

# **A framework for the establishment of large wind ensembles within the LHNCM**

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## **A Forward by Thomas Hornig, Senior Professor at the LHNCM, Session Musician and Musical Director of the LHNCM Big Band**

Having taught at the LHNCM for 21 years I have always been an outspoken advocate for the proliferation of performance opportunities without which young music students cannot develop into mature musicians. In the absence of extensive ensemble experience students rarely develop an intuitive sense of phrasing, ability to blend and balance, listening skills, a deep appreciation for being in the service of others and a profound love of music. The very first experience performing in a large group offers a sense of unity, individualism, and empowerment that is often so profound that it changes lives.

Playing in musical ensembles also helps children establish reciprocal relationships, which has benefits to both ends.

Moreover, musical ensembles may represent a unique opportunity to establish a parity of esteem where everyone has an equal chance to be proud of and praised for their contribution to the whole. (Lack of parity comes from systemic social, economic, and political causes).

Reverse-engineering what it takes to form a musician in Lebanon, or anywhere else for that matter, one must carefully assess skills needed to survive in an increasingly fickle and transient music business. Secondary Schools, Universities

and Music Conservatories across the planet constantly model their entire music programs around their large ensembles all sharing the mantra “Let’s play music”

For all the reasons stated above I am asking that the LHNCM re-allocate teachers and funding to put in place well funded ensembles. Doing so in a piecemeal fashion will fail (fast and hard) as teachers are still not earning a living wage. The LHNCM is uniquely poised to bring joy and pride to the Nation it serves. Healthy well-funded large musical ensembles will transform young lives help promote values that will bring us all a little closer.

Here is my proposal:

## **Large Concert band (Youth Wind Ensemble)**

What is needed?

1. Prioritization of the Availability of Salle “S”
2. Weekly two- hour rehearsals with mandatory participation
3. An administrative structure to include: a musical Director, assistant musical director and two assistants
4. Reassignment of teaching hours for those involved + supplementary income (the work is expansive and time-consuming)
5. A focus on incentivizing and supporting teaching staff.
6. Funds for the purchase and procurement of music, certain musical instruments not available like Low brass, low winds, Percussion, Drums..
7. Active, sustained support from the second floor administration
8. A strictly enforced requirement that ALL wind players, Brass players and Percussionists complete a minimum requirement of many years of ensemble participation (Including Choral). A quick look into the experiences of successful musicians will reveal 5 to 8 years of concert band, Jazz Big Band, Marching band, Pep Band and Chamber Ensemble experience while attending High School and University. To get a better idea of general University level requirements please Google “minimum requirement for musical ensemble participation”.

## **LHNCM Wind Ensemble Administrative Structure**

### **Leadership and Management:**

#### **Musical Director**

Proposed Responsibilities include:

- A) Setting general rehearsal location/dates and time in coordination with all 50-100 members and the LHNCM Administration
- B) Maintaining Email, SMS and Whatsapp communication with all members on a weekly basis to minimize absences.
- C) Working closely with section leaders to schedule at least two sectional rehearsals per concert
- D) Work closely with the LHNCM Administration to set concert dates sponsored by the LHNCM and the Ministry of Culture.
- E) Ensure regular payment of salaries, and extra pay (where merited) for administrative and teaching Staff
- F) Work closely with the Artistic Director and teaching staff in order to choose appropriate repertoire for each concert.
- G) Will procure funds for the purchase of repertoire, a printer and toner
- H) Actively seek out collaboration with local artists, composers and arrangers
- I) Work closely with fundraisers and sponsors raise extra money needed for equipment such as amps, microphones, and stands.
- J) Advocacy: the LHNCM Wind Ensemble must serve to demonstrate our vibrancy and prolific contribution to Lebanese Conservatory and its commitment to offering several musical traditions in its curriculum. Hugely successful, fully packed concerts attracting local and international media will serve to strengthen the image of the LHNCM, the Ministry of Culture and Lebanon as the Artistic Capital of the Middle East. Equally important is a commitment to diversity that the LHNCM proudly demonstrates in its vigorous support of the Student Wind Ensemble. Concertgoers are always hungry to experience an extraordinary example of the power music has to cross all barriers and offer a parity of esteem to all musicians, all teachers and all students. Not to be understated or underestimated, the LHNCM Student Wind Ensemble will serve as a powerful recruiting tool for disciplines underrepresented such as the French Horn, Tuba, Bassoon and even more popular instruments to include Trumpet, Flute, Clarinet and Trombone. Currently the LHNCM has more than 2500 piano students and 1000 guitar students enrolled. Once recruited active involvement in a large wind ensemble will be a primary incentive and absolutely critical for the sustainable development of several severely under-represented disciplines within the LHNCM. It is worth noting that the LPO, created on 2000 is still recruiting foreigners for most positions. There must be a supply side strategy coupled with close mentorship and years of ensemble experience if we are to be successful in forming future Lebanese wind players.

## **Assistant Director**

Proposed Responsibilities include:

- A) Assisting in helping to achieve the smooth running of rehearsals (Preparing the rehearsal space, print out Music and missing parts, set up sound system and manage clean up after rehearsals)
- B) Working with the Wind Ensemble Director to achieve musical results.
- C) Shared responsibility for the choice and preparation of repertoire
- D) Will maintain a music Library and Printer.
- E) Will assist in dealing with guest artists and the logistics involved. (Sponsorship, Housing, fees, meals, repertoire, Master classes...)
- F) Will work closely with arrangers charged with producing commissioned arrangements usually geared towards incorporating Lebanese Culture into the Wind Ensemble experience.
- G) Will work in close coordination with Festival Organizers, Charity Organizations fundraisers, promoters, impresarios, Embassies, Government institutions and Non Government Institutions in an effort to successfully produce performances.

- H) Develop and maintain social media platforms in an effort to broadcast up and coming performances and strengthen the reputation of the LHNCM and the LHNCM Wind Ensemble.
- D) Will gather information related to availability of sound engineers, possible third party videographers and equipment to be procured for concerts (mixers, side fill speakers, monitors, microphones, recording options, Audio and Video connections for media)

## **Assistant Teachers**

Proposed Responsibilities include:

- A) Musical Leadership of the section (careful examination and communication of musical choices related to phrasing issues, articulation, dynamics, blend and balance)
- B) Organization of sectionals (section leaders will take responsibility for insuring sectionals happen at regular intervals and will keep track of all absences)

## **Proposed Rules by which our organization will operate**

- A) Rehearsals will be pre-scheduled and mandatory.
- B) Students will receive credit towards degree program requirements. Absence from three or more rehearsals will result in denial of earned credit.
- C) Performances will take place once a month, on average, throughout the Lebanese territory.
- D) Musical leadership is a requirement of all members of the Youth Wind Ensemble. Full engagement of every single member is a musical priority but also essential for sustainable development of the organization.
- E) The primary goal of the LHNCM Youth Wind Ensemble will be to inspire young Lebanese musicians to become the next generation of Lebanese artists. Students will be given the opportunity to join the LHNCM Youth Wind Ensemble as part of their education at the National Conservatory. Teachers will work with each section of the Ensemble. Where needed, Teachers will play along side students. This close mentorship will dramatically improve musicianship and musical performances.

## **Pay scale**

**Musical Director - \$???? per month (a full time position requiring expertise and experience in management, leadership, musicianship, pedagogy and event management, Administration, conflict resolution...)**

**Artistic Director - \$???? per month (a full time position requiring expertise and experience in management, leadership, musicianship, pedagogy and event management, administration, conflict resolution...)**

**Assistant Teachers - \$???? per month (requires organizational skills and very strong musical leadership)**

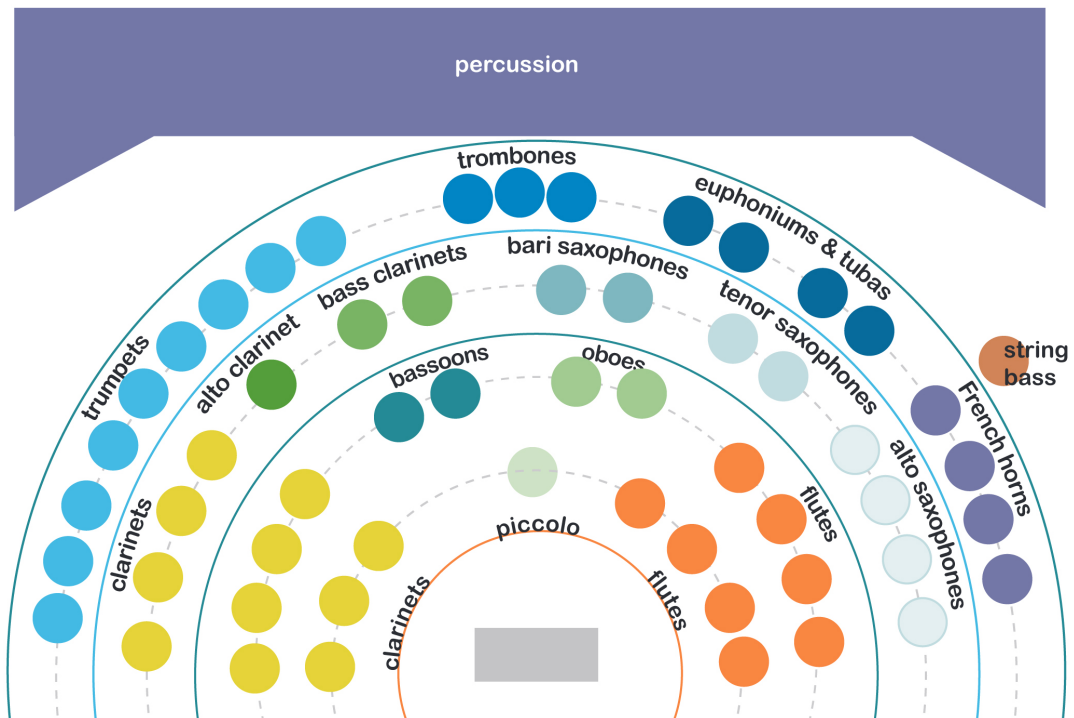
**Student Member –(requires many hours of dedication, full engagement and very strong musicianship)**

# **Location and Timing**

**Place** - Sin el fil "Salle S"

**Rehearsal time** – 12 noon to 2pm

**\*\*\* If the intention is to raise the National Conservatory to University Status, changes can be made incrementally that will not require enormous amounts of money buy will reap rewards far beyond the benefit of offering vital musical experience in one of the few National Conservatories that currently has no official youth ensembles woven into its curriculum and administrative construct.**



Symphonic Band is an ensemble of approximately 50 musicians

(Also known as a Wind Ensemble or Concert Band)