

**Recommendations of Things to Always Have With You for  
Any Band Performance or Practice (Version 2-15-2023)  
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The band is very fortunate to have had several musicians come play with us over the last couple years or so. However, in the hustle of getting their music ready, briefing them about our e-mail system and the information they can find on the band web site, it is often difficult to get with them individually and offer some thoughts, if they didn't already know, on what life is like playing in typical community bands.

While I will **never** know if the musicians in the Columbus Symphony ever have any of the following concerns, the following thoughts are offered just to give you something to think about and get you better prepared when **you** encounter any of them...and you will.

This is just some advice from someone with experience playing in all types of bands, in all types of weather, and someone who made some very bad decisions early on while doing it. This advice will hold true no matter what band you are playing in.

**You will always want to carry things with you to make the performance or practice more comfortable for you.**

The musicians who DON'T carry this stuff with them are almost always the ones who wish they did, or they will be wanting to borrow what you brought. It happens.

After many decades, I long ago learned that there were certain things I wanted to have with me all the time when I am playing in a band. I also learned to put these items in a “go-bag”, and this go-bag is with me no matter if I am playing inside, outside, what time of year it is, what horn I am playing, if I doing a sit down concert, or playing on the bandwagon. Whenever I am leaving the house with any musical instrument, I just automatically pick up this go-bag when I walk out the door and I am always set.

I try **not** to vary the “go-bag” for the things I consider to be essential, no matter where or when I am playing, so that I don't get to a performance and then remember I had taken something **out** for some reason and then never put it back. ..Yeah it happens to everybody, and then you will hear many musicians around you repeat the phrase:

*“Well I had that in my bag but I took it out because (insert reason here).”*

**You might want to give these items some thought.**

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<b>1</b>	<b>Valve oil.....more than one bottle.</b> The time you only bring one bottle is the time you find that you didn't screw the cap on all the way when you used it last, and now it is empty.
<b>2</b>	<b>Clothes pins, enough to handle a 2-page song in the wind, plus spares.</b>  Ask anyone how important this is who has some experience in the Pumpkin Show Band playing a 4-6 page song during any windy Pumpkin Show...which is about all of them.
<b>3</b>	<b>Plastic garbage bag:</b> Sometimes you want to sit on something other than the dirty bleachers at the fair grounds. Or sometimes the band wagon chairs get wet before you have a chance to sit in them.
<b>4</b>	<b>Wet ones or hand sanitizer:</b>  We often play in dirty environments, and every one once in awhile a mouthpiece drops in the grandstand. Don't ask.  The 3-second rule in that case is that, no matter how short the time is that the mouthpiece touched the grandstand floor, the germs can still kill you.
<b>5</b>	<b>Band aids:</b> Things happen...even to adults.
<b>6</b>	<b>Rain poncho or rain coat:</b> The "Holy Grail" of the go-bag.  Both bands will play even if it sprinkles. Even if you choose not to stick around to do that, you will still want something to keep you from getting wet on your way back to the car, which for the Pumpkin Show might be several blocks.  My strong, personal recommendation is to ditch any thoughts of a raincoat. Some of them are OK if you are always standing up, but when you sit down on the band wagon chair ,they invariably gap at the waist and your pants get wet. Ewwww.  <b>First choice:</b> Go on Amazon, Walmart, a Military surplus store, or any store of your choice, and get the largest/longest poncho you can. Also make sure it is the thickest one you can find so that it will last you for years.  You will want the poncho to either snap, or somehow otherwise be fastened, at the sides so that

	<p>in the wind you <b>don't</b> find that you now have more wing surface than the flying Nun. Or to find yourself always pulling it down in order to give you better coverage because the sides keep flapping open. Been there..done that...and got wet doing it.</p> <p>My poncho is one I have had for decades, and it almost comes to the ground even when I stand up. When I sit down on the band wagon, it will obviously cover me totally, even the tops of my shoes.</p> <p>Make sure it has a hood. A poncho or rain coat without a hood is great if you like the water to drip down your neck.</p> <p>I cannot tell you how many times it has started to rain while I am out playing with either band and I just slip my rain poncho on and stay dry while the musicians around me are sharing their personal testimonials on how they have <b>wonderful</b> rain coats, but they are either in the car, or were left at home.</p>
<b>7</b>	<b>Pencils...as in more than one</b>
<b>8</b>	<b>Fold up music stand</b> <p>Often, no matter if your band is bringing them, or they are being supplied at the venue, Murphy's Law says that there will never be enough music stands for all the musicians who will show up. And, for the Adelphi Band, you will always need to bring your own, anyway.</p> <p>If your band infrequently tells you to bring your own music stand, the odds are that you will forget to pack one since you don't have to remember do that all the time.</p> <p>If 10 musicians showed up for the last practice before the performance, and the band winds up bringing 15 music stands, there will invariably be 20 musicians who actually show up for the event.</p> <p>I learned long ago to just to quit worrying about that stuff, especially since it is out of my control, and I am happy to just plan to use my music stand.</p>
<b>9</b>	<b>About the only thing extra that I only occasionally put into my go-bag extra is a seat cushion for when we play in the grandstands at the county fairs.</b> <p>But, even with that change, I don't take something else out in order to put the seat cushion in.</p>
<b>10</b>	<b>A music light.</b> <p>Two things come to mind:</p>

**First:**

My eyes are fine and I get them checked regularly, but they are older than they were. However, interestingly, many of the indoor places that the Pumpkin Show Band plays, and the Adelphi Band practices, may have adequate lighting for a lot of things, but not for old guys like me (*and some others*) to read old music by.

Some music is difficult to read even in great conditions, since it is often a bad copy made from a 5<sup>th</sup> generation copy to start with, and the original was so old that the paper was almost as dark as the notes.

There are definitely light spots and dark spots where each band plays, and one time the Trombones were in such a dark spot in the church that we were playing in that I was ready to put my horn up by intermission and just walk since I could barely see the music.

**Second:**

The evening parades at the Pumpkin Show.

The Adelphi Band trailer does NOT have lights to help light up the band area. The Pumpkin Show Band trailer does....when they are working.

It is hard to believe until you get there, but there are spots so dark on the Pumpkin Show parade route that I couldn't see my music even though (*in those days*), it was on a music lyre just a very few inches from my face.

In my first evening parade at the Pumpkin Show, I walked up to the band waiting in the Staging Area, and I saw pretty much everybody with some kind of light fastened to their horns. I didn't know why...but I soon found out.

A music light doesn't have to be fancy, and my first one was just stuff I bought at the Dollar Tree, and it lasted me for several years. But, if you want something fancier, a store bought one may run you only \$20.00 or so, and my current one I have had for several decades.

Just like having a rain poncho, once you are in the situation where the lighting is so bad that you have trouble seeing the music, it's too late to wish you had been better prepared. Of a particular place to watch for is the building the Pumpkin Show Band plays their indoor concerts in during the Pumpkin Show.

It is a wonderful building, and it is a welcome place to sit out of the weather and use as a Staging Area before moving on to an outdoor concert or parade. However, where the musicians sit for the indoor concerts can go from blinding sun, to the dark side of the moon in just a few feet. For where the Trombone sit in that building, I always have to use a music light.

I have to thank my brother for remembering to add this item to the go-bag. His preferred music light in many situation is the "miner's" style light that slips over your forehead, and is attached

	to on an elastic band.
<b>11</b>	<p><b>A baseball style hat with a wide brim.</b></p> <p>I wear one all the time, anyway, but my brother rightfully reminded me that for those who do not, in some outdoor concerts you may <b>not</b> have the option to opt out of where your section has been placed in order to NOT face the sun.</p> <p>But, if it is raining, the ball style cap protects the miner's style light, and keeps the rain off your glasses. For those of us who do wear glasses, keeping the rain off of them is definitely pretty important.</p>

I learned long ago that when I played in bands, there were things I was always going to **need**, and there were things that I always **wanted** to have with me in order to make the whole experience as comfortable and successful as I could.

Just some thoughts from some people who have “been there and done that”.