

# CASMEC, 2025

## Getting The Most Out Of Your Big Band Rehearsals: Tips & Techniques

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### Setting Up

- How to best use your physical space. Set-up preferences and rationale
- How to best use your equipment.

### Warming Up

Getting the air going - because they are called “wind” instruments.

From the first note of the day have students strive for the best sound they can imagine

### Tuning Up

- Get the students in the habit of tuning themselves. By now, everyone should have an app on their phone.
- Hear students one by one, reading the tuner and offering direction based on the results. Students will eventually develop an “ear” and expectation of good pitch and tone
- Challenge students to play in tune from the first note to the last

### Sight Reading

- Sight read every rehearsal. It’s a skill worth developing.
  - Have the band play along with a loud metronome.
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## Rehearsing/Teaching

- Choosing literature wisely:
  - Based on strengths/weaknesses in the band, soloists, exposing students to styles.
  - Based on the good sounding range of the lead trumpet player(s).
  - Select music that appeals you; music that you yourself might enjoy playing
- Before you dig in, start by playing a tune down, start to finish
- Involve students in the process: ask them what they hear
- Musicianship:
  - Ask the members to identify chord functions, “who’s got the #11 in that chord?”
  - Who’s doubling that (sound shape, etc.,) with you?
- Developing leadership skills;
  - The role of lead players in each section,
  - The role of the lead trumpet,
  - The role of the drummer
- Always make time for creativity: lots of soloing,
- The rhythm sections & getting away from the chart
- It’s still music; articulation, phrasing and dynamics do matter.
- Isolate problems. Be specific.
- Teach the joy of slow practice.
- Teach the effectiveness of singing as a part of learning: It deepens concepts of style, rhythm, phrasing
- Learning jazz styles, and learning what they want to sound like: What does the phrase “listen to music” mean these days
- Developing curiosity
- Encouraging students to find their own solutions

## Performing

Seasoning your band- Get them performing as much as possible