

The “Small School” Band

Robert Sheldon

Composer-Conductor-Clinician-Educator

The “special experience” of being part of a small-school band

- ♪ Community support
- ♪ Opportunities for closer musical relationships with and among students
- ♪ Band students active in every aspect of school activities outside of music

Challenges

- ♪ Distance from music stores, private teachers, professional ensembles
- ♪ Smaller student body from which to recruit members
- ♪ Must work with (NOT against) other teachers and coaches
- ♪ Class conflicts and keeping students in band
- ♪ Performance conflicts with other school activities, sports, and jobs
- ♪ All band students in one ensemble/smaller number of students in the program
- ♪ Budget challenges
- ♪ Expectation that the band will appear at many community events

Solutions

- ♪ Find music that is REAL QUALITY music, but with reduced instrumentation and reasonable difficulty
- ♪ Promote the idea that EVERYONE is in band; celebrate the “other” organizations in which band members participate
- ♪ Compromise with others, but not your principles or standards
- ♪ Re-write parts or substitute instruments so that all parts are covered in every piece performed
- ♪ Motivate advanced students through S&E, leadership and peer teaching
- ♪ Find the best literature you can
- ♪ Look for high interest/low readability music too!
- ♪ When technical difficulty must be limited, expression can become your focus
- ♪ Promote teamwork to cover any missing parts
- ♪ Learning a secondary instrument in FUN!
- ♪ Invite non-band students to join the band
- ♪ Promote student responsibility for instruments and facilities
- ♪ Learn how to make easy instrument repairs/students can assist!
- ♪ Be on the lookout for great deals on instruments for purchase
- ♪ Find opportunities for collaboration and funding of the program
- ♪ PLAY IT AGAIN, SAM! Keep performance-ready music in the folder
- ♪ Consider your audience in programming
- ♪ Find “fun” music that is really MUSIC!

Think outside the “band box!”

- ♪ Bring in private teachers on a weekly basis
- ♪ Annual instrument workshops for each section
- ♪ Peer teaching; section leader rotates through section
- ♪ Create a Birthday band, Booster Band and Chamber Ensembles that can perform at various events
- ♪ Develop an Honors program for music
- ♪ Feature professionals or outstanding student performers on concerts
- ♪ Encourage band members to find recruits; have a high school beginning band
- ♪ Hire college students to provide weekly lessons to students who are switching/learning new instruments

Be the best teacher you can be!

- ♪ Everything depends on the teacher’s personality, drive, organization, sincerity, musicianship and attitude!
- ♪ Show that you believe every student is important, and teamwork is essential
- ♪ We must provide a quality musical experience for every player
- ♪ Success in any program is a reflection of the band director

It is the combination of students feeling a sense of belonging, knowing they are valued personally and as an important part of the organization, the joy of making music, and the positive experiences provided by a caring and excellent band director that create an atmosphere where students are successful. And that translates into creating a program where everyone can’t wait to get to rehearsal every day!

Literature Recommendations for Small High School Bands

GRADE 1.5

All Through the Silent Night	Mark Williams	3:20	Alfred Music	2004
Black is the Color	Robert Sheldon	3:15	Alfred Music	2009
Carpathia	William Owens	2:00	The FJH Music Company	2007
December Sky	Erik Morales	2:30	The FJH Music Company	2005
Serenade	Robert Sheldon	3:00	Alfred Music	2015
Shadows Unleashed	Brian Balmages	2:30	The FJH Music Company	2013
To a Wild Rose	MacDowell/Arr. Sheldon	1:50	Alfred Music	2014

GRADE 2

Aggressivo	Randall Standridge	2:00	Grand Mesa	2013
Adrenaline Engines	Randall Standridge	2:20	Grand Mesa	2010
An American Hymntune	Robert Sheldon	2:15	Alfred Music	2005
...And Goodnight	Chris Bernotas	2:45	Alfred Music	2014
Bartok Variations	Timothy Broege	2:40	Grand Mesa	2003
Black Forest Overture	Michael Sweeney	3:20	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2008
Brave Spirit	Randall Standridge	4:30	Grand Mesa	2013
A Cambridge Carol	Vince Gassi	2:30	Alfred Music	2007
Crazy for Cartoons	Robert Sheldon	2:10	Alfred Music	2011
Darklands March	Randall Standridge	3:00	Grand Mesa	2014
Dorian Haiku	Scott Watson	4:15	Alfred Music	2014
Epic Venture	Tyler S. Grant	2:30	The FJH Music Company	2015
Ever More Distant	Doug Akey	3:10	Alfred Music	2007
Hercules vs the Hydra	Scott Watson	4:15	Alfred Music	2013
Korean Folk Rhapsody	James Curnow	2:50	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2011
Let Evening Come	Robert Sheldon	4:30	C.L. Barnhouse Company	2000
The Message on the Rock	Robert Sheldon	4:40	Alfred Music	2004
Rippling Watercolors	Brian Balmages	4:30	The FJH Music Company	2015
Skygazer Fanfare	Randall Standridge	2:25	Alfred Music	2015
Song of the Blacksmith	Holst /Arr. Loest	1:30	The FJH Music Company	2011
Variants on a Sea Shanty	Robert Sheldon	1:20	Alfred Music	2014

GRADE 2.5

Abington Ridge	Ed Hucceby	4:02	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2014
Amazing Grace	Sean O'Loughlin	4:12	Fischer/Flex Performance	2014
Beyond the Riverbend	Robert Sheldon	3:55	Alfred Music	2013
Contraption	Brendan McBrien	3:50	Alfred Music	2007
Courage March	Bennett/Arr. Clark	2:18	Fischer/Flex Performance	2012
Fantasy on an Early American Marching Song	Robert Sheldon	3:25	Alfred Music	2008
Homeward Bound	Keen/Arr. Karrick	3:35	Alfred Music	2009
Hypnotic Fireflies	Brian Balmages	4:00	The FJH Music Company	2012
In the Shining of the Stars	Robert Sheldon	3:30	C.L. Barnhouse Company	1996
Intrepid Journey	Robert Sheldon	4:25	Alfred Music	2015
Ironclads	William Owens	3:30	The FJH Music Company	2012
Lightning	Todd Stalter	2:45	Alfred Music	2004
Mars (from The Planets)	Holst/Arr. Sweeney	2:00	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2009
Mighty Mite	Mesang/Arr. O'Loughlin	2:39	Fischer/Flex Performance	2013
Pevensey Castle	Robert Sheldon	4:01	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2012
Phantom of Dark Hollow	Robert Sheldon	3:20	Alfred Music	2006
Pictures at an Exhibition	Moussorgsky/Arr. Sweeney	3:35	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2012
The Pioneers	Robert Sheldon	4:10	Alfred Music	2010
Radetzky March	Strauss/Arr. Clark	3:20	Fischer/Flex Performance	2015
Rampage	Todd Stalter	3:25	Alfred Music	2009

GRADE 2.5 (continued)

A Renaissance Revel	Susato/arr. Singleton	6:30	Grand Mesa	2002
Rhythm of the Spheres	Erik Morales	3:30	The FJH Music Company	2011
Shackelford Banks	Jay Bocook	3:30	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2010
Solstice Dance	Jack Wilds	3:30	The FJH Music Company	2015
Storm Warning	Robert Sheldon	2:35	Alfred Music	2014
The Spirit of an Eagle	Larry Clark	3:56	Fischer/Flex Performance	2012
Sun Cycles	Brian Balmages	6:00	The FJH Music Company	2012
Sundance	Carl Strommen	3:28	Fischer/Flex Performance	2014
Wind	Darren Jenkins	3:30	Alfred Music	2008

GRADE 3

Achilles Wrath	Sean O'Loughlin	3:19	Fischer/Flex Performance	2013
Appalachian Morning	Robert Sheldon	3:05	Alfred Music	2008
Call of the Wild	Brian Balmages	4:30	The FJH Music Company	2013
Celebration and Song	Robert Sheldon	4:45	Alfred Music	2009
Cold Mountain Saga	Larry Clark	4:35	Fischer/Flex Performance	2015
Counterbalance	Todd Stalter	3:50	Alfred Music	2013
Digital Prisms	Larry Clark	5:41	Fischer/Flex Performance	2013
El Relicario	Padilla/Arr. Clark	2:43	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2010
Fanfare and Flourishes	James Curnow	2:00	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2013
Furaha	Brian Beck	3:30	Alfred Music	2014
Great Movie Adventures	Williams/Arr. Sweeney	3:15	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2006
The Haunted Carousel	Erika Svanoe	4:35	Alfred Music	2015
His Honor	Fillmore/Arr. Clark	2:42	Fischer/Flex Performance	2014
Ides of March	Sean O'Loughlin	3:28	Fischer/Flex Performance	2015
Imaginarium	Randall Standridge	6:00	Grand Mesa	2016
Last Ride Pony Express	David Shaffer	4:30	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2013
Les Miserables (Selections)	Arr. Vinson	5:50	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2013
The Liberty Bell	Sousa/Arr. Sweeney	3:30	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2011
Nathan Hale Trilogy	James Curnow	6:15	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2013
Nimrod (from Enigma Variations)	Elgar/Arr. Bocook	2:30	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2011
Pony Express	Chris Bernotas	4:10	Alfred Music	2009
Reign of Fire	Jeremy Bell	2:40	Alfred Music	2015
Serenade for Horn and Band	Barry Milner	4:05	Alfred Music	2015
Songs/2nd Suite/Mvt 2&3	Holst/Arr. Stanton	3:38	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2012
Spontaneous Combustion	Robert Sheldon	3:10	Alfred Music	2011
Steel	Randall Standridge	3:30	Grand Mesa	2011
Synergies	Robert Sheldon	3:50	Alfred Music	2008
The Thunderer	Sousa/Arr. Stanton	1:34	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2010
The Thunderer	Sousa/Arr. Bocook	2:45	Hal Leonard/Flex-Band	2010
To Absent Friends	Chris Teischler	3:25	Alfred Music	2014
Travelin' Music	Robert Sheldon	3:40	Alfred Music	2016
Visigoths	Sean O'Loughlin	3:38	Fischer/Flex Performance	2012
West Highlands Sojourn	Robert Sheldon	5:14	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2014
Western Horizons	Thomas Kahelin	2:55	Alfred Music	2009

GRADE 3.5

Danny Boy	Barker/Arr. Clark	4:29	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2010
Fantasia on the Dargason	Holst/Arr. Stanton	2:27	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2013
Hungarian Dance No. 5	Brahms/Arr. Stanton	2:06	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2009
La Tregenda	Puccini/Arr. Beck	2:50	Alfred Music	2012
March/2nd Suite in F	Holst/Arr. Stanton	3:50	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2010
Two Bagatelles	Reed/Arr. Clark	5:09	Barnhouse/Build-a-Band	2010