

# What Adjudicators Want To Hear: Preparing Your Band For Success

*Missouri Music Educators Association*

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*Joe Pappas*

## **I. Building on Experience**

1. Learn through your experiences as a student and as a teacher
2. Learn through others experience - don't be afraid to ask questions
3. Preparation begins the first day students play their first note

## **II. Know performance criteria**

1. MSHSAA Rules and Regulations
2. Adjudicator Training - observe it, practice it
3. Common sense

## **III. Think Outside the Ballot - The Director's Responsibility - Fundamentals Required**

"It's not what you play, but how you play it."

### **1. Selecting the Music**

#### **A. Dare to be different-**

- i. Choose something no one else is playing
- ii. Choose an unfamiliar work to adjudicators
- iii. The music should be educational, enjoyable to all, and contain elements that showcase your strengths

#### **B. Must fit the ability of the ensemble - avoid over programming**

#### **C. Must fit the instrumentation of the ensemble - includes percussion; cross cues?**

#### **D. Avoid letting students pick the music - or at least within reason**

#### **E. At the "read through" - When is a piece too difficult?**

#### **F. Play what you can handle under the pressure**

#### **G. Resources for Music Selection**

- i. Teaching Music Through Performance series - GIA Publications
- ii. New music reviews/reading sessions - The Instrumentalist, Band World
- iii. Best Music for High School Band by Dvorak, Grechesky and Ciepluch
- iv. Best Music for Young Band - by Tom Dvorak
- v. Research state lists
- vi. Talk to experienced directors (See accompanying list.)

### **2. Preparation**

#### **A. Know the Score, study it, interpret what the composer intended**

"Music is like a fine piece of fabric, it must be woven. Each thread serves a purpose and must fit tightly with the threads around it; top, bottom, left, right. One major flaw could cause defect in the whole fabric." Joe Pappas

#### **B. Scoring - creative reassignment for lacking instruments**

#### **C. Work and assign a few sections at a time, not the whole piece.**

#### **D. Musicality - Don't just play the notes or go through the motions, make music.**

#### **E. 6-8 weeks - first rehearsal to performance (school schedule pending)**

#### **F. Measure the progress - when to peak?**

#### **G. Don't grind everyday, PRN (as needed)**

### **3. Programming**

#### **A. Warm-up/Confidence Builder (Ballad or March)**

#### **B. "The Big Tune" - (Overture, Multi-mov't work, Theme and Variation)**

#### **C. Final Impression - play your best selection**

#### **4. Pre-Festival Evaluation**

##### **A. Clinicians**

- i. a second set of ears and eyes can be helpful - experience
- ii. interpretation, listening, suggestions
- iii. avoid clinics 2-3 weeks prior to festival (re:confusion)

##### **B. Student Evaluation**

- i. choose a few students to evaluate and provide feed back

##### **C. Pre-Festival Night**

- i. provide parents with a pre-festival concert
- ii. have an area director or two do a taped evaluation
- iii. include sight reading - go through the entire process in front of parents

#### **IV. Sight Reading**

1. Preparation begins the first day of rehearsals

2. How to prepare

##### **A. The Approach**

- i. know the rules - MSHSAA manual
- ii. take it serious
- ii. relax - even between the performance and the sight reading room
- iii. focus - keep students on task, avoid discussing the performance
- iv. evaluate - after the performance, the follow-up

##### **B. The Materials**

- i. Lake or Ericson arrangements- Bach Chorales (tone, intonation, balance, blend, phrasing)
- ii. Fussell - Exercises for Ensemble Drill (scales, rhythms, etc.)
- iii. 101 Rhythms and Rests

##### **C. Common problems in sight reading**

- i. rhythm
- ii. key signatures/notes
- iii. musicality - balance/blend, dynamics, phrasing

#### **V. Post Festival Wrap-up**

- A. Allow for feed back from students
- B. Play the tapes/recordings from the festival
- C. Read and interpret the evaluation ballots
- D. What about next year?

#### **VI. Discussion**