

All-State: New Music Reading Session — J.W. Pepper Editor's Choice grades 2.5–5

reported by Joe Berns

Between reading the new pieces and discussing culturally-responsive teaching, we all expressed a desire to play more pieces from non-dead/white/male composers. The concern was raised about ensuring a high quality of music as well, and we agreed that we need to strike a balance and work to find excellent quality music by diverse composers. That being said, here are my reactions to simply the music during this session:

Gr.	Title	Composer	Arranger	Comments
2.5	Rise of the Olympians	Brian Balmages		Meh
2.5	Espana Cani	Pascual Marquina Narro	Kathy L. Fishburn	Cool Phrygian theme played by organist at Twins Games
2.5	Dragon Fire	Susan H. Day		✘ = “didn’t care for it”
2.5	The Lego Ninjago Movie	Various	Patrick Roszell	✘ Short shelf life.
2.5	Epic Adventure	Kathryn Griesinger		✘
2.5	HandClap	Fitz & the Tantrums	Larry Moore	Good Pops opener. Larry Moore does really nice pops arrangements.
3	Norwegian Dance 1, op. 35	Edvard Grieg	Deborah Baker Monday	✘ Edition has a loose page.
3	Abendstern	Lauren Bernofsky		Not bad
3	Echelon	Kathryn Griesinger		✘
3	Two Sea Shanties	Trad.	John Mock	✓ = “liked it” Nice 6/8 tunes, good arranging.
3	Sheehan’s Pub Band	Chris Thomas		Meh
3	Surge	Bruce Tippette		✘
3.5	Moonlight Odyssey	Matt Turner		✓ Very cool
3.5	Symphony no. 7, d minor	Antonin Dvorak	Todd Parrish	✓ Cool
3.5	Hungarian Dance no. 1	Johannes Brahms	Carrie Lane Gruselle	✓
4	The Elements	Richard Meyer		✓ Cool
4	Finale from Symphony no. 5	Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky	Brian Holmes	✓ Sure
4	Rise of the Majestics	Alexander Safford		✘
5	Charterhouse Suite	Ralph Vaughan Williams	James Brown	Definitely has difficult bits, will check out.

Joe Berns teaches in Aberdeen SD. †