



**Folly Quarter Middle School Bands**  
**Andrew B. Spang, Director**

# *All About Honors Band*

## **What is the Honors Band?**

The **Howard County Middle School Honors Band** is a band made up of three to five of the best players from each of the middle schools in Howard County. The students have several long, intensive rehearsals before performing in a public concert. The ensemble plays at an extremely high level and the experience of playing with such an advanced ensemble is one that they will remember for a lifetime.

## **How do I get into Honors Band?**

Players tell their school band directors that they are interested in auditioning for the GT/Honors Band. They then prepare the audition and perform it in front of judges in early October. *Students are auditioning for the GT and the Honors Band at the same time.*

## **What is the Audition Music?**

*The audition music for Honors Band is the same as for the Howard County GT and the Maryland All State Band* and consists of three musical components.

❶ **The Prepared Piece:** This is usually a technical étude or study piece from the Rubank Advanced Method or some similar book. For percussionists, there are separate pieces of music for snare & bass drums, cymbals, tambourine, mallets, *and* timpani. Percussionists must prepare *all instruments*. The All State music list is published by MMEA in late August and your director can help prepare study copies of the selections for you. *You will need to prepare the entire selection just as for the All State Band audition.* ❷ **Scales:** each student will be asked to perform a one octave **Chromatic Scale**, except for flute and clarinet players who will perform a two octave chromatic scale. Also, you will need to know your **Major Scales** up to 4 #s and 4 b's. See your director for a copy of these scales, if necessary. ❸ **Sight Reading:** students will be asked to perform a short (approximately 16 measures) excerpt for the judges with only a minute or so to prepare it.

## **What Happens at the Audition?**

Students will be given a specific audition time a couple of weeks prior to the audition. The times are sent

to the school director from the audition coordinators and cannot be given out before they are received. Students should plan on arriving at the audition location about an hour before their scheduled time. They will check in at a reception desk and be escorted to a group warm-up room. This is usually the cafeteria or gymnasium where all of the auditioning students are running through their piece one last time and getting ready to audition. When it is about ten or fifteen minutes before your audition time, a runner (usually a student volunteer from the host school) will come to escort you to the audition room.

You will then stand outside the audition room for up to ten minutes as the person before you finishes their audition. Then, that person will finish and it is your turn. The audition room is often just a classroom with the desks pushed to one side. There will be a chair and a stand waiting for you, and two judges seated at desks in front of you. One of the judges will invite you inside and probably ask if you would like to play a few warm-up notes. Go ahead and play anything you like— run through a scale, play a little of your favorite band piece, whatever you would like. Then you will be asked for either your scales or your prepared piece. The last thing is usually the sight-reading. The whole process takes about ten minutes.

Because there are usually so many flute and clarinet (and sometimes trumpet) auditionees, for those instruments there is a Finals Room. If you are a flute, clarinet or trumpet player, you should be prepared to stay up to 45 minutes longer so that you can repeat the audition process in the Finals Room. Assuming that your first audition goes well, the judges will hand you a slip of paper called a Finals Room Pass. You will then be escorted to the Finals Room where you play the audition *again* for two different judges. The highest scoring auditioners from the Finals Room will then be asked to participate in the band.

The audition results are e-mailed to your band director about a month after the audition. Because of the large number of talented students who try out, being selected for participation in the Honors Band and representing your school is a true honor. ■