

## At Home Enrichment Packet for Band

Hello parents and students. During this unprecedented time making music can be a great way to get out energy and take our minds off of things. I hope all band students will continue to practice and learn at home (an hour a week is a good guide, though more is always better!). This packet will help students practice on their own, as well as help parents monitor to make sure the practice is meaningful. There will be 3 areas of focus for this initial packet: Practice Guide, Weekly Activities, Supplemental Resources.

### I. Practice Guide

- A. When we practice, we want to first make sure we are playing the instrument well. Follow these steps to make sure you are making your best sound

#### Woodwinds and Brass

1. Check you instrument. Is it clean? Are the valves, keys and slides moving? Is there anything that needs oiled or lubed? Do any screws need to be tightened?
2. Breathing. Remember our flow studies? Use a metronome (set to 80bpm) and take steady breathes in and out using the following patterns (pick 3-4 each day):
  - 4 beats in 4 beats out, 4 in 6 out, 4 in 8 out, 4 in 12 out
  - 2 in 4 out, 2 in 6 out, 2 in 8 out
  - 1 in 4 out, 1 in 6 out, 1 in 8 out
  - 4 in 3 out, 4 in 2 out, 4 in 1 out
3. Good Vibrations Practice.
  - Brass players, buzz steady sounds on your mouthpiece. Is the buzz weak, airy or pinched? Make sure the buzz is full and easy.
  - Flutes, play on your head joint. Is the tone clear? Can you make the pitch go higher? Look in a mirror – is your aperture focused or is the space between your lips really big?
  - Saxophones and Clarinets, Using your mouthpiece and the next part of your instrument (neck or barrel), play and hold a steady sound. Make sure your cheeks are not puffing out. Watch your lower lip placement and make sure the sound isn't honky.
4. Long Tones.

It is important to play long sounds on your instrument, keeping the sound clear and steady the entire time. One easy way to do this is to look at the scales on page 42 in the book. Pick a scale and, using a metronome, play each note for 4 beats. You can challenge yourself by holding the note for 6 or 8 beats as well. See the attached sheet for long tone exercises
5. Tonguing

It is also important to keep a clear and steady sound while tonguing notes on your instrument. You should regularly practice repeated tonguing patterns while making sure your tongue is touching the correct spot (back of top teeth, tip of reed, etc). You can do this similarly to the long tones. Pick a scale and tongue 4 beats of quarter notes or eighth note on each beat. See the attached sheet for tonguing exercises.

## **Percussion**

On both snare (practice pad) and bells (pick any note), turn on a metronome (80bpm to start) and play quarter notes then 8<sup>th</sup> notes with the following patterns. Stay with the metronome and make sure both hands sound even.

Repeat each pattern many times until steady (r) = rest

1. RLRL single stroke
2. LRLR single stroke
3. RLRL multi-bounce (snare/pad only)
4. LRLR multi-bounce (snare/pad only)
5. RLRLRL(r)
6. LRLRLR(r)
7. RLRLRL

Play previous patterns at different volumes or with accents. Again, make sure both hands sound the same.

1. Play all soft
2. Play all loud
3. Alternate loud and soft (RLRL rlrl RLRL rlrl)
4. Accent 1<sup>st</sup> note of pattern
5. Accent 2<sup>nd</sup> note of pattern
6. Accent 3<sup>rd</sup> note of pattern
7. Accent 4<sup>th</sup> note of pattern

## **B. Practicing from the Band Book (Everybody)**

I do not expect you to learn new notes and rhythms on your own. There are, however, ways to practice from the book.

1. Review songs that were hard for you. Take the time to work on them using our strategies –
  - a. play it slow
  - b. break it into chunks
  - c. add a note
  - d. work backwards from the end
2. Make songs you know more challenging
  - a. Play it faster (but still good – and use a metronome)
  - b. Play it all loud, or all soft, or write in your own dynamics
  - c. Record yourself playing your favorite song. Does it sound as good as you thought?

## **C. Practicing other songs (Everybody)**

It is perfectly fine to play songs out of other books – just make sure you know all the notes and rhythms. It's also a great idea to try and learn songs by ear. Play with a good sound and see if you can figure out the notes. But keep the songs simple at first.

## **II. Weekly Activities**

Each week I will send out a new set of activities that students can work on. A good idea for parental monitoring, besides checking in while the student is practicing, is to have a weekly performance. The student can play the songs they worked on for the family as if it were a concert. Students can also perform for friends and family over the phone or internet.

1. Songs from the book – Students are welcome to practice any song, but I will provide a few suggestions each week
2. Technical exercise – I will also include an exercise or etude I composed to help students work on their technique
3. Composition exercise – I will provide a prompt for students to compose a short piece. Students can perform their compositions for the family
4. Listening exercise – I will provide a prompt for students to find a recording of their instrument being played, along with questions for them to answer about what they hear

## **III. Supplemental Resources**

Please check my teacher page regularly. Some of the supplemental activities I hope to employ include:

- Videos of me teaching a specific song or strategy
- Opportunities for students to share recordings of themselves playing, hopefully in a site which allows me to give feedback
- Links to recordings, programs, or activities

If you have any questions or would like further guidance, please email me at [lennex.matt@cusd80.com](mailto:lennex.matt@cusd80.com)

Sincerely,  
Dr. Lennex