

NEBRASKA STATE BANDMASTERS ASSOCIATION

RECOMMENDED MUSIC LIST 2022

(FINAL DRAFT 10-19-22)

PREFACE FROM THE 2022 COMMITTEE

This is the sixth iteration of the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association Recommended Music List (RML). In 1995 Linda Donohue, then President of the Nebraska State Bandmasters Association, charged Dr. Jay W. Gilbert and the 1995 committee with the responsibility of creating a recommended list of significant teaching and artistic wind band repertoire. The objective decided upon at the outset of this project was the development of a set of procedures that could be replicated by future committees in the formation of this list. The 1995, 2001, 2005, 2011, and 2017 committees followed these procedures selecting repertoire with the understanding that preparation for performance is important in shaping student taste and appreciation in their formative years. The 2022 RML also focuses on identifying quality repertoire by underrepresented composers from multiple ethnicities and genders. The identification of these individuals and their music was aided by the existence of several resources including the book *The Horizon Leans Forward* published by GIA publications in 2021.

PROCEDURES

CRITERIA FOR SELECTION FOR THE MUSIC LIST

The inaugural RML committee established the following criteria by which all compositions were assessed.

1. The composition provides opportunities for educational and musical growth.
2. The composition provides opportunities for technical advancement.
3. The composition provides opportunities for the development of the expressive qualities in music (including melody, rhythm, harmony, form, tone color, texture, phrasing, and dynamics).
4. The composition provides opportunities for the development of musical independence.
5. The composition represents a balance between repetition and contrast.
6. The composition reflects sensitivity in the treatment of block scoring.
7. The composition reflects sensitivity toward the possibilities and limitations of each instrument.
8. The composition attempts to be genuine and original as an educational and artistic work

The 1995 list was derived in part from an examination of books, articles, and researched materials from several contemporary texts, lists, and research. Several state lists were consulted. Also perused was the *Recommended Music List of the National Band Association*. Many of the original pieces have remained on the RML with additions by each of the five committees. In the interest of selectivity, certain pieces were rotated off the list to make room for newly published works or forgotten gems. The RML Committee recommends that this practice continue to keep the list fresh and up-to-date.

Understanding that the State of Nebraska does not have a list of required music for band programs, the RML Committee has selected compositions that we consider the most "educationally sound" to promote the use of literature that enhances the performance of bands of all levels at contests, festivals, and concert performances.

TIMELINE OF THE 2022 RML COMMITTEE

April 1, 2021 – Committee membership identified

April 17 - Committee meeting on zoom

May 20 - Grade level work groups selected individually by committee members

August - Work group progress report

November - Work group progress report

March - Work group progress report

June - Penultimate meeting of the committee members
August - Meeting of the RML Committee for approval of the 2022 RML
October - 2022 RML uploaded to the NSBA website
November 2022 at NMEA: Final meeting of the RML Committee to prepare for NSBA Presentation
March 2023 - Presentation to NSBA on the 2022 RML

CHANGES BY THE 2022 RML COMMITTEE

ATTENTION TO UNDERREPRESENTED COMPOSER GROUPS

The RML Committee made a concerted effort to research, identify, assess, and include works by women composers, composers of multiple ethnicities including African American and Asian composers, and LGBTQIA2S+ composers. The primary source materials for identifying these composers included the 2021 book *The Horizon Leans Forward*, edited by Erik Kar Jun Leung. Online resources included a spreadsheet of works by diverse composers shared with the committee for which there was regrettably no citation. We estimate that about 15 percent of the music selected for the 2022 RML is by composers who identify as underrepresented. This is a special challenge since some of the composers, who could be identified as underrepresented, choose not to be identified in other projects (see for example, *The Horizon Leans Forward* page 19). Therefore, we chose not to attempt to identify anyone, but rather focus on selecting the best music by as many composers as possible.

Many consider music to be a universal language. However, it is also true that music has a strong cultural component with certain distinctives that make it so. In this era of heightened cultural awareness and sensitivity, folk and traditional melodies have come under scrutiny. The 2022 RML was completed just prior to the adoption of the IDEA Committee by the Executive Board in July 2022. In the future, the IDEA Committee will be invited to examine the RML and make recommendations that encourage excellent music from a wide variety of diverse perspectives and also to provide input on pieces that may present problems for the membership. We, as directors, are ultimately responsible for preparing the repertoire and presenting it to our students and communities in an educationally meaningful way. Therefore, NSBA should not be held liable for issues that may arise as a result of a lack of research and/or preparation of directors who utilize the 2022 RML.

EXPANDED GRADING DISTRIBUTION IN THE 2022 RML

The 2022 RML Committee expanded the six grade system to the following nine grade levels. This grading distribution is a better approximation to the grading system employed by JW Pepper (Beginning Band - Advanced).

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| Grade .5 | Students in Beginning Band. Pieces that were composed using only 6 notes. |
| Grade 1 | Students in their first to second year of playing |
| Grade 1.5 | Students in the second to third year of playing |
| Grade 2 | Students in their third year of playing |
| Grade 2.5 | Students in the third to fourth year of playing |
| Grade 3 | Upper middle level and smaller high schools bands |
| Grade 4 | Outstanding middle level and most high school and small college bands |
| Grade 5 | Outstanding high school and good college/university bands |
| Grade 6 | Exceptional high school and outstanding university bands |

In addition to these grade level expansions, a list of pieces suitable for small bands with limited instrumentation was increased, a core repertoire list at each grade level was enlarged, and the march list was revisited.

As pointed out by earlier RML committees, any number of factors make these divisions somewhat arbitrary. The variability of talent within an ensemble, the uneven distribution of instrumentation, and the uneven workload within a specific work (e.g. challenging clarinet parts, simple trombone parts, etc.)

as well as the musical maturity versus the technical demands may determine the difficulty of a composition for the educator. These grade levels are only a guideline for selection of works. Each director should use their own judgment to determine what is good for their own programs.

The 2022 RML consists of 1371 total pieces; 1183 concert and contest pieces and 188 marches. The following is the breakdown of concert and contest pieces by grade level. Grade .5 = 36; grade 1 = 82; grade 1.5 = 107; grade 2 = 113; grade 2.5 = 86; grade 3 = 247; grade 4 = 224; grade 5 = 206; grade 6 = 80.

Included in this list are 59 pieces identified by the committee as works playable by smaller bands and ensembles. Works with the "Limited Instrumentation" designation indicate full band arrangements that can be successfully performed without all parts being covered. The director choosing to use these "Limited Instrumentation" pieces will need to carefully consider the arrangements and the instrumental forces needed to play.

Also included are 188 marches grades .5 through 6, and 58 works considered appropriate for small programs and schools with bands of limited instrumentation.

Regarding the attention to inclusion, as mentioned before we strove to include more underrepresented composers in our 2022 RML. The book *The Horizon Leans Forward* served as the focal point for our research. This book, published in 2021, was an excellent resource for three reasons; 1) The author stated that "quality" was an important judgment, 2) The list of compositions included up to three quality works by an underrepresented composer, and 3) Erik Leung, the author, describing how the book came to be stating that, "In some cases, some composers wished to not be included" (see page 19 of the book). Considering the relationship of *The Horizon Leans Forward* to our update, we considered that our criteria for selection clearly defined the characteristics of quality by which compositions would be assessed. Secondly, we chose not to identify anyone as underrepresented since we might accidentally make some mistakes, either overlooking someone, identifying someone who did not wish to be identified, etc. There was some discussion about identification and may need to be revisited in the future.

In summary, the committee has worked to include additional works by more underrepresented composers. If one were to use the composers and compositions included in *The Horizon Leans Forward* and compare it to the 2017 and 2022 RMLs, a noticeable increase in compositions by our underrepresented folks can be ascertained. The 2017 committee did not have access to this resource. The 2027 committee will have a greater number of resources to consider.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE 2027 RML COMMITTEE

While the 2022 RML includes a significant number of additional works by underrepresented groups, new lists and compositions have emerged. One of the challenges is that with more composers self-publishing, it will require the committee to look at the current online resources such as databases and input from the membership to help identify the important repertoire emerging in this decade. Our first and foremost concern is to provide the membership with a wide range of outstanding compositions that meet the established criteria. It may be that the criteria itself may need to be discussed and adjusted to meet the developments of the band repertoire.

RECOMMENDATIONS TO THE NSBA MEMBERSHIP

The 2022 RML Committee encourages band directors in Nebraska to continue to consider at least one work from the list for performance at each of their events. It is our hope that school districts will consider this listing as core repertoire for the development of a viable curriculum in each school. We believe that this list of music will interface with the Standards for Education in the Arts.

In closing, the RML Committee wishes to thank President Brandi Kawula and the NSBA Board for their ongoing support of this undertaking as well as Past President Chiyo Trauernicht for establishing the 2022

committee. A special thanks to Marques Eckhoff, NSBA Public Relations Chair, for making it available on the NSBA website. May the list serve the betterment of bands in Nebraska.