PICKING MUSIC FOR ELEMENTARY AND MIDDLE SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

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CHOOSING THE RIGHT PIECE

- Choosing Music for all groups is important, but I feel it is especially crucial in the early years.
- ▶ If you pick music that is too hard your groups will not experience success. Everyone likes to feel good about their playing
 - In judging Festivals I find the following to be a common norm.

KEY SIGNATURES

- Pick Music in a Key your students can handle. Do not pick a song that is in a key your students are not ready for.
- For years one and two stick with the keys of D and G. (Possibly C)
- Don't pick music that changes keys if your students are not ready for this

RHYTHMS

- ▶ Pick music that has rhythms your students know how to play.
- Year One students should play in Quarter Notes –Half Notes-Eighth Notes
- Do not change rhythms too fast.

KEEP THE SKIPS SIMPLE

- Choose music that has scale patterns
- Do not pick music that skips all over the fingerboard
- Keep to one or two strings
- Open String Double Stops are fine

SPARSE SCORING

- Stick with Block Chords
- Picking Music that is scored too sparse puts pressure on sections that may not be capable of playing
- Your group will sound stronger with Block Chords and Like Rhythms

KNOW YOUR GROUP

- If your Cello section is weak don't pick a song that has a difficult cello part
- If you do not have strong basses pick music that the basses double the cellos or at the least simple half notes or quarter notes

STYLE

- Pick and Play Music that your group can handle stylistically
- If you are going to take Mozart to contest play off the string.

MUSIC TOO EASY

- Do not pick music that is way too easy for your group just because you
- want a good rating Judges know-
- ► Honor your work and your students

MUSIC TOO DIFFICULT

- Do not pick music that is too hard to impress the judges
- It is easy to spot these groups
- It is not fair to your students
- Respect both your students and yourself

SHIFTING

Pick music that involves shifting only if your students understand the basics mechanics of shifting

COLLEGE LIST OR EGO

- Do not pick a piece of music just because it was on your College List of recommended pieces
- If your students are not ready for it do not play it
- Don't pick a piece because your ego says this is where my students should be at
- We all have up and down years

FINGER PATTERNS

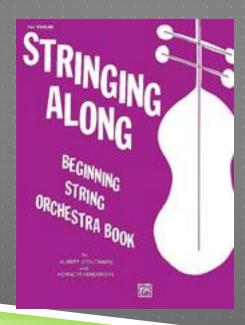
- Pick Music that has finger patterns your students understand
- No Shnarps or fnaturals

CONTRASTING STYLES

- ▶ I am a firm believer that if you go to Contest pick pieces that have contrasting styles
- Don't go with 2 Higher faster Louder pieces

STRING TEACHERS BIBLE

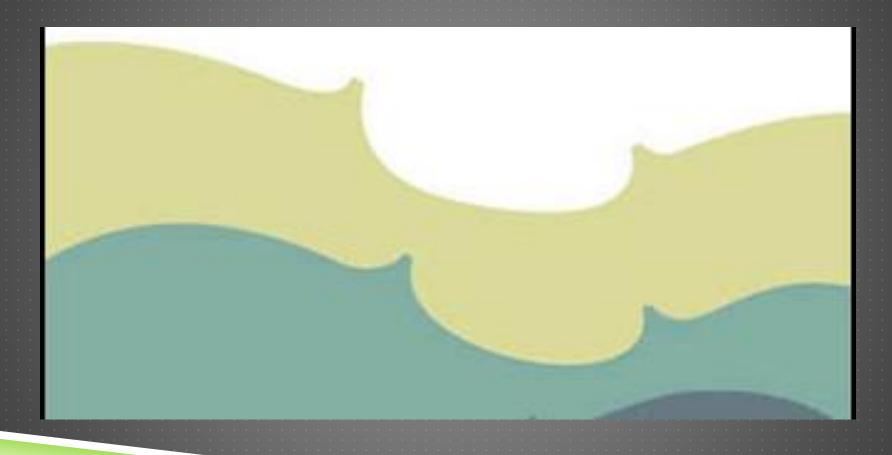
Stringing Along-Albert Stoutamire and Kenneth Henderson Alfred Publishing



KENDOR CONCERT FAVORITES VOLUME 1



KENDOR CONCERT FAVORITES VARIOUS COMPOSERS VOLUME 2



STRING PREMIERE WINGERT JONES



TAKE THE TIME TO PICK YOUR MUSIC

- So many times directors panic and pick a piece
- Give yourself permission to change if a piece is not working
- Let your students haveinput

USE YOUR RESOURCES

- Listen to a piece
- Play through it ahead of time

GOOD MUSIC=HAPPY STUDENTS

- Remember your students are huamn
- ► They want to have fun
- ► Pick music that they will remember
- Be flexible and enjoy