



HOW TO

# GO TO A FESTIVAL WITH YOUR BAND

AND WHY YOU ABSOLUTELY *CAN* AND *SHOULD*

## THE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE

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- What is a festival?
- The types of festivals, and a list of some festival options
- All-Star Band experiences for advanced students

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- Adjudicators, and what their purpose is
- Repertoire choices

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- Create buzz among students
- Unite the band with a common goal

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- Repertoire rules
- Equipment you have to bring
- Planning, communicating your plan to parents and students, and executing said plan
- Uniforms, budgeting, memberships, and more!

## ALL THINGS JAZZ

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- Determining the level of your band
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## YOU MADE IT THERE! NOW WHAT?

- What to do when you arrive at the festival
- The processes of what each group does, starting at unloading the bus

# THE FESTIVAL EXPERIENCE



Groups play and are adjudicated and judged to receive a gold, silver, or bronze award. This can lead to an invitation to participate at the national level - which is MusicFest Canada (held annually in May).

*You can be awarded...*

GOLD	OR	SILVER	OR	BRONZE
A group is demonstrating an exceedingly high standard of musical excellence and <b>merits an invitation</b> to participate in the MusicFest Nationals		A group demonstrates an above average quality of performance with room for improvement in specific areas. Adjudicators reserve the right to award a Silver Plus rating indicating invitations to MusicFest Canada are discretionary.		A group has an average quality of performance, with room for improvement in several specific areas.

If you prefer that your band not receive a rank, “adjudication only” or “clinic only” ensemble. No restrictions are placed on the ensemble and they *will not be evaluated* with a ranking (Gold, Silver or Bronze Standards) . Adjudicators will focus on the specific needs of the ensemble during the clinic session. Groups will also receive written and/or recorded feedback as well.

*Note: if you choose this, your group will not be eligible for higher level competitions*

**Just starting out?** Many festivals also have categories for small ensembles - which can be of many types of instrumentation.

Some festivals also host an **“All-Star” Band for advanced students** during the festival - usually at the conclusion. For this type of group, students may be recommended beforehand by their teacher, or selected in another way. Festivals will publish and share information about this concept (“All Star” Band) if it is offered.

Some festivals offer an “Honour Award” or “Most Valuable Player” award for you to select a student from each group you have. Directors will be asked to provide this information in advance.

# THE LEARNING EXPERIENCE

**Before entering a festival**, you determine the level at which your band will play – you will then be placed in a category / level *usually* based on the level of the pieces they are performing. Some festivals also categorize bands by age or grade level or number of players. Each festival will provide this information for bands planning to participate, be sure to look ahead of time so you are playing music appropriate for your group.

**Choice of repertoire** IS IMPORTANT. This is an area in which an experienced music teacher can help. Usually concert band choices for festivals include 2 to 3 pieces - which should typically include;

- 1) a lyrical (slow) piece,
- 2) a Canadian piece
- 3) an up-tempo selection that will provide a contrast.

Some festivals will insist on a march. Popular music is usually not considered appropriate for festivals. Check the rules for the festival you are going to, and/or ask the festival administrators for suggestions.



Click to go to a  
video for more  
information about  
the learning  
experience of  
festivals!

 **HERE** are some festivals in Ontario!

# ADVOCACY

Advocate for your program

Advocate for your students



Participating in music festivals or simply performing outside of the school are all **very inspiring** projects to work towards. The prospect of practicing for a project like this can inspire stronger work ethic, ensembleship, and musicianship from the students if they know they will be performing for an audience of their peers and/or are motivated by the competitive elements - such as the ranking system and / the possibility of further competition. As teachers we have to have a sense of what is happening around our school and what other schools are doing - and we are supporting each other in the festival process. Attending a live musical performance is a very rich experience to inspire personal and musical growth in students and teachers.

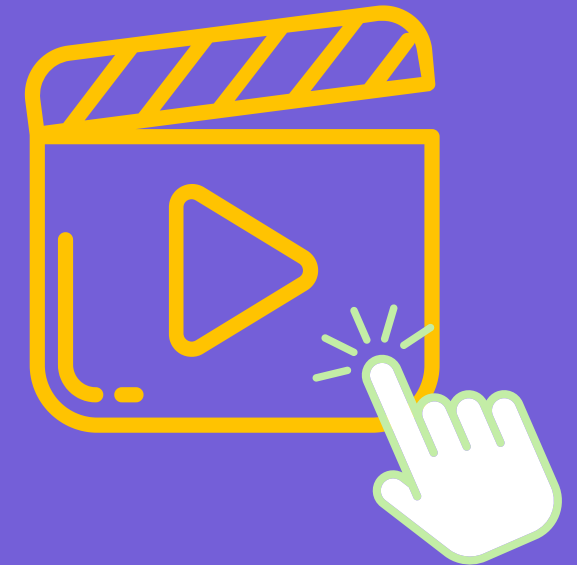
It is also an opportunity for you to come home with a medal, and a group photo to start a photo legacy wall in your music room.



# PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

**There are so many things to consider and plan for. Use this list as a guide, but be sure to read the festival guidelines carefully!**

- Field Trip protocols - follow your school and board rules
- Considerations for travel - busing, overnight hotel stay? - may require a parent meeting
- Budget: travel costs (for type of busing required), entry fees, extra score purchases
- Band uniforms (shirt?) should be considered - all black or black and white are appropriate if no other uniform is available
- Check out how you can pay the registration fee: school cheque, e-transfer, requisition or credit card.
- **Festivals have an entry cut-off date** - ie. last day to register
- If you need to be a member of the organization sponsoring the festival make sure you are a member. For example - if the OBA is the sponsor, the director needs to be a member of the OBA. The fee for membership is very reasonable.
- With your band, review expectations of student behaviour on and off stage.
- Most festivals provide a Provide Teacher's Guide / instructions once your group has registered
- Always evaluate if this is the festival to start out with. Each festival has its own set of rules.
- **Mark all equipment** (school and individual) with ID clearly marked on cases. Most festivals will not take responsibility for damaged, lost or stolen equipment.
- Most festivals have an online registration form



Concert Band equipment *usually* provided by festivals:

Snare drum, suspended cymbal, bass drum, crash cymbals, xylophone, bells, vibraphone, chimes, marimba, 4 timpani, concert toms, electric keyboard (and amp), gong, bass amp, congas, drum set and music stands.

No mallets or patch cords are provided.

# YOU MADE IT THERE! NOW WHAT?



## What happens when you arrive

- Unload the bus in an orderly manner and **check the bus before** it leaves that everything that you need has been unloaded.
- A volunteer will greet you at the registration area and take your group to the **warm-up room** you will be using and will give instructions about time to perform, and at the appropriate time the guide will take you to the performance area.
- Remind your students that there is **no playing instruments outside of the warm-up room**.
- **Your guide will request the diagram with your seating arrangement** on stage and when you arrive at the performance area it will already be available to you. Usually there is a stage crew there to help you rearrange if necessary.
- Your guide will tell you how much time you have for a warm-up and you do what you regularly do to get your group ready to perform (i.e. long tones, chorale, articulation exercise).

## Before Performance

- **Tune in the warm-up room and not on the stage.**
- Make sure you have prepared your students with proper breathing support as this is a technique that will negatively impact nervousness and anxiety.
- Once in the performance area, you will direct your group to sit in their respective area. Your on stage warm-up may include a scale, short technical exercise or a chorale. There is usually a time limit for each band to complete their onstage portion of the festival and that includes set up and performance.
- Listen up while this is happening so that you and your students can become comfortable with the new acoustics in the venue.
- **Student behaviour** while in the **audience and waiting for performance** should be planned for in order to have the most positive experience overall.

## After Performance

- Once your on stage performance is done your guide will take you to the clinic room for an **adjudication clinic**. Some festivals have the post-performance clinic on the performance stage itself.
- Some festivals (although not many) still have a sight reading aspect to the adjudication. Don't panic; the director is given 2 - 4 scores that are a level below what you played. You choose which one you think your group will be able to play. **Sight reading is something you can give them experience doing by using the opportunity to do it well before the festival.**
- After the adjudicator has given verbal comments and completed the clinic with your band (usually 20 - 30 minutes) - you will return to your designated area/room and pack up. After this (if you have planned for this extra time), **you can return to the performance area and listen to some bands play** to expose your group to what and how others play.

## Photos and Videos

- **Most festivals offer a photo opportunity** and this usually happens while your students still have their instruments with them - ie. so that they are included in the photo as well. Group pictures (and/or candid shots during the performance) are available for your school and individual students to purchase.
- If there is a video/audio copy of the performance and clinic - make sure **you** listen to it first **before you allow the students** to view/listen at the next rehearsal. This will allow you a chance to think about how you will respond to student questions or comments about the performance.

# ALL THINGS JAZZ

## Choosing music

Consider the music your band can play, but will challenge them to become the best musicians they can be.

1. Swing Chart **with solo** (Big Band style/medium swing)
2. Latin/Funk/Rock (Bossa Nova, Funk, Shuffle)
3. Ballad **with solo** (slow tempo)

Optional - Pop Chart

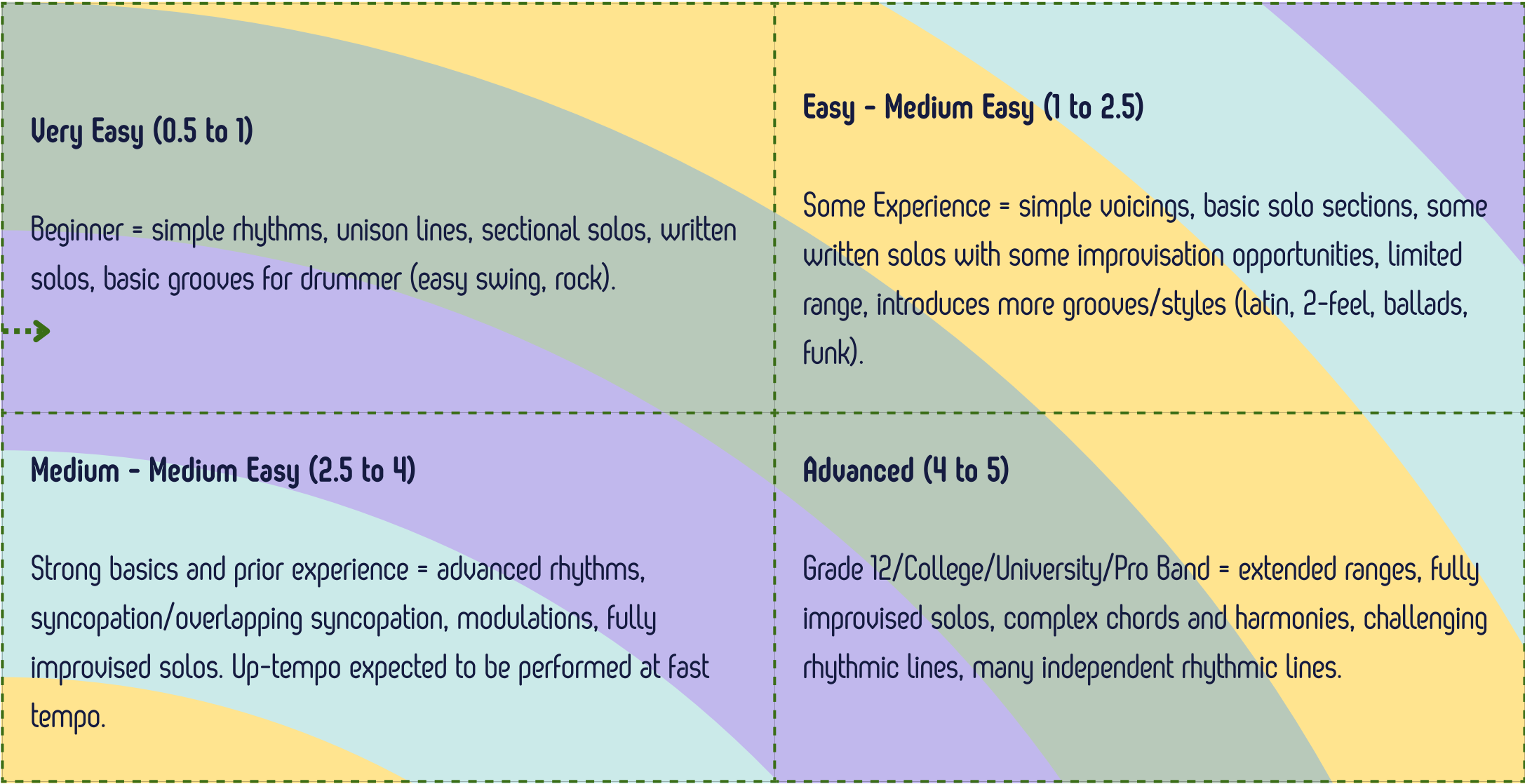
Contrasting styles are often required - Improvised solos are strongly encouraged, and consider a Canadian composer!

## What instruments are in a jazz band?

Instrumentation “Standard” (best case scenario) Big Band Jazz size is between 17-20 pieces “Standard” Big Band Jazz Set-up

- 2 Alto Saxophone (1 & 2)
- 2 Tenor Saxophone (1&2)
- 1 Baritone Saxophone
- 4 Trumpets (1,2,3,4)
- 4 Trombones (1,2,3, 4-bass trombone))
- Piano
- Bass Guitar (electric)
- Drums

NOTE: Other instruments may be added (flutes doubling altos, clarinets doubling trumpets, French horn or baritone horn doubling trombone)



## What to do the day of the festival:

- Sound check is critical!
  - Be sure to check all amp volumes and tones before beginning your festival set list
  - It's important to check the sound levels of rhythm section so select a section for them to play/start with just to ensure the piano/bass/guitar amps are set accordingly
  - Drum set muffling
- festival bass drums are typically unmuffled and VERY boomy [consider bring a towel, pillow, moongels to help dampen the sound]

You may want to bring;

- Extra music stand(s)
- Extension cord(s)



# DETERMINING THE LEVEL OF YOUR JAZZ BAND

1. Reading ability: Can your students read rhythms/different combinations of rhythms, can your students play syncopation? Can your students play syncopated rhythms while hearing a contrasting syncopated rhythm in another section?. Rhythmic difficulty should be the first consideration when picking music for your ensemble.

2. Range:

## TRUMPETS

1. What top note can your lead trumpet currently play?
2. Could they realistically work towards a higher note? (within a full degree of what they currently reach)
3. Will it be a “clean” note or will it be forced, weak, inconsistent? (if yes to any of these, re-think the choice)

## SAXOPHONES

1. Can your saxophones handle the altissimo register?
2. Do they know the fingerings/notes above hi C?

## TROMBONES

1. Can your trombones play above the staff consistently?

3. Improvisation Ability:

- a. Are your students currently playing written solos?
- b. Can your students improvise over basic blues changes?
- c. Which section has your strongest improviser (consider a feature)?
- d. Can your students read/solo over chord changes?

4. Rhythm Section Knowledge

- a. Does your rhythm section understand and have the ability to play the suggested stylistic vocabulary? (examples: Can your drummer play a bossa nova?)
- b. Can your piano player play a montuno?
- c. Does your guitar player understand “Freddie Green strumming?”
- d. Do your chord players (guitar and piano) understand comping?





**HOPE YOU HAVE ALL THE INFORMATION YOU NEED, AND  
YOU ARE EXCITED TO**

**GO TO A FESTIVAL WITH YOUR BAND**

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