

Rolesville Middle School Band

Terms for Success

Tone Quality:

A good tone quality consists of a mature, dark, round, and open sound. Breathing from the diaphragm, blowing a steady air stream, and keeping the throat open will result in a pleasing sound that works for all types of music.

Intonation:

Intonation is how well a performer or ensemble plays a pitch in relation to a relative pitch. Pitches may be designated as sharp (above) or flat (below). Using mechanical adjustments on the instrument, alternate fingerings, a good tone, and listening will assure solid pitch relativity. Always tune from the lowest sounding pitches.

Dynamics:

Dynamics are the loudness and softness of sound. Wind instruments vary the speed of air to produce different volumes. Percussion use different heights and speeds of strike implementations. We use these symbols for volume levels: PP-Pianissimo/very soft, P-piano/soft, MP-Mezzo-piano/medium soft, MF-Mezzo-forte/medium loud, F-Forte/full, and FF-Fortissimo/very full. Dynamics make up the most emotional aspects of music.

Ensemble Balance:

Ensemble Balance is the way an ensemble plays its dynamics in relation to one another. The McBeth Pyramid of Sound is used. All voices of the ensemble are heard when the lows are the loudest, middles are softer, and highs the softest.

Melody:

Melody is the horizontal movement of music. This is the main tune of a piece of music. The melody must always be heard.

Phrasing:

Phrasing is how we connect notes and rhythms into a musical sentence. Phrasing is determined by the style and specific articulation required.

Emotional/Expressional/Musicality:

This is where notes and rhythms are transformed into music. Expression transforms music into a language.

Rhythms:

Rhythms are the ordering of notes that have been given a specific articulation and duration (length). Rhythms are determined by time signatures, note symbol notations, and speeds of time (tempo).

Articulations:

Articulations are the manner in which musical tones or phrases are started in relation to tongue, air, and fingers/hands. Correct tonguing for wind instruments include tongue on the soft pallet for brass and flutes, and tip of the tongue on tip of the reed for woodwind instruments. Note lengths provide a variety of articulation styles: Legato = smooth and connected, Marcato = tongued with space, and Staccato = short and spaced.

Attack and Release:

These are the beginning and ending of a musical tone or phrase. Good articulation, style, phrasing, tempo and use of air will generate the qualities of being together. The two most important notes/sounds in a piece of music are the first and last notes/sounds.

Tempo:

Tempo is the driving pulse of a piece of music, which leads to the forward movement of time. Sub-dividing is the only means for internal steady time keeping.

Watch Conductor/Evaluate/Quickly Correct:

These are the ways the director and members communicate to each other. Music is 80% listening and 20% playing.

Mental Focus;

Mental Focus is the ability of the performers to concentrate on the task at hand. All foundational elements must be executed with precision.

Precision:

Precision is the execution of all concepts by the band in the same style and at the same time. Ensemble members must focus on all aspects, interpret the music the same, and think as one unit. Change from I's and Me's to the We's and Us's.