



# Coda Connections

Columbia Bands, Inc.  
Quarterly Newsletter

Summer  
2014

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Columbia Bands Website

## Greetings, fans and members of the Columbia Bands!

Hopefully you've been out to see and hear some of the great performances from our Columbia Bands ensembles this spring. If not, please check the calendar below, then read on for more. Flute Cocktail is done for the season, but the concert band and the jazz band have more sweet sounds to last you all summer.

Also, please check the "Official CB Positions" section below to see the new board-elect. They will begin their duties in July.

Sincerely,

Len Morse  
Editor

## Performance Calendar

(Local public performances only)



### June:

Sun, 6/8, 7:00-7:45PM, Concert Band at [Byron Memorial Park](#), Williamsport, MD

### August:

Sun, 8/3, 3:00-4:00PM, Maryland All-State Community Band at Wilde Lake High School's [Jim Rouse Theater](#), Columbia, MD

Sun, 8/10, 6:00-8:00PM, Concert Band at [Columbia Lakefront](#), Columbia, MD

Wed, 8/13, 8:00-10:00PM, Jazz Band at [Columbia Lakefront](#), Columbia, MD

Sun, 8/17, 6:00-8:00PM, Concert Band at [Lurman Woodland Theatre](#), Catonsville, MD

## Common Musical Slang

by Len Morse (Columbia Bands member)



We musicians can sometimes be a fairly strange bunch. Take the lingo: We throw around words like "gig," "axe," "riff," and lots of other slang terms for musical events and items. If you are not used to it, this specialized vocabulary can be as confusing as a webmaster talking about search engine optimization, or a writer trying to explain dangling participles.

Some musical terms are genre-specific, and although Jazz players use the most slang, many terms encompass the entire musical paradigm, no matter what style of music is under scrutiny. Non-musicians and audience members should learn these terms to help decipher our curious

phrasology.

An "axe" is the musician's instrument (i.e. trumpet, saxophone, guitar, drum, kazoo, etc., but no hatchet). Sometimes you will hear "horn," referring to a wind instrument. That is, an instrument that one blows into to make sound. (Example: "The pit musician had to play two axes: clarinet and flute.")

If a musician refers to "cats," he or she is probably not talking about the Andrew Lloyd Weber musical, but most likely is referring to other musicians. Only Jazz players will dare use this term, while other musicians usually just say "player," "instrumentalist," or sometimes "artist." (Example: "Those cats can play anything!")

In the world of music, a "chart" is the physical sheet music that shows the notes and other information a musician needs to play. The original music is written by the composer, sometimes changed slightly by an arranger (while keeping the melody of the original tune), then usually goes through a music publisher, and finally to a printer and distributor. (Example: "Check the chart for key changes.")

If your "chops" are tired, it means that your Karate moves have become lazy and ineffective. Actually, no. It means your endurance is low from playing a long time. "Chops" refers to the part of the body used to play the instrument (usually the mouth), but it can also mean the technical expertise of the player. (Example: "You've been playing for two hours straight! How are your chops?")

"Hitting a clam" does not mean you picked a fight with a mollusk; it means you played a wrong note. Traditionally used only in Jazz circles, this term has become a standard in some other types of musical groups. Alternate terms one might hear are "clammage," "clinker," "clunker," or "fluff." (Example: "When first learning a piece, there are usually lots of clams.") Yes, we know "clammage" is not a real word.

If a musician plays a "gig," he or she performs at an event. Another term that expanded from the Jazz lexicon, "gig" can be anything: a Jazz combo on a small pub stage, a military brass flourish announcing a VIP's arrival, a marching band playing a halftime show, or a full orchestra playing a movie soundtrack. In fact, in today's lingo, a gig is any type of job, musical or otherwise. (Example: "He played for a very receptive audience at his last gig.")

A "jam session" is not when musicians get together to make fruit preserves—they improvise with other musicians. Improvisation usually occurs without a chart, allowing (or forcing) the musician to use the tune she already knows to create the music based on the chord progression. In this basic context, to "jam" is to enjoy playing from memory, listen to others play, and jump in whenever one feels the desire. Usually, only more experienced musicians engage in such an exercise. (Example: "They were jamming on 'Down by the Riverside'.")

A "legit" piece is part of the classical genre (composing style) of music, which to some may sound ostentatious or square. "Legit" is short for "legitimate," implying the archaic thought that classical is the only proper style of music. (Example: "Mozart's 'Marriage of Figaro' overture is a well-known legit piece.")

A "riff" is a rhythmic or melodic phrase that is usually repeated many times within a piece. Such a phrase traditionally lays the groundwork for a solo or other melodic line to be played over top of it. "Riffs" are most often found in Jazz, Latin, Rock, and Funk styles. (Example: "She played a beautiful tune over that funky horn riff.")

Members of a large musical group must watch the "stick," which is another name for the conductor's baton. This item is helpful for those who are in the last few rows of a large ensemble (usually brass and/or percussion), and a white baton is much easier to see than the conductor's hand. It is used to help show style and to keep the group together (see "train wreck" below). (Example: "Sousa used a stick as big as a horse's leg.")

"Swing" music has nothing to do with a playground. It is a lazy-sounding, offbeat style that was extremely popular during the 1930s and 40s, and has enjoyed resurgence since the 1990s, being played by swing bands or big bands. (Example: "Glenn Miller's 'In The Mood' is the quintessential swing dance tune.")

A musical "train wreck" is when musicians in an ensemble do not play at the same speed, or tempo, thus causing the piece to crumble. This "falling apart" scenario most often comes about when a group that needs a conductor does not have one. (Example: "The saxes were too fast and the tubas were too slow, which caused the entire band to have a train wreck.")

If a music teacher tells a music student to "woodshed" the part, the student needs to practice the part. He should take the part home, or to a favorite practice area, and repeatedly go over whatever section is causing a problem. (Example: "After a few weeks of woodshedding, Scott was able to play his clarinet solo well, and with confidence.")

There are plenty of other musical slang terms not listed here, but you should now be a little more knowledgeable if you find yourself included in a musician's conversation. So after your next swing gig, go up and talk to the cats about their axes and charts, but do not mention any clams!

## Fun Stuff

**Celebrity Birthday:** [Aram Ilyich Khachaturian](#) (June 6, 1903 - May 1, 1978); Armenian-born, Khachaturian originally went to school to study biology, but turned to music composition instead. His first instruments were tuba and cello. He was a supporter of communism and wrote many patriotic film scores. His works also include chamber music, concertos, symphonies, and ballets, one of which contains his most famous movement, the [Sabre Dance](#).



Happiness (Japan)

**Quarterly Word:** "Quintet" - A piece written for five voices or instruments, or the type of group that plays such pieces. Examples include string, piano, brass, woodwind, or any collection of five of the same instrument.

**Quarterly Quote:** "You can't go to the store and buy a good ear and rhythm." ~ [Les Paul](#)

## Official CB Positions



### Officers

President - Jenn Ambrosiano  
Vice President - Jeanette Donald  
Secretary - Kim Drake  
Treasurer - Jim Wesloh

### Members-at-Large

Nancy Efron, Maurice Feldman, Bob Frantz, Peter LePoer, John Messinger, Harold West, John Zontek

### Ex-Officio Music Directors

CCB Director - [Mike Blackman](#)  
CJB Director - [Pete BarenBregge](#)  
FC Director - [Len Morse](#)

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### Incoming Officers (July)

President - John Messinger  
Vice President - Jodi Shochet  
Secretary - Kim Drake  
Treasurer - Jeanette Donald

### Incoming Members-at-Large (July)

Jenn Ambrosiano, Jackie Bryant, Nancy Efron, Maurice Feldman, Bob Frantz, Harold West, Jim Wesloh

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### Appointees and Volunteers

Accountant - David Weisenfreund, CPA  
CBI/CCB Webmaster - Len Morse  
CCB Equipment Manager - Len Morse  
CCB Librarian - Karissa Strawley  
CCB Program Editor - Jeanette Donald  
CJB Librarian - Bob Frantz  
CJB Manager - Bob Frantz  
CJB Tour Manager - Randy Malm  
CJB Sound System Managers - Mark Morris, Megan Zontek  
CJB Webmaster - Matt Williams  
Facebook Fan Page Moderator - Katy Clemens  
FC Manager - Jeanette Donald  
Fundraising Chair - Harold West  
Grant Manager - Jeanette Donald  
Graphic Artist - Corey Holland  
HCAC Liaison - Nancy Efron  
Historian - Melinda Frisch  
Insurance Liaison - Jenn Ambrosiano  
MASCB Manager - Jeanette Donald  
Personnel Manager - Jenn Ambrosiano  
Poster & Flier Manager - Jim Kaiser