

# Marketing Your Professionalism

## Tips and Strategies to

Prepare and “Psych” Yourself for Interviewing, Personal Branding, and Acquiring That First School Music Teacher Job

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Outline for College Music Education Majors, Prospective New or Transferring Music Teachers



## Mock Job Interviews at Duquesne University: April 15, 2019

### Section I: General Screening or General Music Position

#### Questions:

1. Tell me something about yourself.
2. What are the most important qualities of an outstanding educator? (Popular, Knowledge)
3. Why is it important for students to be actively engaged in the performing arts? (Philosophy)
4. What rules and expectations would you establish in your classroom? (Classroom Management/Discipline)
5. Why should I hire you for this position? (Leadership, Teamwork, Judgment)
6. Describe your background and knowledge of each of the following methodologies, and for a general music position, which one is your favorite? Orff, Kodaly, Dalcroze? (Content Specific/General Music)
7. How would you teach “steady beat” or pitch matching in the primary grades? Give a short example of a learning activity on either lesson target.
8. Why did you decide to become a music educator? (Initiative)

#### Response of the “Peer Jury” (six cards)

- **Attitude:** appearances of calm, positive and helpful mood, grace, enthusiasm, self-confidence/poise but no arrogance, sincerity, respect, modeling attributes of a team player (skills of collaboration) but also a leader and innovator
- **Speech:** qualities of tone, diction, volume, clarity, speed, expressivity, and pacing (appropriate wait-time and spacing between questions/answers)
- **Language:** use of professional terminology, varied and educated vocabulary, avoidance of weak words that suggest a lack of conviction (“I feel like” or “sort of” or “kind of”), avoidance of verbal clutter and repetitive exclamations (“ahhh” or “umm” or “like”)
- **Body language:** posture, eye contact, 15% angle to interviewer, smiling, strong handshake, positive demeanor, avoidance of fidgeting or “ticks” that reflect nervousness like clenching hands, looking down, touching face or hair, tapping pencil/papers
- **“On topic:”** focus, relevance, careful listening and thoughtful responses to interviewers' questions, avoidance of unsubstantiated or unsupported statements, rambling, or “bird walking”
- **Preparation:** model of a knowledgeable and skillful candidate, organization (distribution of resume/portfolio), personal examples/stories of strengths and experiences, research of the program and asking of questions to the interviewer

## Section II: High School Band Position

### Questions:

1. Describe a lesson that did not materialize in a manner that you expected. What did you learn from this experience? (Planning)
2. How would you recruit students to participate in your ensembles? (Innovation)
3. What marching band styles have you taught for halftime shows? Competitive or non-competitive, Big Ten/Show or Core? How would you organize the marching auxiliary units? (Content Specific/Band)
4. If you were hired as a high school band director at the last minute the third week of September, and the marching style was contrary to your preference to teach, how would you adapt? (Content Specific/Band)
5. What are three adjectives students would use to describe you? (Initiative, Knowledge/Education)
6. How would you assess the learning in your rehearsals? (Popular, Education)
7. Why should I hire you for this position? (Leadership, Teamwork, Judgment)

### Are You Truly Prepared? What should be brought to the interview?

- Website (see DavidDockan.com – password “Music”)
- Resume
- Business card
- E-Portfolio (jump drive): awards, transcripts, music education philosophy, recommendations, sample lesson plans, classroom management guidelines, recordings of lessons/performances
- Printed documents and photos

Mrs. Dietz had a video and a “cliff notes” booklet with the script of the recorded text of her mission, philosophy, teaching style, class management, etc. while displaying in the background her (substitute) teaching of general music, chorus, string orchestra for a middle school musical, church ensembles, etc. She aced the interview and got the job!

## Section III: Full Group Final Recommendations for the Road

1. Quick look at the handouts – Follow-up with going to [www.paulfox.blog](http://www.paulfox.blog).
2. Visit the blog *Interviews* at <https://paulfox.blog/2019/04/03/interviews/> – handouts from past NAFME/PMEA conference sessions “Ready to Hire: Interview Strategies to Land a Job”
3. Development of the stories of your life, work, and teaching experiences (both successes and the “glitches” or “snags” along the way which you had to resolve) that demonstrate your competencies, personality traits, acquired skills, problem-solving, and maturity.
4. The killing your interview with one-word answers: seek ways respond to interview questions with these anecdotes, not a quick “fill-in-the-blank” answer (ex. “What was your first job?”)
5. How do you get to Carnegie Hall? How do you achieve a great interview? Practice... Video-tape your own interview (don’t stop – like your recital!) and view/assess your “show!”
6. Look out for “stress interviews,” and trick questions like *What is your greatest weakness?*
7. Leave you with a couple more questions for personal reflection:
  - a. *What are the most important traits of an effective educator?* Fox: proficiency, compassion, and trust in leading the students to their own future success in learning.
  - b. *What is most important to you (and why) – music content, outcome, or process?*
  - c. *What are your personal goals and where do you see yourself in five/ten/20 years?*