

The Evaluation Process

Part 2

By Mark Stone

In my last installment of this article, I described the evaluation process in general terms. In this article, I would like to give more specific information on two of the captions, the 'General Effect' and 'Music' captions.

General Effect

What is General Effect? It is how the members perform and the audience responds to the program. Effect is about performance quality and entertainment value. The difficulty is in deciding what is 'entertainment'. Let's take a look at the Effect judging sheets.

The Effect caption is divided into two sub-categories (sheets); Musical Effect and Visual Effect, each receiving 300 points. The two sheets are then averaged and the total score is 300 (**remember that the sub-total of the score is out of 1,000, then divided by 10, arriving at a score out of 100**). So the overall effect on the score is 30%.

The following is the criteria upon which the points are awarded;

Musical Effect: This sheet is divided into three categories, each worth 100 points;

Program Effect-Credit is given for the effectiveness of the Musical Program, the creativity and originality of the program concept, and the imagination, depth and pacing of the musical design. Credit is also given for musical appeal, creativity, and the development of musical ideas and use of time.

Performance Effect-Performers are rewarded for their ability to bring the show to life through all of those positive qualities of a technical and artistic nature, which are communicated through the performance. Also for the emotion, expression, style and communication of the performance.

Coordination- Performers are rewarded for the interrelationship of all musical elements to present various musical styles and moods. Consideration is given for coordination of percussion to winds, and winds to winds. Also for the effective staging and presentation of musical voices, and the percussion & visual enhancement of the music.

Visual Effect: This sheet is also divided into three categories, each worth 100 points;

Program Effect-Credit is given for the effectiveness of the Visual Program, the creativity and originality of the program concept, the imagination, and the depth and pacing of the visual design. Credit is also given for appeal, creativity, and development of visual ideas and use of time.

Performance Effect- Performers are rewarded for their ability to bring the show to life through all of those positive qualities of a technical and artistic nature, which are communicated through the performance. Also for the emotion, expression, style and communication of the performance.

Coordination- Performers are rewarded for the interrelationship of all visual elements to present various styles and moods. Consideration is also given for co-ordination of visual to music and between visual elements. Also for the effective staging and presentation of musical voices and the percussion & visual enhancement of the music.

On both sheets, the Program Effect relates primarily to the design of the program, which is why the term 'credit is given' is used. The Performance Effect category relates to the quality (excellence) of the performance, and the Coordination is a combination of both design and excellence.

The preceding section is a lot of 'ajudicator-ese' that describes how we earn credit (points) with our program, but let's get down to the 'nuts & bolts' of what a 'effective' show contains.

Great General Effect happens with a partnership between three parties;

1. **The Program designers**-These are the people that select and arrange the music, write the drill and write the equipment/body work.
2. **Performers**-These are the ones who bring the show to life through excellence, technique, emotion, personality and communication.
3. **Audience**-You are the ones that need to understand the program, enjoy it and then react to it. If the program is effective, then the audience will react with applause, cheers, emotion, etc. The Effect judge can be considered in many ways as a professional audience member. When he reacts positively, instead of applauding, he awards us points.

Great Effect comes from synergy created between sight and sound, music and motion, design and execution, intellect and emotion, winds and percussion, band and guard. In other words, the coordination between any two parts of the program, and the blending and balance of all. All of this comes together to make entertainment.

Some questions you can ask your self when deciding if a show is 'effective' are:

- Does the program demonstrate creativity?
- Does the program have highs and lows? Does it have to?
- Does the program DEVELOP an idea?
- Does the visual package support musical package?
- Does the program have IMPACT & EFFECT?
- Does the program provide CONTRAST?
- Does the program establish the MOOD needed to guide the emotional response?
- Does the choice of tunes tie together well and make musical sense?
- Do the performers RELATE to the concept, the music and the visual design?
- Does the audience UNDERSTAND the musical program and ENJOY it?

Music

We all know what kind of music we like, and can usually tell if the music is played well, but the areas that are evaluated by the judges may not be as obvious, so let's look at the sheets.

The Music caption is divided into two sub-categories (sheets); Ensemble Music and Individual Music, each receiving 300 points. The two sheets are then averaged and the total score is 300 (**remember that the sub-total of the score is out of 1,000, then divided by 10, arriving at a score out of 100**). So the overall effect on the score is 30%. In fact, the two sheets used by these judges are very similar in many ways, so the important thing to note is that the Ensemble Music judge is in the Judges Box and the Individual Music judge is on the field. This means that the Ensemble Judge is evaluating the musical performance from a distance, listening to the 'big picture', whereas the Individual judge walks around and through the ensemble sampling each specific section and commenting on the individual's skills and performances. This can be very intimidating for the younger, less experienced performers, but the judges are trained on being as unobtrusive as possible.

The following is the criteria upon which the points are awarded;

Music Performance-Ensemble: This sheet is divided into three categories, each worth 100 points;

Balance and Timing-Credit will be given for the successful balance of all winds and percussion and the ensemble blend and cohesiveness. Recognition will be given for the simultaneity of events at the judge's focal point. Consideration will be given to tempo, pulse control and rhythmic interpretation as well as clarity and uniformity of articulations. Demand is inherent in consideration of achievement.

Tone Quality and Intonation-Credit will be given for the consistency of timbre/sonority, tuning of instruments, melodic and harmonic intonation and muscle control as it relates to tone production. Recognition will be given for breath support, embouchure, forearm, wrist, etc. in evaluating all winds and percussion. Recognition will be given for the demands placed on the musicians in your consideration of achievement.

Musicianship-Credit will be given for qualities of phrasing, expression, style and idiomatic interpretation of all winds and percussion. Recognition will be given and credit will be given for involvement of the individual players. Demand is inherent in the derived achievement score.

Music Performance-Individual: This sheet is also divided into three categories, each worth 100 points;

Method and Timing-Credit will be given for all qualities and techniques involving method and timing of winds and percussion including note accuracy, attacks, releases, clarity and uniformity of articulation. Credit will also be given for uniformity of enunciation and tongue technique, stick control, arm and wrist techniques for percussion and the quality of rhythmic interpretation and control of tempo and pulse. Demand is inherent in consideration of achievement.

Tone Quality and Intonation-*This description is the same as on the Music Ensemble sheet.*

Musicianship-*This description is the same as on the Music Ensemble sheet.*

Definitions:

Timbre/sonority-This refers to the characteristic tone qualities of the individual instruments.

Balance-This refers to the blending of the individual tonalities (sound qualities) of the ensemble (clarinets to saxes, woodwinds to brass, winds to percussion, etc.).

Timing-This refers to the accuracy of the articulation within the ensemble, not just the percussion.

Tuning-This refers to the adjustment of the instruments to match pitch, and the students ability to make minute adjustments to match the pitch within the ensemble on any given note.

Breath Support-A wind musician must breathe in a very controlled and specific way, and support refers to the constant and consistent pressure of the air going through the instrument (air column).

Articulation-The way in which a note (or sound) is attacked, released, accented and enunciated.

Attack-The manner in which a note or sound is started.

Release- The manner in which a note or sound is ended.

Accent- The manner in which a note or sound is emphasized, or not.

Enunciation-The shape and vowel sound of a note performed by a wind player.

Tempo-The speed in which the material (be it musical or visual) is performed.

Dynamics-The volume of music (static or moving) and the contrast of it.

Embouchure-The point of contact between the mouth and the instrument.

Phrasing-A phrase is a musical sentence, perceived as a cohesive statement. Phrasing mainly refers to the subtle nuances in shaping, articulation and dynamics performed by the student.

A 'rule of thumb' for a great musical performance is not the fine execution of any one part, but the combination of all of the parts.

I hope this helps you to understand a little more clearly the Music portion of the performance score.

(For more information you may go to www.westernband.org/contest_rules.html and download the WBA Handbook).