

Dear SCMEA Division III West All-County Band Musicians,

Congratulations on your selection into this truly select ensemble! You have distinguished yourself as one of the finest musicians in the county. Make sure you get a chance to thank everyone involved in helping you achieve your success including your parents, all of your band teachers, and anyone else who inspired you throughout the years. Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur and I spent over 10 hours picking out this program for you, we hope you like it.

Performance notes: (Please make markings in pencil.)

“Block M” by Jerry H. Bilik is our concert march opener and it’s as good as it gets! This classic, a personal favorite, was first published in 1955 when Mr. Bilik was only 22 years old. This tune is performed during the weekly pregame celebration when the University of Michigan (Bilik’s Alma Mater) band forms the Block M on the football field.

The MM (metronome marking) is half note = 152 in cut time*. The dynamic contrasts, which are vital in all music, should be quite apparent particularly in the “piano” section at measure 9 (mf – p means mf the first time and p the second time through). As with most marches, play this march in what is called a “march style” which is to play all notes with a very clear and precise staccato. Also, the quarter note at 16, 32, 42, 93, and 141 should be clipped precisely on the downbeat, please mark a slash over these notes to indicate this. The exception to playing staccato is between 60-94 (note pp) where all clarinetists and all saxophonists should play all notes tenuto (very connected, legato actually means slurred). Notice the dynamic marking. All cornetists and trumpeters should note the cup mute marking at measure 90 which lasts throughout the second run through. The conductor notes specify to maintain the tempo of MM=152 throughout the piece and *not* to slow the ending down as with some marches.

To hear “Block M” by Jerry H. Bilik log on to :

http://www.stagepass.com/groupartist/artist_item_detail.html?Artist=Bilik%2C+Jerry&Invnum=82341

and click **Free Audio Sample**

*For a free online metronome log on to: (use headphones while playing along)

www.metronomeonline.com

“Abracadabra” is another one of Frank Ticheli’s masterpieces written in 2004 and is packed with many interesting tonalities, as you would imagine by its title. You should log onto: http://www.manhattanbeachmusiconline.com/frank_ticheli/html/abracadabra.html and click **“Hear a complete performance of Abracadabra”**. You should also scroll down to read about how and why the piece was put together (form) and the different musical concepts that occur throughout the piece. Please hold all quarter notes with the tenuto marking into the next beat, otherwise you are playing a note somewhere between and dotted eighth note and a quarter note. Also hold any non-staccato note into the next beat or next rest for the same reason. Place a tie marking into the rest. Starts off at MM=138, note the accelerando into measure 150 at quarter=168.

“O Magnum Mysterium” by Morten Lauridsen was premiered in 1994 and has become one of the world's most performed and recorded compositions for obvious reasons. I first heard this piece at an All-Eastern band concert a few years ago and experienced an event that can only be called indescribable. MM=66-72, I prefer 72. As the music is marked, play *molto legato e espressivo*, or very smooth and connected and with expression and passion. This vocal piece expertly transcribed for band by H. Robert Reynolds should be played with minimal vibrato, if any. The quarter note stays constant throughout all time changes. Sustain your airstream to keep a full tone throughout each note. Hold all notes into all rests, otherwise you are not playing the entire duration of the note (draw a tie into the rest). The ending is *lunga niente*, in this case, play a long fermata into niente, or nothing which means your note should evaporate, as would be logical with a work of this kind. To hear this piece:

<http://www.youtube.com> and type in the search bar: NBHS Silver Band – O Magnum Mysterium

If the first three numbers were not enough, fasten your seat belts for:

“Raging Machines” by Brian Balmages is one of the hottest new tunes by one of the hottest composers around. We're one of the first bands in the country to play this piece, what a great grand finale for a great group of musicians. Believe me when I tell you that after listening to all four tunes in a row, you'll feel like you've barely warmed-up and you're ready for more. I apologize in advance if you lose hours of sleep at night because you can't get these tunes out of your head.

To hear “Raging Machines” by Brian Balmages log on to:

<http://www.fjhmusic.com/band/b1359.htm> and click “Play Recording”

While listening to the concert as a whole you'll notice that each piece sets up the next. Fun/happy followed by Magical Fantasy followed by Extreme Emotion followed by an aggressive Roller Coaster. Challenge: What do all four pieces have in common?

We'll be working on tone, balance, blend and intonation. Of course we'll be working on phrasing, articulation, dynamics, musicianship, nuance as well. When practicing, please be aware of all dynamics and practice measure by measure, beat by beat, note by note when necessary. Be sure to get together with your band teacher several times, and don't forget to thank all of your band teachers.

There is just not enough room in this letter to get into these concepts so I would ask that you log on to: www.bandbrilliance.com and click the “Div. III All-County” link where you will find links to these concepts so that we're all thinking alike. I'll also include the listening links in this letter to make it easier for you. I will include a few .pdf pages of technique builders, etc. you might wish to print and use for your musical growth. There will be a bonus clip of a very cool version of “Take Me out to the Ballgame” you'll find very interesting.

I look forward to meeting you and thank you in advance for your dedication to this wonderful art of music.

Mr. Michel Nadeau