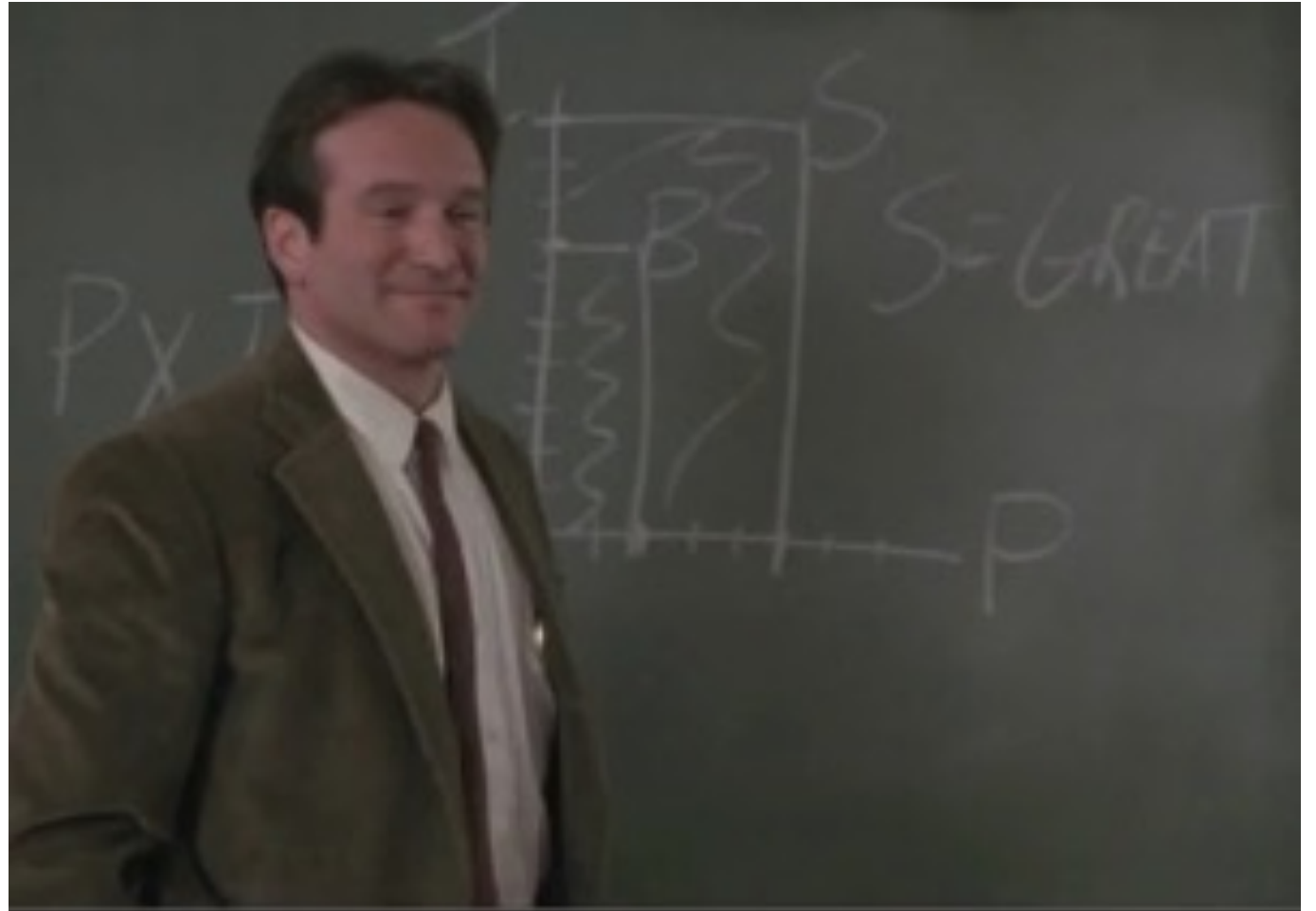
- ▶ Serious Artistic Merit – Ostling / Gilbert / Towner studies
- ▶ What does it teach students about music?
- ▶ “Can we play it?”
- ▶ Ensemble engagement / audience interest
- ▶ Programming considerations

What is “Serious Artistic Merit?”

Form, Imagination, Design,
Compositional Craft, Consistency of
Style and Development, Authenticity,
and Validity. (Ostling Study, 1978)

▶ ...and why is that important?

The "Pritchard Scale"
rebuked by Professor
Keating in the film
"Dead Poet's Society"



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- ▶ ...and why is that important?
- ▶ Don't miss hidden gems!

Score Study

(no – not that kind...)

Nothing too deep – you're not preparing it for performance (yet)

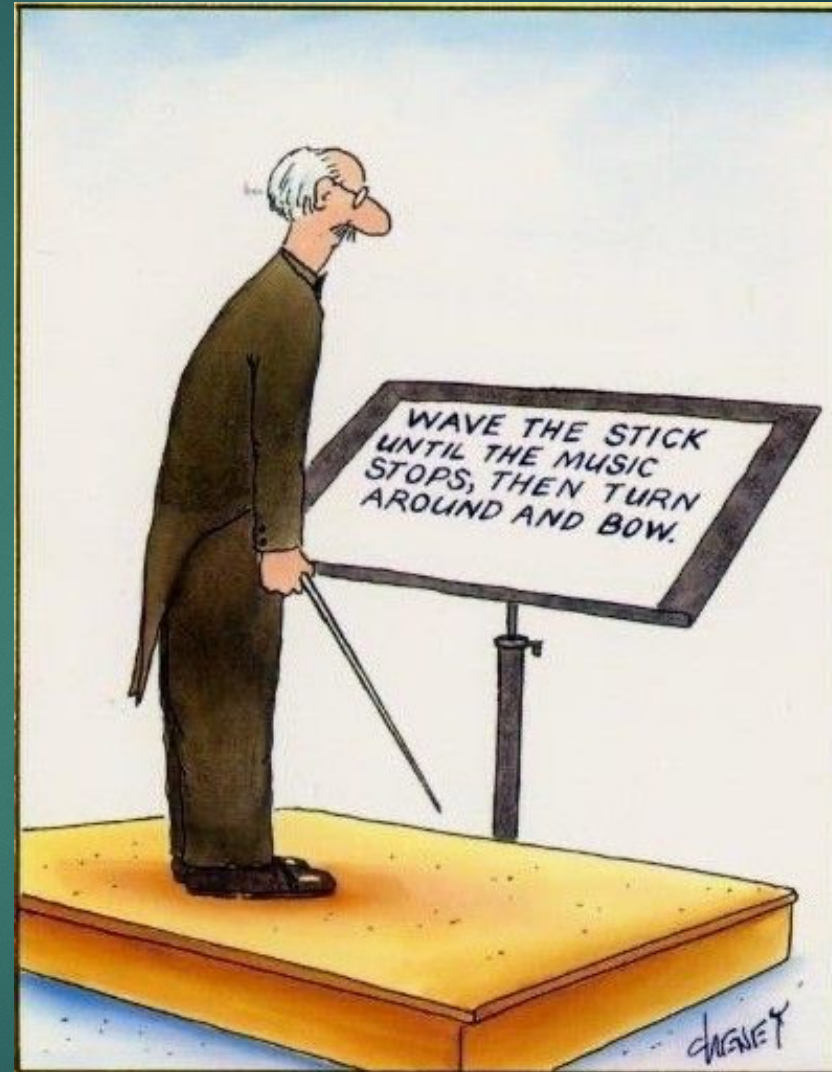
Form and structure?

Imagination and creativity?

Treatment of the melody?

Treatment of the inner layers?

The better you are at score prep, the easier the "once over" will be.



Selecting the right works for my ensembles

We all make critical decisions every time we select a program for our groups, but how can we make the process more efficient?

- ▶ During our first glance...
- ▶ What's our skill set?
- ▶ Instrumentation
- ▶ Soloists, doubling, etc.
- ▶ Can we achieve a high level performance?

Publisher promos...

Publishers and distributors are in the business of selling music. Period.

The giants will tell you they understand one size does not fit all, which is why they are happy to "make your band sound great" by helping you find the right piece in THEIR catalog...

- ▶ So. Much. Music. Who has time?
- ▶ This is great, but not in our wheelhouse...
- ▶ This is great, but where do I put it?
- ▶ Why is it graded the way it is?
- ▶ "Essential Repertoire" lists.
- ▶ Learn to discern.

So how do we listen on a schedule?

Listen in the car, in your planning period, during your workout, or even set aside time periodically to listen to music.

- ▶ Listen to browse, and then listen for content. Trust your instincts.
- ▶ Listen to new composers.
- ▶ Listen to old composers.
- ▶ Find underrepresented composers.
- ▶ What is your favorite ensemble performing recently?
- ▶ If you find something you like, don't be afraid to go down the rabbit hole (just make sure you come back!)

Other Genres

What can the iconic composers and performers teach us about music?

What music
inspired you?


- ▶ Listen to great orchestral works
- ▶ Listen to great chamber works
- ▶ Listen to great jazz works
- ▶ Master composers and master performers teach us how music is supposed to behave.

What is the role of the music in my curriculum?

What is it teaching and why is it on the program?

- ▶ What educational role does it serve?
- ▶ What programmatic role?
- ▶ What thematic role?
- ▶ How will it help the students grow?
- ▶ How will it help you grow?





What is the music
teaching?

What can we do vs.
what can't we do?

Genius, creativity,
and innovation lies in
this gap.

- ▶ Does this piece empower the players to make musical decisions?
- ▶ Does the music give them the opportunity to rely on each other?

The “teaching piece”

Performance repertoire isn't for teaching a rhythmic device or technical skill. Our developmental drills are for that.

We must choose music that teaches music.

- ▶ Teachability OR Artistry vs. Teachability AND Artistry
- ▶ It shouldn't ever be a choice – Grade 1 through Grade 6+ music exists that serves both needs. Seek it out!!
- ▶ The “teaching piece” usually falls short musically.
- ▶ Great art will always teach artistry.
- ▶ Beauty will emerge from any artistic endeavor that is well done.

Arrangements and Transcriptions

Pros

- ▶ Enables the ensemble to play music not written for that genre
- ▶ Source material is quality music (mostly!)
- ▶ Gives directors a chance to expand students' ears

Cons

- ▶ Often presents articulation and phrasing hurdles to overcome
- ▶ Can be fundamentally difficult (especially transcriptions)
- ▶ Length can sometimes lead to programming hurdles

Abundance isn't
greatness, and vice
versa.

Prolific doesn't always mean great,
and a small catalog doesn't mean
you won't find a gem.

- ▶ "One hit wonder?" Play it anyway.
- ▶ No one has ever programmed this before?
- ▶ The composer "rut"

How should we use lists?

The wisdom of the profession is a tremendous resource, but no one knows your ensembles better than you do.

- ▶ What can they give us?
- ▶ But they can also limit us...
- ▶ Teaching Music Through Performance
- ▶ State Lists

But I'm limited by my library...

- ▶ I have a tiny budget for new music...
- ▶ Create a plan, based on the need.
- ▶ Borrow from other libraries.
- ▶ Share resources from your library.

To recap...

Study

Browse

Once over

Find something that attracts
your ear

Lists

A great tool

Use as a starting point

Use as a composer reference

Not a programming guide

Listen

Know the repertoire

Listen to browse

Listen to learn

Listen to program

Questions??

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