Education Support

American Dance

Music and Band Coordination

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1. Meet your Band Director(s)

Most band directors are extremely busy trying to produce a quality performing group while teaching music. It is, therefore, essential to plan ahead and respect his/her time requirements. At the same time, your drill team can greatly enhance the scope and general effect of the band shows. A good drill team is good for a band and vice versa.

2. Band Arrangements

Find out what music your band director is planning to play and give him/her a list of music that you would like to use. Please note that the arrangements heard on all camp tapes have been played to provide the best length and tempo for camp routines. Your band will have to play the music the same way, or you may need to adjust your routine accordingly. Decide on the music you will be using for football season as soon as the camp music is available so you can order the band arrangements for the band. Your band director will appreciate your promptness.

3. Tempo and Length

If your band director asks you, "how fast", you no longer need to shrug your shoulders and answer, "oh, just medium." Band directors and recording specialists measure tempo in beats per minute (BPM) and you should learn to communicate to them on their terms in order to get your best results. Using a variable speed tape recorder, determine the right speed and count how many beats occur in 15 seconds, then multiply times 4. This will give you a close determination. Repeat this step at least twice to ensure accuracy. Now you can answer with, "132 BPM's, please!". Band directors and flag/rifle squads utilize a different terminology than drill teams in that music is in "bars" instead of "8 counts". For the sake of translation: If the piece is in 4/4, 1 eight count = 2 bars. If the piece is in 2/4, 1 eight count = 4 bars If the piece is in 6/8, 1 eight count = 4 bars

4. Performance

Try to compliment the band show in your charting and routine selection. In charting a show, be sure everybody can hear the beat and do not separate team members at

different distances from the drums or primary source of rhythm. Sound takes over ½ second to travel the length of a football field.

5. Music and Audio

Your music quality can be the key to any performance with pre-recorded music. Make sure to use a high quality sound system that has been designed to provide the best music quality in your gym or performance area. A good sound that makes the audience feel like moving or clapping will give your performance a boost. Generally, top quality speakers are most important and a bass speaker is always a plus to project the sound. For the best quality, use "full range" speakers with bass, mid-range and high frequency speakers. If you use a "house system", the sound is directed towards the audience and you may not be able to hear well in the actual performance area. In this case, you may need additional monitor speakers aimed at the performance area. Whenever possible, check the sound system and your sound level before a performance and should be made before the audience arrives. Always bring a backup device in case of technical difficulties.