Curated by Wynton Marsalis, Artistic Director, Jazz at Lincoln Center

WALKIN' AND SWINGIN' BY MARY LOU WILLIAMS

Transcribed and Edited by Ted Buehrer for Jazz at Lincoln Center

FULLSCORE

This transcription was made especially for Jazz at Lincoln Center's 2009-10 Fifteenth Annual *Essentially Ellington* High School Jazz Band Program.

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NOTES ON MARY LOU WILLIAMS

As a young professional traveling the black vaudeville circuit, Mary Lou Williams idolized fellow pianist Lovie Austin, and aspired to nothing less than to emulate Austin's ability to play the music for a show with one hand while simultaneously writing new music for the next act with the other, all while conducting and giving musical cues with her head and smoking a cigarette. Though these aspirations may have seemed lofty enough to a naïve teenager, Williams could not have anticipated how much further her legacy would extend. She could not have fully realized the hardships she would face as a female in the male-dominated field of jazz, nor the grace and determination she would demonstrate along the way that, along with her formidable talent, would earn her the respect of her peers. And though she recognized her talent, once writing in frustration to her agent, "Do you know that there aren't any women and very few men that can do what I can musically?" Williams carried herself with humility and could not have anticipated a set of editions such as this one celebrating her music.

Born in Atlanta in 1910, Mary Elfrieda Scruggs spent most of her youth in Pittsburgh and quickly became a prodigy at the keyboard. Her mother played the pump organ at a local church, and was shocked one day to hear her three- or four-year-old daughter, seated on her lap, reproduce note-for-note the music she herself had just played. Mary's talent matured, and by the age of six she became known as the "little piano girl," playing for parties and teas throughout the city. She first experienced life on the road as a member of a traveling musical group when she was twelve, and although this experience was limited to eight weeks, two years later she was back on the road again traveling the black vaudeville circuit. The band she was with folded in 1925, but Mary landed on her feet, catching on as the pianist with a popular dance team called Seymour and Jeanette. In 1926 she married the saxophone player in this group, John Williams, and when this act fell apart the newlyweds moved to Memphis where they started a group known as the Syncopators. A short time later, John accepted a job with a band based in Oklahoma City known as the Clouds of Joy at a salary that promised a bright future for the young couple, while Mary stayed in Memphis to keep the Syncopators alive. But being an independent seventeen year old woman of color in the South at that time was perilous, and by 1928 the Syncopators folded and Mary rejoined her husband, traveling with the Clouds of Joy as an unemployed spouse. Despite John's attempts to convince the band otherwise, Mary was not given a role in the band until a year later, after the band had reorganized and relocated to Kansas City.

By the early 1930s, Andy Kirk had taken over the leadership of the Clouds of Joy. Kirk's Clouds of Joy had its roots in the Southwestern style, and though they never achieved the fame of bands led by the likes of Count Basie, by the late 1930s they were a strong band developing a national following. They, like many other bands of their stature, toured the country extensively (it was not uncommon for them to travel 500 miles overnight after one engagement had ended in order to get to the next job), made recordings, and had frequent radio appearances. Williams established herself as the pianist and the chief arranger and composer for the group, and her exposure to the sounds and techniques of other bands increased significantly as a result of the band's wide-ranging travels. Her reputation as a composer and arranger grew, and by the late 1930s and early 1940s she was providing arrangements not only for the Clouds of Joy, but also for bands led by Jimmie Lunceford, Louis Armstrong, Earl Hines, Tomniy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, and later, Duke Ellington.

NOTES ON PERFORMING MARY LOU WILLIAMS' MUSIC

There are a few factors that are important to understanding and interpreting Williams' music. First, it's important to recognize that her style was never stagnant; it was always evolving as she assimilated and experimented with new techniques in her music. This was a real strength that characterized her music throughout her career: her ability to bring together style characteristics from a variety of sources to create unique, original, musically satisfying results. The arrangements included in these editions are proof of this point: they were written for three different bands. Walkin' and Swingin' was played by Andy Kirk and the Clouds of Joy (1936), Roll 'Em was written for the Benny Goodman Orchestra (1938) and New Musical Express was intended for the Duke Ellington Orchestra (1967).

It therefore becomes difficult to derive a set of "universals" in describing how to play Williams' music. The following should serve as starting point, many of these points are consistent with those provided by David Berger in his notes on playing the music of Duke Ellington:

1. The most consistent factor is that her music swings hard. Regardless of the band she was writing for, regardless of tempo, Wilkiams loved writing infectiously swinging lines. Remember that Kansas City served as her home base for a number of years, so blues-based, riff-influenced, driving swing (with ample improvisation) became second nature to her. Yet through her exposure to other bands and styles, she balanced this influence with passages that contained precise and intricate ensemble writing. The results are arrangements that "feel good" to play. Benny Goodman amplified this point, saying, "Usually, we'd play five or six arrangements in a set and each would be three minutes. But some of those arrangements Mary Lou Williams wrote you would want to play for more than three minutes and the dancers would want you to, too." Make sure the music swings.

- 2. Also regarding swing: think of a pair of written eighth notes as a quarter-note triplet and an eighth-note triplet. The only time this is not the case is at extremely fast (or extremely slow) tempos, or when the music is marked to be played with straight eighth notes (equal value).
- 3. The drummer "drives the bus" and does much to establish (or not!) the swing feel of an arrangement. Timekeeping is his/her primary responsibility, with the soft "feathering" technique on each beat with the bass drum (light, almost inaudible attack), the other foot snapping the hi-hat closed on beats two and four, and the right hand providing swing rhythms on the ride cymbal (or, if brushes are called for, with both hands on the snare drum). Fills, when called for, should remain stylistically consistent with the rest of the ensemble playing. Remember, the adage "less is more" is applicable here! The drum parts are notated to reflect as accurately as possible what the drummers on the source recordings played, so that the student drummer can (and should!) listen earnestly to glean every nuance in order to capture the style properly. However, he/she should not necessarily attempt to read every rhythm, every fill literally—the result would most likely come across as too mechanical.
- 4. Also regarding written-out rhythm section parts: the bass and piano parts do not need to be played strictly as written at all times. Everything in these parts is transcribed as accurately as possible from the recordings so that the student can see in notation what is heard in the source recordings in order to help them master the style. Particularly in solo sections, where chord changes are provided, the bass, piano, and guitar players should feel free to depart from the written transcribed part as long as what he/she plays remains harmonically and stylistically consistent with what is being replaced. In other sections (where no chord changes appear) the written parts should be observed.
- 5. All improvised solos have been transcribed and included in the editions for the purpose of understanding the style and learning from the jazz greats who created them. Soloists are encouraged to learn the nuances of these transcribed solos; not just the notes, but how the notes are approached, left, articulated, and phrased. In this way the solo transcriptions can serve as an important reference point and can help the soloists in developing his/her ideas. But soloists should not lose sight of the fact that these are to be improvisations, so they should also learn and follow the chord changes as they create their own improvised melodies.
- 6. Remember that as with Ellington, this is acoustic music. Amplification should be kept as minimal as possible. Rhythm section instruments lend support, they don't lead. Be sure their volume is kept under that of the horns. In some performance

situations, slight amplification of the bass (an acoustic bass is vastly superior to an electric for this music) and piano may be needed, but the conductor should be sure that these do not overpower the rest of the group. When guitar is used, a hollow-bodied, (preferably) unamplified rhythm guitar is best, with the guitarist playing four quarter-note chords per bar (a la Freddie Green style).

7. As in most big band music, there should be only one person per part. Doubling a part with two or more players on the same part blurs the ensemble sound, distorts the intended balance, and disrupts the individuality of each part. The lead players (1st Alto Saxophone, 1st Trumpet, 1st Trombone) should guide the phrasing, volume, articulation, and other stylistic issues confronted by each section, and each section should strive to match its lead player. In soli passages that include the trumpet section and at least one other section, all horns should follow the lead trumpet player.

8. Conductors should make sound, informed interpretive decisions based on close listening to the source recordings and other recordings of Williams' music by Andy Kirk and the Clouds of Joy, Benny Goodman, and Duke Ellington. Listen together with the students so they too can hear and learn stylistic conventions. Dynamic shape should generally follow melodic shape: crescendo as lines ascend and decrescendo as they descend; note attacks and releases should occur together; articulations should be consistently played throughout the ensemble. Williams did not clutter her scores with a lot of articulations and dynamics, so there is plenty of room for interpretation (comparing the source recordings with the recordings made by the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra will reveal some of these interpretive decisions). On the other hand, those articulations that are marked should be observed.

9. In general, focus on precision without losing that overall sense of swing. Keep in mind the words of jazz editor Barry Ulanov who wrote this about Williams' music: "One of the difficulties about jazz is that it's very hard to notate it, but Duke Ellington could and so could Mary. Very few other people have been able to put on paper the feeling of jazz . . . She has discovered, because of her particular genius, a way to articulate on paper a jazz pattern—how to accent a measure. And that's why her best stuff is among the best in jazz.

In his autobiography, *Music is My Mistress*, Duke Ellington summed up Williams' music, saying: "Mary Lou Williams is perpetually contemporary. Her writing and performing are and have always been just a little ahead throughout her career. Her music retains—and maintains—a standard of quality that is timeless. She is like soul on soul."

GLOSSARY

The following are terms which describe conventions of jazz performance, from traditional New Orleans to the present avant garde.

Break: within the context of an ongoing time feel, the rhythm section stops for one, two, or four bars. Very often a soloist will improvise during a break.

Call and response: repetitive pattern of contrasting exchanges (derived from the church procedure of the minister making a statement and the congregation answering with "amen"). Call-and-response patterns usually pit one group of instruments against another. Sometimes we call this "trading fours," "trading twos," etc., especially when it involves improvisation. The numbers denote the amount of measures each soloist or group plays. Another term frequently used is "swapping fours."

Coda: also known as the "outro." "Tags" or "tag endings" are outgrowths of vaudeville bows that are frequently used as codas. They most often use deceptive cadences that finally resolve to the tonic, or they go from the tonic to the subdominant and cycle back to the tonic: I V/IV IV #IV° I (second inversion) V/II V/V V I.

Comp: improvise accompaniment (for piano or quitar)

Groove: the composite rhythm. This generally refers to the combined repetitive rhythmic patterns of the drums, bass, piano, and guitar, but may also include repetitive patterns in the horns. Some grooves are standard (i.e., swing, bossa nova, samba), while others are manufactured (original combinations of rhythms).

Head: melody chorus.

Interlude: a different form (of relatively short length) sandwiched between two chorus forms. Interludes that set up a key change are simply called modulations.

Intro: short for "introduction".

Ride pattern: the most common repetitive figure played by the drummer's right hand on the ride cymbal or hi-hat.



Riff: a repeated melodic figure. Very often, riffs repeat verbatim or with slight alterations while the harmonies change underneath them.

Shout chorus: also known as the "out chorus," the "sock chorus," or sometimes shortened to just "the shout." It is the final ensemble passage of most big band charts and where the climax most often happens.

Soli: a harmonized passage for two or more instruments playing the same rhythm. It is customary for horn players to stand up or even move in front of the band when playing these passages. This is done so that the audience can hear them better and to provide the audience with some visual interest. A soli sound particular to Ellington's music combines two trumpets and a trombone in plungers/mutes in triadic harmony. This is called the "pep section."

Stop time a regular pattern of short breaks (usually filled in by a soloist).

Swing: the perfect confluence of rhythmic tension and relaxation in music creating a feeling euphoria and characterized by accented weak beats (a democratization of the beat) and eighth notes that are played as the first and third eighth notes of an eighth-note triplet. Duke Ellington's definition of swing: when the music feels like it is getting faster, but it isn't.

Vamp: a repeated two- or four-bar chord progression. Very often, there may be a riff or riffs played on the vamp.

Voicing: the specific spacing, inversion, and choice of notes that make up a chord. For instance, two voicings for G7 could be:



Note: that the first voicing includes a 9th and the second voicing includes a 49 and a 13. The addition of 9ths, 11ths, 13ths, and alterations are up to the discretion of the pianist and soloist.

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

The following are placed in their order of importance in jazz. We should never lose perspective on this order of priority.

Rhythm: meter, tempo, groove, and form, including both melodic rhythm and harmonic rhythm (the speed and regularity of the chord changes).

Melody: what players play a tune or series of notes.

Harmony: chords and voicings.

Orchestration: instrumentation and tone colors.

WALKIN' AND SWINGIN'

INSTRUMENTATION

Reed 1 - Alto SaxTrumpet 1Trombone 1GuitarReed 2 - Alto SaxTrumpet 2Trombone 2PianoReed 3 - Tenor SaxTrumpet 3BassDrums

ORIGINAL RECORDING INFORMATION

Composer: Mary Lou Williams Arranger: Mary Lou Williams Recorded: March 2, 1936

Time: 2:37

Original Issue: Col DB/MC5023

Currently Available on CD: 'Mary's Idea' B000003N3O,

'Classic Swing Vol. 1' B00000B51R

Personnel: Andy Kirk and His Twelve Clouds of Joy - Mary Lou Williams, *piano*; Paul King, Harry Lawson, Earl Thompson, *trumpets*; Ted Donnelly, Henry Wells, *trombones*; John Harrington, John Williams, Dick Wilson, *reeds*; Ted Robinson, *guitar*; Booker Collins, *bass*; Ben Thigpen, *drums*.

Soloists: Mary Lou Williams, piano; Dick Wilson, tenor saxophone

REHEARSAL NOTES

Walkin' and Swingin' was the first recording made by Andy Kirk and his Clouds of Joy in 1936 after a five-year recording draught due to the effects of the Great Depression. As such, it gives us a chance to hear how Williams' compositional and arranging style had matured since her early attempts. This is a swing masterpiece, not only because of its irresistible rhythmic feel, but also because of the imaginative horn writing, including a challenging chorus for a quartet of trumpet with the three saxophones. Those familiar with the music of Thelonious Monk will recognize toward the end of this chorus the germ of wha would become his tune "Rhythm-a-ning". (Williams was a mentor to Monk, and she later said that he and many of the young beboppers would hang out, talk, and play music at her apartment after the clubs closed.) Williams later talked about how she came to write this chorus, saying, "I needed a 4th saxophone, but during that period you had only three. As I didn't have a 4th, I used a trumpet ... for the eighth notes. This was an innovation for the time; musicians loved in

Tempo is something that you might wish to experiment with. The Clouds of Joy did two takes on the day this arrangement was recorded, and they were at significantly different tempos. The first take (matrix 60852-A) was at about J = 178, while the second take (matrix 60852-C) was at about J = 194. Conductors might experiment to find the tempo at which they think the arrangement feels the best for their ensemble.

The form of this composition is a simple 'AABA', and the harmonies and chord progressions are uncomplicated. The focus needs to be on the swing feel. The rhythm section must keep the feel smooth and light. The time just floats along - if listeners don't feel the urge to get up and dance then the groove is not what it should be. The bass should play "in 2" during the **A** sections and walk the bridge during the first two choruses. Once in the solo section (letter **G**) and then the shout chorus (letter **J**), the bass can walk throughout.

The drummer remains on brushes until the shout chorus. Have the drummer listen to the source recording and how Ben Thigpen creates a playful yet understated feel with the brushes on the snare. This is worth emulating. I have notated Thigpen's brush playing in the drum part, but it need not be played precisely as written. Once the switch to sticks is made, the swing rhythms can shift over to the open and closed hi-hat cymbal or possibly the ride cymbal (though you will notice that Thigpen does not use the ride at all in his playing on this chart).

Throughout this edition, the drumset notation follows standards set by the Percussive Arts Society, particularly Norman Weinberg's Guide to Standardized Drumset Notation (Lawton, OK: Percussive Arts Society, Inc., 1998), legend as follows:

Snare (w/ brushes where indicated)



Piano and guitar should comp lightly throughout the chart, piano in the stride style indicated in a way that is felt but not quite heard, and guitar with simple chord voicings on each quarter note. Both piano and guitar should give beats 2 and 4 a slight accent. The guitar should need little or no amplification - too much amplification forces the volume of the rest of the ensemble to be louder and limits the dynamic range of the group.

Listen for cut-offs on long sustained notes and execute them together. In the opening saxophone melody, for example, I wrote the long note in measure 1 (and measures 3, 5, etc.) as a whole note tied across the bar-line because I wanted to convey the sense that this note is a part of a line, but you'll notice in the source recording that the Clouds of Joy release the note earlier, on beat 4. This is an issue that conductors will want to experiment with.

Another area that is open to interpretation in some places is articulation. Where specific articulations are not marked, there is sometimes more than one way to execute a phrase or passage. Letter **D**, the trumpet/saxophone soli, brings up several examples. In the measure before, the three quarter notes

pick-ups have no articulations marked. The Clouds of Joy play each of these with a legato attack; the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra play the first two legato, then accent the last one. Later in the sixth bar of letter **D**, there are again no markings, but you might experiment with placing an accent on the low note of each four-eighth-note grouping (on beat 1 and beat 3). Also, in the following measure, there are different ways to group the consecutive sets of triplets: tongue the first note of each group? Tongue beat one and beat three and slur in between? Slur them all together? Listen for how Kirk's group and the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra approach this differently. As always, once you've made an informed decision be sure the ensemble executes the articulations together.

Behind the opening saxophone line, the brass play a harmonized riff. The Clouds of Joy play the longer, first note of this riff with some fast vibrato, almost as a shake. A similar effect can be heard in the ensemble riff in letter **J**. This is a performance style technique that Williams wouldn't have notated with a special marking, so I have not included any marking on these notes (other than the accent mark). The riff could also work without the vibrato. If you choose to play the figure with the vibrato, the players should keep it controlled, and they should strive to match their vibrato speeds as closely as possible.

Mary Lou Williams' piano solo in the middle of this arrangement is a gem - she was a formidable pianist and, only in her midtwenties at the time, a master of the stride piano style. In the last two bars of her solo, listen to how she foreshadows the upcoming horn call with a call of her own; it sets up the unison brass entrance perfectly. The pianist will benefit from studying this solo, but he/she should ultimately improvise. The chord changes are simple enough in the **A** sections: I-vi | ii-V (think I've Got Rhythm) repeats every two bars with slight variations at the end of the phrases.

Dick Wilson is often overlooked as a tenor soloist, but he was a wonderful player with interesting ideas. He only gets 8 bars to solo on here (the bridge), but he makes every note count. I recommend that the soloist stand, even for this short solo. The chord changes are easy: repeating I-ii-V progressions every two measures, until the end of the phrase that sets up the return to the A section.

Notes on Mary Lou Williams and Rehearsal Notes written by Ted Buehrer. Glossary written by David Berger.

To view videos of Wynton Marsalis leading the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra in rehearsals of the Essentially Ellington 2009–10 repertoire please visit jalc.org/essentiallyellington.

NOTES FROM WYNTON MARSALIS

Why did you decide to pick Mary Lou Williams to be included in the *Essentially Ellington* library?

W.M. I think Mary Lou Williams has a very important body of work, her playing and her arranging, and I think the fact that she as a woman is important. It's important for our female students to hear Mary Lou's music and understand the level of virtuosity and sophistication that she gave to jazz in the late 20s, 30s and 40s, up until she passed away. She was constantly creative up until the 1970s.

What do you think students and directors can learn from playing her music?

W.M. One, how to swing. Because her music is always about swinging and it's about the blues. From listening to her music piano players can learn how to play because she could just flat out play. She played with two hands; she played in many different styles, from the Eastern Seaboard stride school of piano playing to the Kansas City jump style, boogie-woogie piano. She played with tremendous elegance and technical élan. She had a flair with her style of playing, and she even went down into the 70's when they got into Sus 4 chords and playing fourths and all of that. Mary Lou could do all of that kind of stuff.

What are the similarities between Mary Lou's music and Duke's music?

W.M. Duke taught everyone how to write for the big band. He was the greatest and most sophisticated of all the arrangers and composers, so anyone who came after him would be influenced by him. I think the main things with Duke were the orchestration of blues timbres; where to put the half-steps and then spread them apart, making the chord bend. So Mary Lou picked up a lot of those types of techniques, and also how to use unison part A lot of writing for the big band is about wanting to use unison lines: you don't want all that harmony going on all the time. And above all, their biggest similarity would be the dedication to the different moods of the blues. Because the blues is not just those harmonies, it's not just a song; it's different types of shuffles, jumps, stomps, and I think Duke Ellington showed everyone the range and sophistication of jazz from a groove standpoint. And I know Mary Lou was very moved by it and moved to create original and great arrangements in the tradition of Duke. I know that she was proud of the arrangements she wrote for Duke, most notably Blue Skies, and she was always talking about it. And Duke was very encouraging. He encouraged her in the pursuit of her

Are there significant differences between her music and Duke's?

W.M. Yes, there are many differences between her and Duke, like the way she treats the ensemble. She has a more regional feeling of Kansas City, a lot of boogie-woogie stomps. And when she developed her music with pieces like *The Zodiac Suite*, she began to use a different type of harmonic vocabulary. She was much more of a piano virtuoso than Duke when it comes to just digital technique. Now, Duke was a virtuoso of timbre and sound and color; he had a different type of technical mastery. Mary Lou could just... up and down the keyboard, you know? So, she had that. And her themes, the way that she developed her material, is very different from Duke's.

What's significant about Walkin' and Swingin'?

W.M. In Walkin' and Swingin' Mary Lou taught us how to cross-orchestrate. That's the first example of a trumpet leading a saxophone section. It is a beautiful extension of the Kansas City style of call and response and shout chorus. It's like her rumination on that style, because she adds a lot of little different twists in it. One of the themes is a theme that Monk used in one of his songs; "Rhythm-a-ning" is Monk's song. It's a difficult tune to play; it's hard to find a breath. But it plays with the chorus format. In jazz, we use a chorus format; it's the same form, repeated over and over again, and each time you repeat the form you put something else in it. It's like a skyscraper. You might have 24 floors that are the same exact dimensions, but you might put a beauty salon in one, you might put a concert hall in one, and when you get off at each floor, what goes on in each floor determines what affects the form of the entire skysoraper.

Mary Lou has a couple of choruses of 'A' sections of the piano playing, and in the bridge the saxophone will play with the brass background. A lot of times in this orchestration, it's like a lesson in how to use the ensemble: the brass playing, the saxophones answering at one point the brass and the saxophones play together and the saxophones answer. So the saxophone players have to play with the brass section, and also answer, and then come back underneath the trumpet - a lot of little difficult things like that. Then there's a reference to El Manisero, "The Peanut Vendor". The trombone is leading some of the saxophones, and it's like a wonderful allusion to the Spanish tinge that goes all the way back to W. C. Handy's introduction to the St. Louis Blues where he puts what he calls "tango," but it has a Cuban feel and tango feeling in the beginning of that blues. Mary Lou introduces this near the end in the trombone, and then there's a short, traditional shout chorus.



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Walkin'and Swingin' 8 Tbns. 1 Gm7 Dm7 Gm7 Gtr. Pno. Bass















16 Walkin'and Swingin' Alto Tenor Tpts. 1 Tbns. 1 C7 F6 Dm7 Gm7 C7 F6 Gm7 Dm7 Gtr. Pno. Bass Drs.



ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON

The Essentially Ellington High School Jazz Band Program (EE) is one of the most unique curriculum resources for high school jazz bands in the United States, Canada, and American schools abroad. EE extends the legacy of Duke Ellington and other seminal big band composers and arrangers by widely disseminating music, in its original arrangements, to high school musicians for study and performance. Utilizing this music challenges students to increase their musical proficiency and knowledge of the jazz language. EE consists of the following initiatives and services:

Supplying the Music: Each year Jazz at Lincoln Center (JALC) transcribes, publishes, and distributes original transcriptions and arrangements, along with additional educational materials including recordings and teaching guides, to high school bands in the U.S., Canada, and American schools abroad.

Talking about the Music: Throughout the school year, band directors and students correspond with professional clinicians who answer questions regarding the *EE* music. *EE* strives to foster mentoring relationships through email correspondence, various conference presentations, and the festival weekend.

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Since 1995, over 300,000 students have been expessed to Duke Ellington's music through Essentially Ellington.

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Band Director Academy: This professional development session for band directors is designed to enhance their ability to teach and conduct the music of Duke Ellington and other big band composers. Led by prominent jazz educators each summer, this companion program to EE integrates performance, history, pedagogy, and discussion into an intensive educational experience for band directors at all levels.

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