THE MAGIC OF SINGING WITH YOUR BAND

by Dr. Andy Pease

Hartwick College

peasea@hartwick.edu

<http://andypease.com/scholar>

Singing in rehearsal will improve listening in your ensemble and foster a deeper connection with the music.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

* The word “singing” is used loosely to mean any musical vocalizing, pitched or unpitched, done as a group (or, rarely, individually) in rehearsal.
* This is not meant to train voices. That is choir.
* Unless checking for intonation, pitch should be the least of your concerns, but do emphasize that you are always listening for rhythm, articulation, and dynamics.
* Start small, humming single pitches or repeating unpitched rhythms. Understand that some students are in band specifically so that they NEVER have to sing!

SOME SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES

**INTONATION** – Play a single pitch together. Then sing it, taking time to let players adjust. When played again, it will be better in tune.

**RHYTHM** – Target a short rhythmic cell in your music. Have the entire band repeat it vocally to check for understanding. Then apply it to instruments in context.

**TIME** – “Sing” (with least concern about pitch) a passage of repertoire in a piece with steady time to reinforce the notion of how steady time should feel (without resorting to a deafening metronome) and to give agency for maintaining time to the players.

**TEXTURE** – Have melodic parts sing while accompaniment parts play, or vice versa, and direct listening to help players understand their role in a texture.

REPERTOIRE FEATURED

Julie Giroux – Journey Through Orion

Ethan Cypress – Hill of Dreams