

REHEARSAL TARGETS

Teaching Music through Literature-Specific Performance Fundamentals by Thomas Singletary

What is the ultimate musical goal for our students?

We want our students to exhibit good fundamental musical skills and APPLY those skills in a variety of musical settings.

How can we structure our rehearsals to achieve this goal?

Most band directors make time to focus on fundamentals and basic performance skills during the initial period in the rehearsal. Many directors refer to these activities as a “warm up,” “fundamentals time,” or “daily drill.” Although this focus on basic skills and routines is important and valuable, it is not a guarantee that concepts emphasized in this initial period will transfer to the literature that is played later in the rehearsal. One way we can help our students to make the *connections* between the basic skills (such as tone quality, tuning, technique, rhythm, articulation, etc.) and the literature is by providing exercises and activities that extract material from the piece to be performed, placing this material in the context of an ensemble warm-up or technical exercise. These exercises and activities, designed for transfer and connection, can provide the link between fundamentals and performance that can help students reach new levels of musical understanding.

REHEARSAL TARGETS is based on the idea of *concept teaching*, which involves emphasizing the application of specific musical concepts across a variety of performance settings.

REHEARSAL TARGETS

- help to prepare specific literature for performance.
- teach musical concepts that will transfer from one piece to another.
- maximize rehearsal efficiency by focusing on relevant topics during the warm-up.

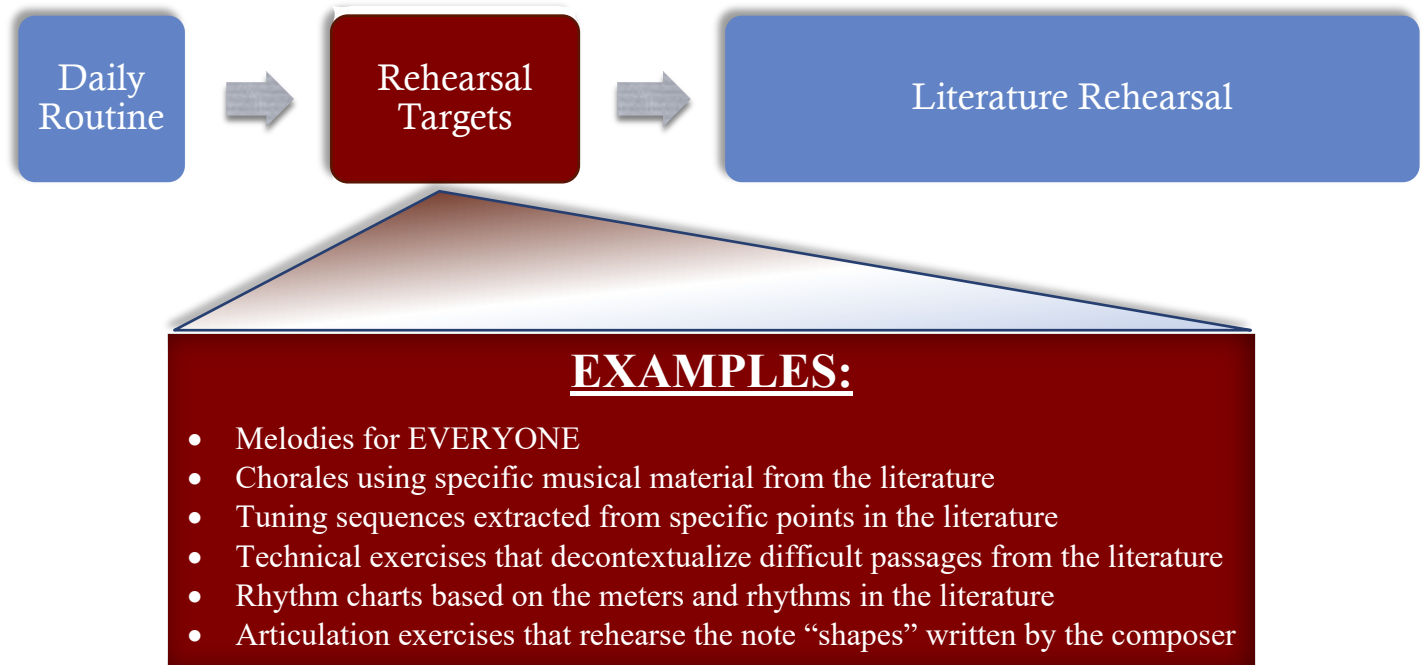
How does REHEARSAL TARGETS accomplish this goal?

With high achievement in musical learning and performance in mind, *Rehearsal Targets* extracts important musical elements from pieces in the wind band repertoire and presents them in the form of an ensemble warm-up. While directors may continue to emphasize basic skills in their existing routine, *Rehearsal Targets* provides a link between playing fundamental exercises and rehearsing the literature.

Won't this take away from my rehearsal time?

Rehearsal Targets enhances rehearsal time by providing a plan for decontextualization. As band directors, we study the score, assess our students' progress, and "break down" the pieces of the puzzle that need the most attention. We identify the musical concepts that need the most reinforcement, and we teach those concepts. *Rehearsal Targets* identifies these concepts, specifies the point of application in the literature, and provides a relevant musical exercise for the ensemble. Each exercise elevates an important concept to a more prominent status in the rehearsal and provides a direct connection to the literature, promoting transfer in a meaningful way. Each *Rehearsal Targets* packet contains a full set of parts for the instrumentation in the original piece and a full conductor's score.

How do Rehearsal Targets fit into the rehearsal?



While all performance elements and musical concepts in a piece may be impossible to capture in an ensemble warm-up, each version of *Rehearsal Targets* elevates the most relevant musical concepts in each piece to a more prominent status in the rehearsal and provides opportunities for students to transfer musical concepts to the literature in a meaningful way.

- ✓ **Melody:** Students are given the opportunity to play the essential melodies in the piece, whether or not the original part contains the melodies.
- ✓ **Tonality:** The exercises use each key signature or tonal area contained in the piece. Chorales and scales explore some of the harmonic language in a convenient format for all the wind instruments.
- ✓ **Articulation/Style:** Exercises provide an opportunity for students to perform various articulations in the piece at the indicated performance tempo. Printed articulations are combined with rhythmic variations to recreate the note shapes unique to the piece.
- ✓ **Rhythm:** Students should demonstrate their understanding of rhythm/meter by performing the rhythmic elements essential to the melodies and accompaniments in the piece. While some of the rhythmic exercises employ only one note, others may include multiple notes based on musical context or ease of facility, with the goal of decontextualizing rhythms to make them easier to transfer to various sections of the piece.
- ✓ **Dynamics:** The exercises explore a variety of dynamic shadings present in the literature, often including interpretive shaping of melodic phrases. Students can transfer these kinds of dynamics to music based on melodic contour, tessitura, musical context, and conducting gesture.
- ✓ **Intonation:** Students should understand and perform the tuning strategies for the tonalities in the piece by tuning in unison and in intervallic relationships as required by the literature. Some directors may choose to isolate *just intonation* tunings in selected places that will help eliminate interference beats.