

## All-State: Energize—Using Eclectic Styles to Motivate

presented by Bob Phillips — reported by Suzanne Larson

The session on *Using Eclectic Styles to Motivate* discussed three main music styles: fiddle tunes, Mariachi and jazz. There are many reasons as to why alternative styles should be taught in your orchestra classroom. One of the reasons for teaching these styles would be to address 5 or 6 of the National Standards. Another is that students are thoroughly engaged by active creation more so than in flawless replication. Fiddle tunes should be taught by ear. That way the students can focus on getting a good tone, learning about chord structure and harmony without having to think about reading the notes as well. The entire class can be involved with a fiddle tune, all at their own level, at the same time. Bob stressed that the students should actually write and teach fiddle arrangements. The students will rise to the occasion but it has to be presented to them. Fiddle groups can meet after school or be incorporated into your regular class.

One of the cool things about eclectic music is how it can involve so many aspects of the students' education. Learning these

styles helps the students learn national heritage, cross-cultural, cooperative, self directed and other learning experiences. Bob states that traditional music making is participatory, and invites a sense of com-



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munity.

The Mariachi style is one that introduces the students to a completely different style of music that is common in certain areas of our country. The Mariachi band consists of six violins, guitar, guitarron,

vihuels, singers and two or three trumpets. There are music books and many resources available to teach this style of music.

The third style of music is Jazz. Jazz is commonly played in band (Jazz Band) but not as often in the orchestra class. Jazz is a good way to teach the students improvisation, swing rhythms and blues. Generally, string players are not very comfortable with improvisation and swing because they have not had experience with this style. This would be a great way to bring it into the classroom and introduce it to your students.

I am glad I was able to participate in this session to learn how to incorporate these different styles into my lesson plans. It was great to have Bob explain the benefits of spending a few minutes of class to work on these styles. Plus, once the students have learned a few tunes, they are ready to perform out in the community at a moments notice!

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