

# **Wisconsin School Music Association**



**2022-2023  
Adjudicator Handbook**

# Table of Contents

WSMA Personnel	1
What Is WSMA?	2
Festival Services	3
WSMA Festival Music List Revision Schedule	3
Purpose of WSMA Festivals	3
<b><i>Adjudicator Information</i></b>	
<a href="#"><u>Role of WSMA Adjudicators</u></a>	3
<a href="#"><u>Adjudicator Levels</u></a>	4
<a href="#"><u>Adjudicator Assignments</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Sample Contract</u></a>	5
<a href="#"><u>Adjudicator Evaluations</u></a>	6
<a href="#"><u>A Typical S&amp;E Festival Day</u></a>	7
<a href="#"><u>Concert Festivals</u></a>	8
<a href="#"><u>Rating Information</u></a>	9
<a href="#"><u>Purpose of Rubric Forms</u></a>	10
<a href="#"><u>Providing an Effective Critique</u></a>	11
<a href="#"><u>Sample Adjudicator Comments</u></a>	12
<b><i>Festival Information</i></b>	
<a href="#"><u>Quick Reference</u></a>	13
<a href="#"><u>Reminders</u></a>	14
<a href="#"><u>Frequently Asked Questions</u></a>	15
<a href="#"><u>Adjudicator Resources</u></a>	16
<a href="#"><u>Adjudicator Timeline</u></a>	17
<a href="#"><u>Festival Cancellation &amp; Weather Emergency</u></a>	18

**Wisconsin School Music Association**  
**1005 Quinn Drive**  
**Waunakee, WI 53597**  
**Phone: 1-800-589-9762/608-850-3566**  
**[www.wsmamusic.org](http://www.wsmamusic.org)**



**Wisconsin School  
Music Association**

1005 Quinn Drive  
Wauwaukee, WI 53597

(608) 850-3566

(800) 589-9762

[www.wsmamusic.org](http://www.wsmamusic.org)

*For specific staff responsibilities and contact  
information,  
please visit the WSMA website at:  
[www.wsmamusic.org](http://www.wsmamusic.org)*

Dear Adjudicator:

On behalf of the Wisconsin School Music Association, we are pleased to present you with the 2022-2023 edition of the WSMA Adjudicator Handbook. The scope and size of WSMA festivals has grown to be one of the largest student activities in the nation. It is our goal to continue these standards of excellence and preserve our proud musical heritage.

This handbook is intended to bring together, in one source, all of the necessary and relevant information needed. Committee members, adjudicators and WSMA staff have collaborated to assemble this important and useful adjudication tool.

It is our hope you will use this handbook as a guide in providing a constructive and educational experience for all students participating in WSMA Music Festivals. With your continued assistance, a unique and valuable learning experience awaits the young musicians of Wisconsin.

Your role as an adjudicator has a great impact on students participating at a music festival as well as a lifelong impact. We sincerely thank you for your commitment and service to WSMA activities.

Best wishes for a successful festival season!

Sincerely,  
WSMA Board of Directors,  
WSMA Festivals Committee Members and  
WSMA Staff Members

**OFFICE STAFF**

**Laurie Fellenz**  
*Executive Director*

**Kerrie Brey**  
*Finance Manager*

**Jerry Hrovat**  
*Program Associate*

**Theresa McKinley**  
*Director of Technology Services*

**Linda Meier**  
*Program Associate*

**Darin Menk**  
*Professional Learning Associate*

**Anne Proescholdt**  
*Program Associate – Member Services*

**Erica Ruppert**  
*Program Director*

**Laura Schram**  
*Program Manager*

**Kevin Thays**  
*Director of Communications*

**Tim Wurgler**  
*Interim Program Director*

## WSMA MISSION STATEMENT

To ensure that all students have opportunities which encourage lifelong involvement in music, Wisconsin School Music Association will provide statewide music programming activities, offer leadership and support for school music programs, and advance music as an integral part of the school curriculum and community life.

### WSMA BELIEFS

- We believe music is a basic human need.
- We believe the study of music develops life skills.
- We believe the study of music is a vital part of every student's education.
- We believe a high-quality, comprehensive, inclusive music curriculum should be offered to all students at all levels.
- We believe a comprehensive study of music involves performing, creating, reading, listening and responding to music and should be available for all students at all levels.
- We believe a music program is most effective when there is sensitivity to scope and sequence of musical knowledge for all students at all levels.
- We believe the study of music develops creativity, self-expression, discipline and teamwork.
- We believe music education positively influences other disciplines and professions.
- We believe a quality music program has a positive impact on school climate and community life.
- We believe participation in school music encourages lifelong learning, involvement and appreciation of music.

### WHO WE ARE

Founded in 1932, the Wisconsin School Music Association is proud to serve more than 3,500 music teachers and school administrators in the education of more than 100,000 students who annually participate in our activities. The Association, including more than 1,200 member schools, is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of school administrators elected from ten geographic districts, three elected officers from the Wisconsin Music Educators Association, a representative from the Department of Public Instruction and from the Wisconsin Association of School Boards as well as a Parent-Community Liaison. Under their leadership, WSMA has created a strategic plan to guide us as we challenge our youth to achieve excellence through music.

### WHAT WE DO

- **PROGRAMS:** Open to music students from all member schools, WSMA annually provides opportunities through Music Festivals, State Marching Band Championships, State Honors Music Project along with several other programs designed to augment, enrich and support the school music program.
- **VISION:** In Wisconsin schools and communities, all have access to enriching musical opportunities that assure a lifetime of involvement and enjoyment.
- **REPRESENTATION:** WSMA through the Wisconsin Music Educators Association acts as advocates and representatives for quality music education in Wisconsin schools.
- **SERVICES:** Publications, workshops, teacher in-service, continuing education offerings, and special projects are available as a result of the work of committees, Board of Directors and WSMA staff.

The growth in all of the above activities is testimony to the importance and strength of music education in Wisconsin's schools. Wisconsin School Music Association is proud to be an important contributor to this part of the education of our youth.

## FESTIVAL SERVICES

WSMA assigns all adjudicators, collects fees, implements rules, provides a subsidy and offers awards for WSMA sanctioned Festivals according to guidelines found in the WSMA Festival Rules.

District Festival Managers are responsible for sending accurate and timely information to adjudicators, scheduling festival events, communicating with participating schools, providing facilities, paying all festival expenses, maintaining communications with WSMA and responding to deadlines as outlined in the Festival Managers Handbook.

### **Festival Music List Revision Schedule**

Festival Music Lists are continually reviewed and revised using the following schedule:

<b>School Year of Publication</b>	<b>Wind/ Percussion</b>	<b>Vocal</b>	<b>Orchestra</b>	<b>Piano, Handbell, Guitar</b>
2023-24	Woodwind, Brass and Percussion Ensembles (duets, trios, quartets, quintets, choirs, etc.)	Concert Choirs (SATB, SAB, SSA, TTB, TTBB, etc.)	Full Orchestra String Orchestra	
2024-25	Concert Band Jazz Ensemble Jazz Combo	Vocal Jazz Show Choir Vocal Solos (Classical & Music Theater)	String Solos	Piano Solo (Classical & Jazz) Guitar Solo
2025-26	Woodwind, Brass and Percussion Solos	Concert Choirs (SATB, SAB, SSA, TTB, TTBB, etc.)	Full Orchestra String Orchestra	
2026-27	Concert Band Jazz Ensemble Jazz Combo	Vocal Jazz Show Choir Vocal Ensembles (duets, trios, quartets, Barbershop, etc.)	Alternative Strings String Ensembles (duets, trios, quartets, quintets, choirs, etc.)	Handbell Choir Piano Duet Piano Trio (1 piano, six hands)

### **Purpose of WSMA Festivals**

- Improve students' music performance through assessment;
- Increase students' understanding of music literature and music concepts;
- Motivate students to continue the study of music;
- Establish standards of excellence in music performance;
- Provide opportunities for students to understand the relationship of music experiences to other life experiences.

### **Role of WSMA Adjudicators**

- Represent WSMA's purpose, goals and focus;
- Maintain consistency by following WSMA rules and procedures;
- Clarify expectations and standards of quality in various aspects of performance;
- Provide constructive comments and suggestions for improvement on student performance;
- Encourage students to continue musical development and participation;
- Assist students in understanding the relationship between festival and other music experiences;
- Verify the music to be performed is on the current WSMA Festival Music List and is the original, publisher printed version of the matching edition or legally purchased e-print.

Each year, hundreds of music educators in Wisconsin serve as adjudicators and clinicians for WSMA sponsored music festivals. The service provided to young musicians and to other music educators is significant, often having an impact that continues long after the music festival event has passed. In fulfilling the purpose of WSMA festivals, professional and friendly demeanor is expected throughout the day. The excessive use of negative comments or the use of sarcastic language is not appropriate. Adjudicators are encouraged to write comments on all aspects of performance and use comments that support the rubric value chosen and subsequent division award. An additional purpose at the district level is to identify superior Solo & Ensemble events in Class A that have earned a performance at a State Solo & Ensemble Festival.

## **ADJUDICATOR LEVELS**

*The levels and associated criteria below are intended to provide access to those seeking to become or continue as active WSMA adjudicators, while also recognizing training, continued service and experience.*

### **Submit an Adjudicator Registration Form and attend an Adjudicator Workshop**

1. Attendance at an Adjudicator Workshop is expected for all new adjudicators to complete their initial training.
2. All adjudicators are expected to attend a workshop at least once every four years to maintain their experience level. *Those not attending a workshop within this time frame receive reduced compensation.*
3. New adjudicators and those that have not attended an Adjudicator Workshop or have not met sufficient criteria are placed in the Level IV supplementary adjudicator category. Adjudicators in this entry-level category are assigned only in emergency situations until step two is completed.

### **Qualifying for Level III-Registered Adjudicator**

1. Meet at least one of the following:
  - a. Undergraduate degree in music or music education **or**
  - b. Four years of teaching experience in a studio/professional music education setting **or**
  - c. Music performance experience at a professional level.
2. Successful participation in a WSMA Adjudicator Workshop.
3. Experience (choose one of the following)
  - a. Participation at a festival as an adjudicator trainee with a Master Adjudicator **or**
  - b. Complete and turn in WSMA rubric evaluations of S&E performances at an Adjudicator Workshop **or**
  - c. At least seven years experience with WSMA festivals as a teacher or festival manager
4. Demonstrated knowledge of rules and procedures by completing Quiz #1
5. Recommendation by Master Adjudicator upon completion of training (3.a) or recommendation by review of workshop rubrics.
6. Completed Annual Update Quiz.

### **Advancing to Level II-Certified Adjudicator**

1. WSMA Adjudication Experience:
  - a. Three years as an active WSMA adjudicator and nine WSMA assigned festivals **or**
  - b. Nine years preparing students for solo and ensemble festivals in a school setting.
2. At least three years of experience in preparing students for music festivals.
3. Acceptable evaluation record as a WSMA adjudicator.
4. Completed Annual Update Quiz.
5. Up to date adjudicator workshop attendance.
6. Demonstrated knowledge of rules and procedures by completing Quiz #2
7. Provide contact information for two references that represent the categories below:
  - a. Administrator or supervisor (for school music teachers) **and**
  - b. An active WSMA Adjudicator, school music teacher or music department chairperson.  
(Private music teachers or others not employed by a school need to have two recommendations from the sources identified in 3b.)

### **Achieving Level I -Master Adjudicator**

1. WSMA Adjudication Experience:
  - a. Seven years as an active WSMA Adjudicator AND twenty-one WSMA assigned festivals **or**
  - b. Fifteen years as an active music teacher in a school.
2. Acceptable evaluation record as a WSMA adjudicator.
3. Completed Annual Update Quiz.
4. Up to date on adjudicator workshop attendance.
5. Demonstrate advanced knowledge of procedures by completing Quiz #3
6. Meet a minimum of two of the following:
  - a. Evidence of professional development **or**
  - b. Awards or recognition in the education or music profession **or**
  - c. A minimum of seven years of experience preparing students for WSMA festivals **or**
  - d. Evidence of continuing activity as a professional musician.

# ADJUDICATOR ASSIGNMENTS

Adjudicator assignments are the responsibility of WSMA. Assignments are made based on availability, expertise required and location of both the festival and the home address of the adjudicator.

- The District Festival Manager is asked to provide adjudicators with directions, names of other adjudicators and a preliminary schedule within two weeks of the festival date.
- A required adjudicators meeting will be held 30 minutes before the festival start time.
- Festivals over five hours will provide a meal at no cost to the adjudicator. A 60-minute lunch break is required for an eight hour festival and 30-45 minutes for a five to seven hour festival. A morning and afternoon ten minute break is suggested, but not required.
- Overtime pay is \$8.00 per half hour and \$10 dollars is added to the base fee of all state contracts.
- The Festival host determines the method of payment (same day check, check by mail, direct deposit).

## Sample Adjudicator Contract:

**WISCONSIN SCHOOL MUSIC ASSOCIATION, INC.**  
 1005 Quinn Drive, Waunakee, WI 53597  
 Telephone: (608) 850-3566

Festival Number: 123-M      Festival Type: District S&E

### CONFIRMATION ADJUDICATION CONTRACT

Agreement entered into between Wisconsin School Music Association, Inc., the District Festival named below and

JANE DOE  
 41006 QUINN DR  
 CWAUNASEE WI 53456

Business Phone:  
 Home Phone:  
 Cell Phone: 608-123-4567  
 Email: [jdoe@wisconsin.org](mailto:jdoe@wisconsin.org)

ADULT QUALIFIED ADJUDICATOR, who agrees to render services as a PRIVATE SERVICE CONTRACTOR at the location assigned below, under the following terms and conditions:

Location: <b>Any HS/MS</b>	Festival Mngr: <b>John Teacher</b>
City: <b>Anywhere</b>	Mngr Phone: <b>608-678-6789</b>
Date: <b>Sat, Feb 16, 2019</b>	Mngr Email: <b>jteacher@anyschool.org</b>
Festival Hours: <b>8-4 PM</b>	

1. The adjudicator agrees to follow and enforce WSMA rules and procedures. Any waiver of stated rules or procedures requires written authorization from WSMA in advance.
2. The adjudicator agrees to serve in support of the stated purposes and form of WSMA music festivals.
3. The festival host will pay the amount indicated below, which includes the base fee as determined by the adjudicator's experience level, and mileage for traveling to the festival site. In addition, the festival host will compensate the adjudicator for any assigned adjudication duties beyond eight hours of adjudication at a rate of eight (\$8) dollars per half-hour. The district will also provide a meal at no cost to the adjudicator if the schedule runs through a meal hour.
4. Adjudicators are required to attend the adjudicator's meeting scheduled 30 minutes prior to the festival start time or as arranged by the festival host. This meeting is not included in the contracted fee.
5. By accepting this contract, the adjudicator agrees to the method of payment as provided by the WSMA member school.
6. The adjudicator or the above festival host has the right to cancel this agreement within 7 days of the assigned festival date due to unexpected circumstances. This cancellation must be done through WSMA so replacements and/or reassignments, if possible, can be made. Any cancellation by a district with less than 7 days notice will result in a \$25 cancellation fee payable to the adjudicator.

I have agreed to the terms and conditions stated above.

*Accepted per Phone Call/Email*

Dated: Jul 15, 2019

<b>Assigned Area:</b>	<b>Base Fee</b>	\$133.00
<b>Brass</b>	<b>Travel Stipend</b>	\$20.00
	<b>Hotel Stipend</b>	\$0.00
	<b>Balance Payable</b>	<b>\$153.00</b>

*Laurie N. Fellenz*  
 Laurie N. Fellenz  
 WSMA Executive Director  
 Dated: 7/15/2019

## **ADJUDICATOR EVALUATIONS**

A WSMA sanctioned music festival is intended to be a celebration of accomplishment as well as an opportunity for continued growth. Festival managers as well as music teachers receive evaluation forms for sharing perceptions with WSMA about adjudication. Positive and negative comments about individual adjudicators, as well as general comments about the process are welcomed by WSMA. All written comments are shared with adjudicators. Concerns regarding adjudicators are treated seriously, particularly if there is more than one source or situation involved. Adjudicators can and will be replaced on Festival day if rules and procedures are not maintained.

### **Grounds for dismissal as a WSMA adjudicator may include one or more of the following:**

- Excessive use of negative comments.
- Use of sarcastic or discriminatory language.
- Consistent failure to provide written comments on all aspects of performance.
- Failure to follow all WSMA rules or policies.
- A lack of professional behavior in dealing with students, parents or peers.

### **What you should know:**

- Member-school teachers, private teachers, parents and students may submit an online adjudicator evaluation to WSMA. This online form is available in the Account Portal.
- The form covers the following topics and answers:
  - Verbal and written communication with students
    - Supportive and helpful
    - Helpful but too few or too general
    - Overly critical
    - Unprofessional and/or inappropriate
  - Consistency of verbal and written comments with scoring
    - Comments support ratings
    - Comments do not support ratings
  - Application of WSMA Festival Rules and Procedures
    - Excellent knowledge and application of festival rules and procedures
    - Unsure of some rules and procedures
    - Doesn't follow rules and procedures
  - Ethics and Professionalism
    - Demonstrates good judgment in working with students/peers/parents
    - Occasional careless/insensitive remarks or comments
    - Unprofessional and/or inappropriate interaction with students/peers/parents.
- Evaluators may include additional comments under each topic.
- Uploads of the completed rubric and/or video performance may be attached if applicable.

## **Background Checks**

WSMA instituted a policy in June of 2019 to begin using the background check monitoring system of Wisconsin Court Access Program known as CCAP for those that work with students through Festivals. A continuation of this policy recently requires all adjudicators to submit to more formal background checks. This is done for the safety of students, schools, WSMA and the adjudicator.



# A Typical S&E Festival Day

## *Before the Festival...*

- A. The Adjudicators Meeting begins 30 minutes before the festival. Please be sure to:
  - 1. Allow sufficient driving time.
  - 2. Have access to both the Adjudicator Handbook and the Festival Music List.
- B. At this meeting, adjudicators will receive:
  - 1. Adjudication forms for the day along with the final room schedule. Check that the forms are in order and reflect the adjudication assignment.
  - 2. Verbal reminders of Festival Rules.
  - 3. Locations of performance sites, festival headquarters and where lunch is served.
  - 5. End of day check out information.
- C. Report to the performance site.
  - 1. Introduce yourself to the door monitor and room chairperson and offer suggestions on how they may assist.
    - a. The adjudicator should do everything possible to ensure that the performance site runs smoothly and effectively.
    - b. Keep events flowing in time order as much as possible. If one event is not ready to perform at its scheduled time, allow one that is ready (and willing) to perform out of order.
  - 2. Check that the room is set appropriately and make changes as needed.
    - a. Make sure the desk is in a location where the adjudicator can see the performer(s) and still allow for the audience to see.
    - b. Adjust the piano so it is in the best possible location for the performance site. Allow the teacher and student to make the final decision.
    - c. Play the piano and any provided percussion equipment and alert the festival manager if there are any issues.

***Please do your best to keep your room running ON SCHEDULE.*** Some delays cannot be avoided, however the adjudicator needs to remain flexible and in control.

## *During the Festival...*

- A. After welcoming the student(s) to the performance site, the performance should always begin with the student introduction.
  - 1. The introduction should include:
    - Performer and accompanist name(s), name of school, title and composer of selection (and if appropriate, the movements being performed), and a significant aspect of style, form, technique, harmony, rhythm or melody in the piece. (In Music Theater Events students are also asked to set the scene. Please see Rule V.B.4.b for further explanation.)
  - 2. If it seems the student is going to forget the introduction, simply remind them.
  - 3. The introduction is not part of the rating.
- B. During the performance, write comments on the back of the rubric to support the rating, making notes of specific performance areas, passages or measures that were outstanding or in need of attention.
- C. Following the performance make sure to speak to the student(s) right away.
  - 1. Thank the performers.
  - 2. As time allows, share suggestions on how to improve, and/or acknowledge excellence.

*\*Remember: Always be aware of how comments are worded. Students should be left with a feeling that they have done well or have learned something about how to improve. If a criticism is offered, always **be sure** to offer suggestions/techniques on how to improve.*
- D. Complete the rubric by circling sub-caption scores, filling in the total points at the bottom and circling the overall rating at the top.

*\*Remember: The rating should match the profile chosen during the performance and should be supported by written comments on the back.*
- E. Place the form in the “completed” envelope provided. Approximately every 30 - 60 minutes a runner will come around to collect completed rubrics.

## *At the end of the Festival...*

- A. Mark remaining forms with “DNA.”
- B. Check the room for any music left behind.
- C. Take DNA’s and unclaimed music to the Festival Headquarters to checkout.

# CONCERT FESTIVALS

*A majority of Solo & Ensemble Festival rules and procedures are the same for Concert Festivals. This page outlines the information that is specific to Concert Festivals. Reference the Festival Rules for more details.*

## ADJUDICATORS

- Either three WSMA adjudicators or two WSMA adjudicators and one clinician will be contracted for concert festivals.
- When a clinician is hired, contracted adjudicators will only be asked to provide written comments and a rating. The clinician will provide the clinic/verbal comments.
- Each adjudicator will provide written comments and a rating for each ensemble.
- Adjudicators should not consult with others prior to assigning a rating.

## MUSIC

- Class Types: A, B, C, M
- Adjudicators must be provided with a complete score for each piece performed.
- Choral scores must be originals or legal electronically printed music. Photocopies are allowed for instrumental scores.
- Each concert group must perform 1 selection from the current WSMA Festival Music List
- The required selection must be the matching, correct edition to the current WSMA Festival Music List.
- Additional selections should be of equal or greater difficulty level.
- Each concert group must perform two additional selections, for a total of three. If the combined performance time equals or exceeds the minimum times listed below, a concert group may perform only two selections.

ENSEMBLE TYPE	CLASS B, C, M	CLASS A
Instrumental	10 minutes	15 minutes
Choral	8 minutes	10 minutes

## CHORAL MUSIC

- The voicing of additional choral selections must be 3 or more voice parts for class A and B and two or more for class C.
- Pre-recorded accompaniments are not permitted for concert festivals.
- Students or adults may perform published accompanist parts for choral groups as allowed, reference event header.

## SIGHT READING

- Sight reading is not required; however, directors may request a sight reading experience as part of the concert group festival.
- A sight reading rubric and music will be provided to adjudicators. (See rubric in the Account Portal)

## CLINIC

- Depending on class, at least 5-10 minutes is allotted for verbal comments. The festival manager may schedule more time if the schedule allows.
- Adjudicators can either rotate each ensemble or each take a turn with the same ensemble.
- Adjudicators should take up the full time allotted for an interactive critique.

# RATING INFORMATION

## Rating Descriptions:

- I** A consistently outstanding performance in all areas.
- II** A Very good performance with only minor issues.
- III** A performance demonstrating accomplishment but weak in several qualities.
- IV** A performance containing numerous weaknesses within the performance.
- V** A performance indicating a need for continued efforts in fundamentals.

*Please Note: Expectations within each criterion should be adjusted according to the class entered.*

## For All WSMA Festivals

Indicate the sub-caption value that best reflects the performance and then add the sub-captions. The final rating is then determined by the total of the sub-captions. Rating information is included on all rubrics.

## Solo & Ensemble Festivals

### Final Rating Class A

Rating	*I Class A only	I	II	III	IV	V
Class A (5 criteria form)	5-8	9-11	12-22	23-33	34-44	45-50
Class A (6 criteria form)	6-9	10-12	13-24	25-36	37-48	49-60

### Final Rating Class B and C

Rating	I	II	III	IV	V
Class B and C (5 criteria form)	5-11	12-22	23-33	34-44	45-50
Class B and C (6 criteria form)	6-12	13-24	25-36	37-48	49-60

## Concert Festivals

Rating	I	II	III	IV
7 criteria forms	7-17	18-31	32-45	46-56

## State Solo & Ensemble Festivals

Rating	I	II	III	IV
Class A (5 criteria form)	5-7	8-17	18-25	26-30
Class A (6 criteria form)	6-8	9-20	21-32	33-36

# Purpose of a Rubric Form

**Rubrics define performance expectations at various levels.**

**Rubric forms save time by:**

- Helping adjudicators identify elements of a performance:
  - Focus on why it is happening
  - An opportunity to offer specific suggestions
  - The ability to reinforce positive elements
- Providing a springboard for specific comments. Specific comments should be written on the back of the rubric form.

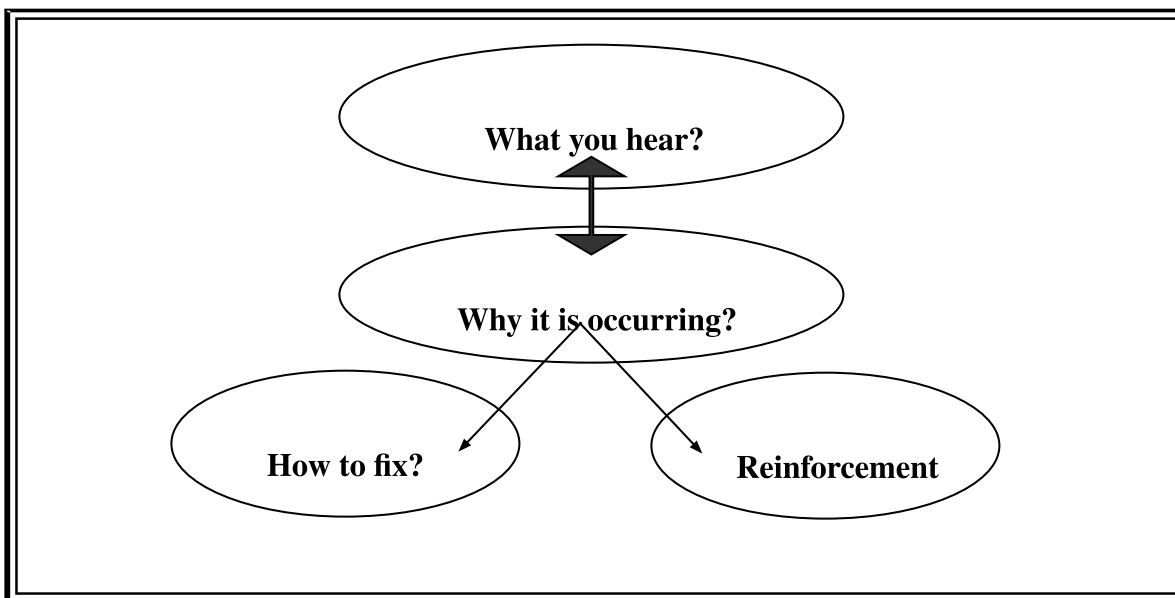
**Using Rubrics**

- There are two numbers in each “box” of a sub-caption. Circle the number that most accurately describes the element being evaluated.
- Underline/circle specific comments that reflect aspects of the performance.
- Total the points and write the score at the bottom of the form.
- Circle the corresponding rating on top.
- Sign your name.

**Remember:**

- Use the back of the form for written comments to reinforce items circled on the front. The comments on the back must always align with the sub-caption scores on the front of the rubric.
- Provide suggestions for improvement or reinforce positive aspects of the performance.
- Keep in mind the three elements of a constructive comment:
  - Why it is happening
  - Offer specific suggestions
  - Reinforce positive elements

## Providing an Effective Critique



# Providing an Effective Critique

*John Scheib - WSMA Master Adjudicator*

Musicians communicate feelings, emotions, ideas, or stories to the audience. To effectively accomplish this, the performer needs to clearly communicate the intent of the music. This is where to spend time in clinic situations - defining WHAT is the intent, working on HOW to improve the clarity, but always relating the concepts back to the goal of effective communication.

Below is a list of helpful hints for the clinician. This is in no way a complete list of advice, nor completely original. This is a compilation of what has been observed in other successful clinicians as well as what has worked well in clinics in the past.

- **Preparation is the key** - Make sure you are familiar with the level of literature for the students in the clinic. In addition, write down some ideas on how musicians can achieve better performance within each area (e.g., balance, blend, tone, intonation, phrasing, articulation, style, etc.).
- **Begin the clinic with a few positive comments** - Mention the strength(s) of the individual or group - what makes the individual or group unique and special.
- **Focus the critique on 1-3 concepts** - Don't just talk about the faults; show how the students can improve. Try to find something that the students might not have been exposed to before, or try to present things in different ways. It's good to reinforce previously learned concepts but try to give a fresh approach.
- **Relate comments to the students lived experiences** - Try to relate information to the level of the students. This doesn't mean talking down to the individual or group, just be aware of the needs and level of understanding.
- **Excite and inspire!** - Be animated and enthusiastic with the presentation. Show a love of music through the presentation. Never expect the individual or group to take risks unless the clinician is willing to as well.
- **Engage the students** - Keep students active participants in the clinic physically and mentally. Meet the needs of the different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic). Don't just talk about a concept, use visual cues (conducting, gesturing, etc.); auditory references (demonstrate by singing, playing, etc.); and physical activity (playing, singing, humming, sizzling, clapping, etc.).
- **Focus on the unique qualities of the group** - Don't just give the same "canned" presentation for every group. Address the issue(s) that will truly help the ensemble that has just performed.
- **Always try to relate comments to the end result** - For example, proper articulation technique is only important as it relates to the bigger picture - the effective communication of style, phrase, musicality, expression, etc.
- **Keep an hourglass shape to the clinic** - Talk about the big picture, break it down into smaller elements and concepts, then bring it back to the whole to reinforce.
- **Sincerely thank the students for performing and being involved in school music** - No matter the performance level, students are doing something wonderful. If keeping school music alive is important, then thank those who make it possible - the students!

# Sample Adjudicator Comments

## -tone

- Tone has a tendency to be rather small and stuffy. Give special attention to embouchure. Be sure and keep your chin flat and pointed towards the floor. Try to put the “woody” quality back in the tone.
- Bravo to the entire ensemble for the interplay of the melodic line as it shifts from brass to woodwinds.
- Warm your sound with more vibrato. Individually, keep working so that everyone has vibrato. This will add to the colors you are painting.
- Tone is quite inconsistent. Use a mirror to watch the direction of your bow. It must move straight across the string to produce the best sound.

## INTONATION

- Difficulties in the upper register. Always remember that intervals are closer together as you get higher on the fingerboard.
- Pitch has a tendency to be flat due to a lack of breath support. Work on long tone exercises to help improve this.
- Sustained vowel sounds are notorious for dropping in pitch, this causes a loss of phrase vitality. Your sustained pitches can be kept alive and energetic by adding subtle crescendos and decrescendos.
- It may be helpful to record and playback your practice. Listen specifically for inaccurate pitches. Do your chords “gel”?

## BALANCE

- Good for the most part. The saxophone color tends to dominate the woodwind passages. Work to balance the volume within the sax section and with other sections.
- Work on your own part until you know it well enough to be confident and secure even when other parts are different.
- Too much bass in the forte sections. Back off, your presence will still be noticed.
- Accompaniment parts are intended to support the others. The Violin II and Viola need to understand their role at measure 97 through 123. Allow the counter-melody at rehearsal mark B to C to be heard.

## TECHNIQUE

- The initial sounds of each phrase are not completely together and precise. Plan exactly on which part of the beat you will initiate the first vowel or consonant.
- Technique is limited because hand positions are not permitting the best finger flexibility. Curve your right hand as if you were grasping a tennis ball.
- You all have a facility to be envied. It shows careful practice and excellent training on everyone’s part.

## INTERPRETATION/EXPRESSION

- I applaud your subtle changes in dynamics to reflect the contour of the phrases. Those changes sounded natural and inspired, as opposed to mechanical.
- Sing each phrase as a flowing, unbroken stream of air. If the energy drops before the end of the phrase, it may sound stiff and choppy.
- The musical phrase was broken by breathing in the wrong places. Breathe only at the beginning and ends of your musical “sentences” or phrases.

## PRESENTATION

- Your excellent posture was a contributing factor to your terrific breath support, poise, and stage presence.
- As performers, you kept your concentration and poise from the moment you entered this room until you left.

## GENERAL DO’S

**Do...**Find something on which to make a positive comment.

**Do...**Focus on 1 - 3 concepts for verbal comments.

**Do...**Make suggestions for improvement if you point out a performance problem.

**Do...**Acknowledge the performers with a thank you or a brief comment, even if time has elapsed.

# QUICK REFERENCE

## RUBRIC FORMS

- Instrumental rubric forms for Solo & Ensemble Festivals are divided into winds, percussion and string rubrics. Concert Festival rubrics are divided into band rubrics and orchestra rubrics.
- All non-rated performances at Festivals utilize a *Comment Only* form. As always, adjudicators are encouraged to provide performers with as many written comments as possible utilizing the back of the form with summary comments on the front.

## REGULAR AND SPECIAL ENSEMBLES

All ensembles in WSMA Festivals are classified as either Regular or Special Ensembles. Regular Ensembles are smaller, number specific (duets, quartets, etc.) and may not be conducted. Special ensembles are larger (Flute Choir, Show Choir, etc.) and may be conducted by a student or adult but with some exceptions as outlined in the Event Headers and below:

- Events 1918 (Misc. Vocal Ens.), 1519 and 1529 (Madrigal Ensembles) may only be directed by a student performing from within the ensemble.
- Event 5859 (Steel Drum Band) may only be directed by an adult or student beating time from within the ensemble using traditional Steel Drum Band instruments (such as a brake drum or ting), excluding drum set.
- Event 6468 (Jazz Improvisation Combo) and 6478 (Creative Jazz Combo) may not be conducted by an adult.

## CONCERT GROUP REMINDERS

- No consideration should be given for grade level or chronological age.
- Adjudicators should not consult with others prior to assigning a rating.
- For Concert Choral Festivals, selected pieces must use the same voicing as identified and represented in the event heading.
- Adjudicator Music: band and orchestra scores can be photocopied, but choral scores must be originals or eprint.
- Additional selections should be of equal or greater difficulty level.

## ADDITIONAL ADJUDICATION REMINDERS

- Students in grades 6 through 12 are eligible to participate in Solo & Ensemble Festivals for a rating or comments only.
- Ratings are based on what the adjudicator hears compared to an expected student performance standard as described on the rubric. Age and/or grade level should not influence the rating.
- It is not appropriate to hold adjudication forms.
- The numbering of measures is highly recommended, but not required.
- Students/parents/teachers cannot clear the room.
- An introduction is expected but it is not a part of the overall rating.
- Accompaniment is recommended but only required for Music Theater events.
- Memorization is required for Music Theater events.
- A conference with students following the performance is required but this conference should not take the place of written comments.
- Comments made directly to a music teacher should be written on a separate sheet of paper and placed in an envelope with the name of the school or music teacher.
- The recording of adjudicator comments is prohibited by WSMA. Adjudicators are not allowed to give permission to allow comments to be recorded.
- In Special Ensembles, if a student is missing, they may still receive a rating if all parts are covered.
- In Regular Ensembles, if a student is missing, the performance must be for Critique Only (No Rating) whether at District or State.
- Class C vocal events and all classes of Event 1231 and 1331 (Changing/Transitioning Voice) have no restrictions on transposition.

### **REMEMBER:**

*If you do not receive festival information in a timely manner, please contact the Festival Manager. Contact information is on your Adjudicator Contract. If you still have issues, contact WSMA.*

# REMINDERS

## **TO CANCEL A CONTRACT IN AN EMERGENCY OR AT THE LAST MINUTE:**

Please contact WSMA immediately at 608-850-3566. During Festivals a WSMA Staff Person is always on call to assist. Please provide the Festival location as well as the adjudication area assigned. WSMA will contact the Festival Manager.

## **MARKING OF ADJUDICATORS MUSIC**

Teachers and students are best served by making all written comments directly on the back of the rubric form rather than on the music provided. In many cases, the school purchases the music and students never see the marks made by the adjudicator or the music is used by multiple students.

## **DELIVERY OF COMMENTS**

Comments to students are intended to improve future performances and to positively reinforce strengths already present. The adjudicator should always strive to deliver verbal/written comments in a friendly, constructive and supportive manner. All comments made to students, whether written or verbal, should augment the day-to-day efforts of the school music teacher. The adjudicator should always strive to support those efforts.

## **PLAYING OF STUDENT'S INSTRUMENT**

Adjudicators should refrain from playing the student's instrument especially in the case of winds and strings. It is permissible to play on percussion equipment but adjudicators should refrain from using the student's mallets or sticks. This policy provides protection to the adjudicator in the event of instrument damage as well as addressing student and parent concerns.

## **JAZZ EVENTS**

- In Events 6558, 6458, 6459 and 6468 (instrumental jazz) one of the numbers performed must be a swing tune and the other number must complete the contrasting style or tempo requirement.
- It is not permitted for an adult to play piano in Jazz Ensemble Events 6478 and 6459.
- Live accompaniment for vocal jazz improv solos (Event 6211) requires a WSMA permission letter.

## **FESTIVAL MUSIC PERMISSIONS**

If a student or ensemble is performing any music not on the current WSMA Festival Music List it is required to have a *Festival Music Permission Approval* form attached to the original score or the performance must be for *Critique Only (No Rating)*.

WSMA may grant permission to perform music in an event that states No Permission *if*:

- The submitted music is an original composition written by a currently enrolled student that meets WSMA eligibility requirements; *or*
- It is a comparable edition of a piece already on the WSMA Festival Music List.

If the permission request is granted by WSMA, a *Festival Music Permission Approval* form must be attached to the adjudicator's original score or the performance must be for *Critique Only (No Rating)*.

## **MUSIC IN PUBLIC DOMAIN:**

Music that is in public domain is acceptable as the publisher printed original of the matching, correct edition of the music as designated on the current WSMA Festival Music List and can be given to the adjudicator. It is acceptable to use public domain music that is similar to the edition on the current WSMA Festival Music List **but only** if it is considered an acceptable alternate edition by WSMA and has received permission. In this case, the student will have a letter from WSMA indicating that permission is granted.

## **COMMENT ONLY & CRITIQUE ONLY**

- **Comment Only** refers to a performance that is registered specifically for a festival experience that only provides the performer(s) written and verbal comments with absolutely no reference to a rating.
- Any violation of a WSMA Festival Rule will result in the performance receiving a **Critique Only**. There should be no rating indicated or awarded. Please be sure to state the reason for the Critique Only on the top of the rubric form.



# FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

## FESTIVAL RULES

WSMA Music Festival Rules govern all WSMA sanctioned festivals and are intended for the use by member schools. WSMA allows the individual school districts to adopt additional policies and expectations that are an extension of the rules and information.

## MUSIC FOR ADJUDICATORS

- **In Solo & Ensemble Events**, the adjudicator must be provided with a publisher printed original of the matching, correct edition of the music to be performed or the performance is for *Critique Only*. The adjudicator is not required to verify the performer's music.
- **For Concert Events**, all *choral* scores given to adjudicators must be original publisher or legal electronically printed music. Band and orchestra scores may be photocopies.
- The use of legal electronically printed music is permissible in all WSMA Festivals.
- Music saved to an electronic device (such as an iPad) is not permissible for the adjudicator.

## STUDENT PARTICIPATION

- Students may enter the same Regular and/or Special Ensemble event more than once as long as the selection and ensemble members differ for each entry. In solo events, a student may only participate in each separate event once.
- Students performing together in a Regular or Special Ensemble may be from multiple WSMA member schools.

## MULTI-MOVEMENT SELECTIONS

- In Solo & Ensemble events, unless otherwise specified in the current WSMA Festival Music List, the performer may select two contrasting movements. Tempo, style and/or meter are examples of acceptable contrasts.
- In Concert events, unless otherwise specified in the WSMA Festival Music List, ensembles should perform all movements in the required selection.

## ACCOMPANIMENT

Adjudicators should never consider the use or lack of accompaniment when assigning a rating. Accompaniment for all Solo & Ensemble performances is strongly encouraged but it is not required except for Music Theater events. Pre-recorded accompaniments are permitted in all solo events including Music Theater. Alternative accompaniment instruments may be substituted for piano. Pre-recorded accompaniment including the use of instrumental tracks is allowed in Show Choir and Vocal Jazz Ensemble Events, as long as no vocal lines are present.

## RULE INFRACTIONS

If possible, be sure students are made aware of a rule infraction before they perform. This will allow the student(s) the option to correct the infraction prior to their performance. If the infraction cannot be corrected, the student can choose to perform for critique only or perform at a later festival. Once the student has performed there are no options for another performance.

## PERFORMANCE LENGTH - S&E EVENTS

- If the length of the music exceeds 3/4 of the allotted performance time, the music may be cut to stay within the time limits. If cuts are necessary, it is suggested that repeats and repetitive sections be cut first. Music performed should include excerpts from movements (or sections) that display contrasting styles.
- In Ethnic, Folk, Heritage Ensemble events, the music performed must be at least five minutes in length or another selection must be added.
- All vocal solos should be sung in their entirety as these solos do not exceed the 3/4 allotted performance time.

## STOPPING A PERFORMANCE

Adjudicators are encouraged to make every attempt to listen to the entire performance, especially if the student has made cuts in the music to meet the time requirement. If it becomes necessary to decrease the verbal critique after the performance, please be sure to provide as much written feedback as possible.

# ADJUDICATOR RESOURCES

*The WSMA website is a source of information for adjudicators. To assist the adjudicator, this short list of topics is intended to aid in navigating the WSMA website.*

## **ADJUDICATOR CENTER**

The WSMA Adjudicators Center is found under “Festival Resources” of the Solo & Ensemble Festivals tab of the WSMA website.

The Adjudicators Center includes:

- New Adjudicator Registration
- Adjudicator Levels
- Quizzes
- Adjudicator Handbook
- Adjudicator Availability Form
- Workshop Registration

## **FESTIVAL RULES AND HEADERS**

All WSMA Festival Rules, Rule Changes, Headers and Information are found under the Festival Resources of the Solo & Ensemble Festivals tab of the WSMA homepage. Please refer to this information frequently to assist in completing quizzes, tests and preparing for festivals.

## **ACCOUNT PORTAL**

The Account Portal is a password protected online resource that provides WSMA information to member school teachers and adjudicators. Materials regarding all aspects of the WSMA Festival are found in the Account Portal.

- Festival Registration
- Festival Music List
- District Solo & Ensemble Rubrics
- Concert Rubrics

*(Contact WSMA for password or login assistance.)*

## **FESTIVAL MUSIC LIST**

The current WSMA Festival Music List is found exclusively online. Adjudicators are encouraged to visit the WSMA Festival Music List to remain current with the repertoire and up-to-date with changes. The Festival Music List may be found in the Account Portal. Login is required.

*To Access the WSMA Festival Music List:*

- Login to the Account Portal. If you have issues accessing or creating an account, please contact WSMA.
- Click the profile icon. This is the small person icon in the right hand corner.
- Click on My Digital Library.
- Click on Festival Music List: Print Versions Folder.
- Download and/or print the parts you wish to utilize. You can access the complete list or parts of the list.

*To Access Solo & Ensemble and Concert Rubrics:*

- Login to the Account Portal. If you have issues accessing or creating an account, please contact WSMA.
- Click the profile icon. This is the small person icon in the right hand corner.
- Click on My Digital Library.
- Click on the Rubrics Folder.
- Download and/or print the rubrics you wish to utilize.

## **FESTIVAL MUSIC LIST UPDATES**

Throughout the Festival Season it is sometimes necessary for WSMA to clarify and/or update the Festival Music List. Adjudicators are encouraged to visit the Festival Music List Updates page often. Updates to the WSMA Festival Music List are found under the Festival Resources of the Solo & Ensemble Festivals tab of the WSMA website.

***If you encounter any issues with accessing or printing Festival Resources, please contact WSMA for assistance. Most things can be emailed to you, even on the day of a Festival.***

# ADJUDICATOR TIMELINE

## September:

- Register for an Adjudicator Workshop as needed/required.
- Submit materials for adjudicator level change.

## October:

- **Fall Festival Season**
- Adjudicator Availability form sent via email. **Due** November 1.
- Annual Update Quiz available online.
- Fall festival contracts via email or phone.

## November:

- **Fall Festival Season**
- Adjudicator Availability form **due** by November 1.
- Materials for all adjudicator level changes **due** by November 15.

## December:

- First round of District and State Solo & Ensemble adjudicator contracts are emailed.

## January:

- **Spring Festival Season.**
- First round adjudicator contracts due.
- Second round contracts are offered via email/phone.

## February:

- **Spring Festival Season.**
- Solo & Ensemble contracts are offered via email/phone.
- Concert Festival contracts are offered via email/phone.

## March:

- **Spring Festival Season.**
- Solo & Ensemble contracts are offered via email/phone.
- Concert Festival contracts are offered via email/phone.

## April:

- **Spring Festival Season.**
- Solo & Ensemble contracts are offered via email/phone.
- Concert Festival contracts are offered via email/phone.
- State Solo & Ensemble Festivals are held on the last Saturday of April.

## May:

- State Solo & Ensemble Festivals are held on the first Saturday of May.
- Concert Festival contracts are offered via email/phone.
- Adjudicator Registration form emailed with summary of assignments.

# **Festival Cancellation & Weather Emergency Procedures**

If a festival needs to be postponed or rescheduled due to weather or unforeseen circumstances, all resources from the original festival, including adjudicator contracting will transfer to the new date.

The following weather emergency procedures should be followed:

- Before the festival, the District Festival Manager should obtain contact information for each participating teacher attending the festival and/or establish a communication plan and system.
- Before the festival, participating schools should agree on an alternate festival date and location in case of inclement weather. The alternate festival date should be as close to the original festival date as possible.
- Decisions regarding the operation or cancellation of a WSMA festival during inclement weather are made by the Festival Manager, Principal, Superintendent and/or other school officials as required by the hosting school.
- Options for inclement weather include:
  - One or two hour delay in the festival schedule to allow roads to be cleared.
  - Cancel and reschedule the festival.
    - If either occurs, the Festival Manager must take the following actions:
      - Notify all adjudicators. (If delayed and an adjudicator is unable to fulfill their assignment, please notify WSMA immediately.)
        - If an adjudicator is not notified of a canceled festival and arrives at the festival location, the adjudicator is entitled to be paid the full mileage plus \$25.00 by the host school.
      - Notify all participating teachers.
      - Inform local radio station(s) or television station(s) of the festival's delay or cancellation and ask for immediate broadcast of the information. The host district's superintendent will know which stations to contact.
      - Notify WSMA with any available information (delay, cancellation, schools that were unable to travel due to inclement weather, etc...).
  - If canceled, every effort should be made to reschedule the festival involving at least three schools.
    - Notify WSMA of the rescheduled date and location as soon as possible.
    - Contact the originally contracted adjudicators to inform them of the rescheduled date. Inform WSMA if any adjudicators are not available.