

# SEE what you HEAR

## *Visual Orchestration for Marching Band*

### CLINIC OUTLINE

Maryland Music Educators Association - March 7th, 2025

*Also available on [IVconcepts.net](http://IVconcepts.net)*

## Planning, Creating, Evaluating

Three Main Parts to our Season:

Planning - before the season starts

Creating - the beginning of the season

Evaluating - the middle and end of the season

### MUSIC

Music selection

Arranging and Teaching

Evaluation

### VISUAL

Planning and Design

Creating and Teaching

Evaluating and Editing

### Planning and Design

WHO: Band staff, visual designer/programmer, drill designer, color guard staff, choreographer, visual techs

WHAT: The musical and visual components of the show

WHEN: Winter/Spring/Summer

WHY: Because it has to be done

HOW: Brainstorming, marinating, and some fighting

## Designing Conceptually

Just as your music usually has some connective thread....

...your visual ideas should too.

What is the visual hook?

What is the show t-shirt?

What is the color story?

Are there themes, motives, or memorable events?

## Designing Logically

Is there a plan?

How do we get from A to B?

Moment A to Moment B

Page A to Page B

Idea A to Idea B

How do we use the stage? Does it have a purpose?

## Designing with Orchestration in Mind

Stage and scope

Does your stage choice reflect your ensemble size and section numbers?

Drill considerations

Length of phrase - tempo - complex count structure

Texture must equal texture

A thickly scored musical section may require thick visual orchestration

## Production Sheet

Counts	Measures	Music	Visual	Conceptual/Guard		
7	8	1	2	160 BPM - Soundscape	Coming from afar - legions represented by flags? Drums on field and color guard air playing them???	Focus on front dancers
8	16	3	6	Drums and Voice		Banners move forward
9	18	7	10	Drums and Voice		
10	18	11	14	Drums and Voice		
11	20	15	19	Drums and Voice		
12	18	20	23	Drums x 2 and Voice	Speed change here	Introduction of new idea
13	18	24	27	Drums x 2 and Voice		
14	16	28	31	A - Trumpets		
15	16	32	35		Move 12, Hold 4	
16	16	36	39	B - Trumpets, add Flutes and Clarinets		
17	16	40	43			

## Vertical Orchestration vs. Horizontal Orchestration

Vertical Orchestration - THE MOMENT

The cool parts of the show in our heads

Horizontal Orchestration - GETTING TO AND OUT OF THE MOMENT

The parts of the show we don't have in our heads

Transitions are bad - Developments are good

## Design vs. DESIGN

Design

Verb: to create, fashion, execute, or construct according to plan

DESIGN

Noun: An underlying scheme that governs functioning, developing, or unfolding :  
pattern, motif

A plan or protocol for carrying out or accomplishing something, also the process of preparing this

The arrangement of elements or details in a product or work of art

The creative art of executing aesthetic or functional designs

## Creating and Teaching

WHO: Band staff, visual designer/programmer, drill designer, color guard staff, choreographer, visual techs, students

WHAT: The drill, staging, orchestration, and choreography of the show

WHEN: Summer/Fall

WHY: Because it has to be done

HOW: Teaching drill and staging to students, planning and implementing orchestration, writing and teaching choreography to students

CREATING

Drill Design

Visual Orchestration

Choreography

TEACHING

Drill and staging

Visual Orchestration

Choreography

Where is my Score?

Musically you need a score to plan, teach, and rehearse.

What is the Visual Score?

- The drill charts?
- The production sheet?
- A combination of the two?

## Skeleton

A rough, live sketch of what the final orchestration will be, including drill, body choreography, color guard choreography, and props/implements.

Allows the choreographic and ensemble team to see visual ideas

Highs and lows, primary versus supportive voices, impacts points

Isn't a final product, but would work for a football game or even a first show.

## Evaluating and Editing

WHO: Band staff, visual designer/programmer, drill designer, color guard staff, choreographer, visual techs, students

WHAT: The Visual Orchestration of the entire production

WHEN: Fall

WHY: Because it has to be done

HOW: Using live performances and video, evaluating performances, adjusting orchestration as needed

## SEEING what you HEAR

Do you SEE what you HEAR?

Watch the video without the music - is it an accurate portrayal of the music's style?

Is there a sense of MUSICALITY?

Is the drill musical?

Is the choreography musical?

Do the parts work together in the same way the musical lines do?

## Know your Criteria

As we are all part of MMEA, we know we will be evaluated on the Visual Performance (Ensemble) Sheet.

**MMEA Maryland Marching Band Association**

### Visual Analysis

Credit the visual design, the reflection of the music, and the performance of the ensemble over time.	
Composition	Performance Quality
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality of Orchestration                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Elements of Design</li> <li>◦ Principles of Design</li> <li>◦ Motion &amp; Movement</li> <li>◦ Creativity</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Interpretation of the Audio &amp; Musically</li> <li>• Clarity of Intent</li> <li>• Simultaneous Responsibility</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensemble Control</li> <li>• Accuracy</li> <li>• Recovery</li> <li>• Uniformity</li> <li>• Articulation of Body/Equipment</li> <li>• Adherence to Style/Role</li> <li>• Presence</li> </ul>
Score	Score
<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
<b>Total</b>	
<b>200</b>	

**MARYLAND MARCHING BAND ASSOCIATION VISUAL ANALYSIS**

Achievement to the end product of what the performers are given and how well they perform those responsibilities over time.

Composition				
<small>Who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to:</small>				
<small>Orchestration (Horizontal &amp; Vertical): The arrangement and coordination of visual devices, both through time and in any one moment of time.</small>				
<small>Elements of Design: The purposeful use of line, shape, form, space, color, and texture within the program.</small>				
<small>Principles of Design: The purposeful use of balance, contrast, emphasis, unity, proportion, and variety within the program.</small>				
<small>Motion &amp; Movement: The purposeful use of movement, energy, choreography, and motion within the program.</small>				
<small>Creativity: The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the composition.</small>				
<small>Interpretation of the Audio: The purposeful marriage of the visual and audio composition.</small>				
<small>Clarity of Intent: The presentation of the compositional elements in a clear, accessible, and intelligible manner.</small>				
<small>Simultaneous Responsibilities: The layering of responsibilities placed upon the performer.</small>				
Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5
60 to 65	66 to 73	74 to 80	81 to 87	88 to 100
Learning Goals	Excellence	Proficiency	Understanding	Apply
Performance Quality				
<small>Who had the greater understanding/achievement as it relates to:</small>				
<small>Ensemble Control: The ability of the ensemble to maintain accuracy, clarity, and control with respect to space, time and line.</small>				
<small>Accuracy: The degree of precision relative to the quality of the performance.</small>				
<small>Recovery: The timely and appropriate adjustment to inconsistencies in the presentation.</small>				
<small>Uniformity: The consistent application of approach (Ensembles).</small>				
<small>Articulation of Body/Equipment: The clear, distinct, and uniform approach to the use of body and equipment (individual).</small>				
<small>Adherence to Style/Role: The consistent application of a chosen style or role.</small>				
<small>Presence: The ability of the performers to elevate the written program beyond technical accuracy.</small>				
<b>7th Grader Criteria</b>				
Minor Differences	Minor Differences	Significant Differences		
1 to 2 percentage points	3 to 4 percentage points	5 to 7 percentage points	8 & higher percentage points	

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