

Standard of Excellence

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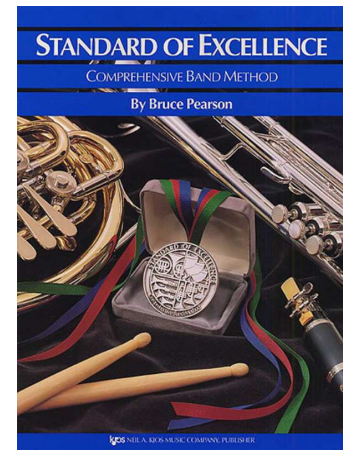
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Introduction:

Standard of Excellence Band Method books have been written for nearly every instrument used in band, and are usually made up of three volumes.

Each *Standard of Excellence* book comes with the company's IPAS software, and 2 CDs. The software has every piece from the book, and a program where the student plays along, receiving feedback as to whether the note was played correctly.



- The whole series of books includes comprehensive band method books for almost all the instruments in band, theory & history workbooks, a conductor's score, and a curriculum guide for teachers.
- These books use several pictures. For example, on the second page of nearly all the books, it illustrates how to put instruments together, and what correct playing position, posture, and embouchure look like. This makes it convenient for students and parents to check at home. The pictures are colorful and clear, attracting student's attention.
- On the last page of each book is a fingering chart for that instrument. You can read it easily. If alternate fingerings are possible, these are also shown.
- In this series, there are a lot of songs which are very familiar to students, including "Hot Cross Buns" and "Jingle Bells," some of which they can play after completing only the first lesson. It also includes some American folk songs, and segments of famous pieces such as Beethoven's Symphony No.9. Students may have more interest in playing songs which they are familiar.
- The method books teach students music theory, and songs progress from simple to complicated. For example, in the flute book, it introduces the G clef, 4/4 time signature, whole note, whole rest, and flat in the first lesson. After that are half and quarter notes. They make it easier to read by using yellow along the top. On the bottom, there is a small fingering chart, which reminds students of the correct fingering. The book goes fast, so it doesn't make students feel bored, but they are also very detailed, which makes it easier for older elementary school students.

- For rhythm studies, there are several different patterns at the end of the books, with different notes and time signatures which teachers can use as examples when students practice.
- Topics and techniques are introduced in a logical way. For woodwinds, this means progressing from longer notes to shorter ones, since whole notes require better breath support. This develops students' breathing technique.
- Developing students' "musical ears" is an important part of a comprehensive music education. *Standard of Excellence* provides a wide variety of tools for that development, including exercises in the student books, and activities for teachers to use in class.
- This series of books uses different books for wind instruments and percussion. Also, it includes music theory and history for students. For teachers, it provides a comprehensive band method, curriculum guide, and performance book with a variety of styles and a CD.
- Some activities which teachers can use to develop students' comprehensive musicianship are included, addressing national standards such as singing before playing, listening, performing, evaluating, and understanding music in relation to history and culture, among others.
- For assessments, you will see there is a practice journal on the first page. This should help remind students of their need to practice. Also, it records the student's improvement. By the end of their first semester, they will see their improvement and feel a corresponding sense of achievement. At the end of the books, there is a chart for checking their notes, rhythm, and tone. Teachers can use this chart when assessing students' playing.
- Looking at the physical features of these books, the cover is made of durable plastic. The quality of paper is very good, and the text easy to read, using large type. They are also colorful, with pictures good for any student learning their first instrument, or older students changing instruments.
- This series include a curriculum guide and conductor's score, which lists everything needed for teachers to provide their students with the most complete music education possible.
- Student books come with CDs they can listen to at home.
- I think the *Standard of Excellence* books are very good series, which includes everything band teachers need for teaching. By splitting into three separate volumes for each instrument, different level students can quickly find the level where they best fit, and begin learning from there.

