



## **Choosing Literature for Success at Contest**

**CLINICIANS:**

**Corey Graves, Rylon Guidry, Darcy Potter Williams**

# **Texas Bandmasters Association 2016 Convention/Clinic**

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HENRY B. GONZALEZ CONVENTION CENTER  
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# Choosing Literature for Success at Contest

Corey Graves – Roma Middle School, Roma ISD  
Rylon Guidry – Arbor Creek Middle School, Lewisville ISD  
Darcy Potter Williams – Stiles Middle School, Leander ISD

## Recognizing ATTAINABLE POTENTIAL – might not necessarily fit right now

- Know your kids!!!
- What is the timeline?
  - How long do you have?
  - Class Period?
  - Sectionals?
  - Test dates, holidays, dances, field trips, etc.
  - Plan with the end in mind.

## Does It Fit Your Band?

### The Basics

- Instrumentation
- Strengths and weaknesses of sections
  - Balance involvement (ex. heavy ww piece paired with a brass/percussion heavy piece?)
- Range
  - Is it editable? ;)
  - Rescoring options - what's appropriate
- Rhythmic Challenges
- Endurance
- Soloists

### Teacher Experience

- Mentorship, especially for the younger teachers

### Buy-in (can the kids appreciate your music selection)

- Balancing traditional with new (Sousa/Mackey, Edmonson/Balmages)
- Age Appropriate/Mental Focus

## Programming Considerations

- Contemporary pieces
  - Part of a comprehensive music education.
  - Opportunity to interact with composer
- Multicultural pieces
  - Less familiar harmonies and rhythms.
  - How music relates to culture and society.

- Slow/Lyrical – *you don't have to do one! There is no written rule!*
  - Develops tonal control/band sound
  - Don't choose a slow piece for UIL if your band cannot perform it at a high level (especially 2nd and 3rd bands)
- Multi-movement Works
  - Must treat each movement as a separate piece
    - Sometime easier, sometimes harder depending on the piece
- A varied list of march styles – they come in different "flavors"
  - Traditional March
  - Concert March
- Transitional Pieces
- What pieces compliment each other?
  - Avoid same styles for every piece (especially with lower level bands... easy to do)
- Performance Order

#### Quality of the Piece

- Is the piece GOOD?
  - Great dissertation written on this very topic
    - What makes great music?
    - <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1044&context=musicstudent>
- Is the piece WRITTEN WELL?
  - Parts written based on academic ideas of what *can* be played
  - Poor balance because of ranges
  - Disjointed parts to fill chords
  - Would you have passed a college theory class with this piece?
  - Is it editable?
    - Conversation with Jim Meredith

#### What is the point of this concert?

- Fall Concert
  - building ensemble skills (more time for fundamentals)
  - building individual skills (time for technique, All-Region, etc.)
- Winter Concert
  - audience buy in
  - UIL march(?)
  - mentally preparing kids for UIL cleanliness
  - seeing how quickly kids will take to learning music on their own, which sections rise to the occasion
  - Holiday Music?

- UIL = different for each level of band
  - 3<sup>rd</sup> band – easy enough that they can achieve on a really high level
  - 2<sup>nd</sup> band – choosing music just beyond where are, pushing toward the level of the varsity band
  - Top band
    - Honor Band/Midwest level music
    - Building a Top band (for historically weaker programs, new/young teachers trying to build, low socio-economic battles, brand new schools)
      - Buy in/culture change/setting high expectations is KEY.
      - Start with appropriate programming to give kids/community a taste of success on the smallest level, go from there.
  
- Spring Concert
  - GO HARD! - It's not UIL :)
  - 3rd band - make sure they play something really fun and catchy so that kids placed in bottom band have something cool/positive to look forward to next year.
  - 2nd band - pushing 7th graders to become next years leaders
  - Top band - FLASH! OR The piece you love that you don't want to take to UIL
  
- Number of pieces for non-UIL concerts

### Questions? Contact Us!

Corey Graves – [cgraves1@romaisd.com](mailto:cgraves1@romaisd.com) - [romamsband.com](http://romamsband.com)

Rylon Guidry - [GuidryR@lisd.net](mailto:GuidryR@lisd.net) - [arborcreekband.com](http://arborcreekband.com)

Darcy Potter Williams – [darcy.williams@leanderisd.org](mailto:darcy.williams@leanderisd.org) - [stilesmsband.org](http://stilesmsband.org)