

## Western Carolina University Marching Band Adjudication Training

The following are notes taken from the clinic by Craig Everett. This information may or may not appear in the handouts by the presenters.

**Drum Majors** – Bobby Lambert, Asst. Director Marion Catholic High School near Chicago IL.

- The audience does not always notice a good drum major but he drum major should be the driving force to the band members.
- DM judges should give more weight to musicality and less to showmanship.
- Drum majors are very important to the band musically. If a band plays well then the drum major has done their job.

### **The Drum Major Sheet**

#### Technique Box

- Technique is the most important element.
- Tempo control should be their most important demand.
- The judge should be evaluating clarity of conducting.
- There should be no excess motion.
- Arms should be even.
- Physical projection – Do they look comfortable?
- Technique is also judged in the showmanship and musicality blocks.

#### Showmanship Box

- Are they in control or is the band controlling them?
- Can they bring out the musical expression?
- Their spirit and intensity should be evaluated.
- Communication – Would you watch them if performing?
- Appearance is important. Do they have pride? Do they inspire?

#### Musicality

- Creativity – Is their style appropriate?
- Can they bring out musical expression?
- Full range of dynamics – Do you see it happen?
- Do they reflect the mood and emotion of the music?
- Artistry – Would they inspire you to play better?

The back of the drum major sheet (like all of the other sheets) is designed to use the five box system for criteria reference. Box 1 is fair, 2 is below average, 3 is average, 4 is excellent (above average), and box 5 is superior.

The drum major sheet is music centered.

Drum Major comments by Bob Buckner, from Western Carolina Univ. and chair of the state marching band committee.

- When judging drum majors, the best vantage point is in the middle of the stands. He recommends using the press box and not the field to be able to full evaluate the conducting patterns. Be sure to identify where you are judging from on the tape.
- Tempo control should be the #1 concern.
- All drum majors should own their own metronome to memorize tempo markings.
- Directors should always communicate with the drum majors by giving them exact tempo markings. Many drum majors wear metronomes around their neck.
- Drum majors should understand the musical phrases they are conducting.
- When in doubt drum majors should give big one's (beat one of the pattern).
- Drum majors should watch the feet of the band members who are the furthestmost away from the drum major on the podium.

- The drum major and the center snare player should always communicate and the drum major should go with drums when in doubt.
- Drum majors should do whatever it takes to hold band together. The drum major can often score points for the way they pull the band back together following a timing tear.

### **Role and Preparation of a Adjudicator – Bob Buckner**

- Judges should not consider their personal taste or favorites.
- Judges must be able to rank bands by deciding how much better or worse a band is when compared to the others. For example, Are these two bands in the same numerical neighborhood or do they belong in a different neighborhood? Numbers management (point spreads) skills are essential. A judge must be able to rank and make a decision by how much.
- A judge must understand numbers management regardless of the performance order. How many times have we seen the numbers inflate toward the end of the day as bands get bigger?
- One judge can call an entire contest if they are not consistent with their point spreads. Be careful!
- Judges should be competent musicians who can communicate how to fix problems.
- Be careful not to assign non-music degree people to judge music performance or effect.
- The #1 goal of a judge is to educate!
- Judgment skills are important – Judges must not be afraid to make a decision.
- Do not be concerned with that others will think.
- Do not allow reputations (good or bad) to influence your judging.
- Avoid talking to others before performances.
- Do lots of listening to learn about all different styles of music. Remember – do not penalize the band for playing a style of music you do not enjoy.
- Make practice tapes before judging a competition. You can learn a lot just by listening to yourself.
- Do not be overly concerned with using buzz words.
- Direct every comment on the tape as if the students were listening.
- Percussion comments are often overlooked.
- Provide dialog to support your score. The worse judges give good comments with a low score or bad comments with a high score.
- Beware of voice activated tape recorders.
- Contest host should have spare recorders and batteries.
- Be sure to cue up the leader on the tape so your first comments can be heard.
- Test the recorder through out the entire contest. Have a back up.
- Initial all erasures.
- Try concluding comments reviews at the end of each capsule (section) of the show so you will not forget your main points at the conclusion of the program.
- Transfer as many positives as possible. The band member's self-esteem is important.
- The tape is the book judges write and the picture they paint.

Bruce Burritt (BOA and DCI judge) joins discussion. He was also a school principal and ended he retired from his career in education as a school superintendent giving him much insight on music education.

- Consistency is the key.
- Anger leads to mistakes and assumptions that are wrong.
- Be careful not to talk down to the band director and students on the tape.
- A judge becomes a band's staff member for the 10 minutes he is making the tape.
- Be humble and put yourself in the shoes of the conductor.
- The score sheet is immediate and concrete. It is seen before comments are heard.
- Be positive. for example... Do not say "bad tone quality." Instead say "Tone quality could be improved through breathing exercises, playing long tones, etc..... FIND SOLUTIONS!
- Be on time with the proper tools of the trade (recorder, batteries, pencil, calculator, etc...).
- Study the sheet BEFORE you arrive at the contest and be familiar with each caption so you can anticipate problems.

- Learn each caption so you can trust the scoring system. For example a band that does little marching may get a high music execution score but should get hit hard in the visual and effects captions. The best bands are more likely to win by using this system.
- The role of the judge is to diagnose a problem then tell how to fix it.
- Rank-Rate-Rank (4 minutes or less in between bands) Based on my experience, where do they belong?
- Read each performance criteria box and determine where the band belongs. Then decide is it high box, middle box, or lower box? Think boxes from the beginning of show.
- It will help to read the box criteria before the show and underline key words that will help determine box placement. These boxes are designed to recognize levels or achievement and is more educationally sound. Our goal is to raise the performance standards of all bands.
- Judges must have sub-caption integrity.
- Always use a tote sheet to rank. They will be supplied to you at state sanctioned shows.
- Feel free to hold the first couple of sheets to make sure judges are in the same boxes.
- At the end of the tape, give hope to the band that they can improve.
- Time vs. Concentration – The worst enemy of a judge is the inability to concentrate.
  - Try standing.
  - Summarize at end of each segment or module of the band's program.
  - Dig in and use lots of self-discipline!

### **Music Performance Individual (on field judge) – Bruce Burritt**

The marching band committee and these clinicians feel strongly that the on-field music judge is a strong element for state-sanctioned festivals or competitions in the future. The music performance judge on the field provides more accountability for each individual in each section. Contest sponsors are urged to find a way to hire this added judge.

- Students respond favorably to this judge. Band directors are encouraged to attend shows that utilize on field judging.
- Band directors can practice with someone talking in a tape recorder on the field while the band is doing a run-through.
- Common woodwind problems are:
  - Embousure – flat chins
  - Articulation – lack of uniformity
  - Soft reeds
  - Clarinet break problems
  - Piccolo tuning
- Common percussion problems are:
  - Feet not in time can identify precision problems.
  - Stick heights that are not uniformed effecting accuracy.
  - Top complaint for judges.... Percussion is too loud.
  - Balance problems.
  - Poor technique.
  - Stick to head placement.
  - Choice of mallets.
  - Timpani and bass drum tuning.
- Common brass problems are:
  - Accuracy – wrong partials.
  - Attacks and releases.
  - Chops – pressing mouthpiece into lips to play high.
  - Endurance – fracking/scatching notes due to range demands.
  - Intonation problems especially in mellophones and high brass from clinching jaws and going sharp.
  - Tone problems from over-blowing.
  - Lack of breath support.
- As always, think (W,W, HTF) What, When, How to Fix?
- Dig inside program to talk details.
- Be careful with sub-caption integrity. Judge as 3 different contests (ww, brass, perc.). Add all three captions quickly.
- Are you comfortable with ranking? If not, go back to the sub-captions (ww, brass, perc.).

## Music Effect – Bruce Burritt

- The role of the music effect is to react to the performers.
- This is more subjective.
- It is about emotion, feeling, reflection, tension and release.
- Observe your audience. Did the performers connect?
- The effect judge should be entertained. A good sign is if the program is over and the audience (and judges) wishes it was not.
- Be able to articulate what the music does to you emotionally. This non-definable and your inner most feelings.

### Components of Effect

1. Intellectual – the range and quality of the performance
  2. Emotional – a planned response of the audio/visual performance.
  3. Aesthetic – the beauty, artistry, details of the performance.
- As always:  
What did the band achieve? Which box?  
Summarize after each module or segment so you will not forget.
  - Common problems with bands in the Repertoire Effectiveness caption are:  
Outstanding performances performing mediocre music.  
There is not a good understanding of the music by the band members.  
Students must “understand to understand” their role as performers.
  - Remember to judge the entire band, commenting on all sections.
  - Did the band move you? Did the band use a wide range of dynamics?  
(powerful vs. sensitive).
  - How was their use of time with interest by audience, direction and flow? (pacing).
  - Was there variety? For example, all tutti is poor. How does the musical texture and moods change?
  - Was there attention to detail related to the audio/visual production?
  - Was there communication of roles? Did the music come to life?
  - Bands should strive to make it human by making it reach the audience with spirit.
  - It must have emotion and commitment by the performers. It should come to life with energy.
  - Did the band members perform to a high level with poise, professionalism, pride, and self-assurances?
  - Band should have the ability to sustain through long builds or sections. Think of rubberbands that keeps stretching without breaking.
  - The coordinated effectiveness depends on the integration of all the components of the band. (Audio/Visual)
  - The auxiliary (colorguard) is especially vital in this area. They tell the story visually to what we are hearing. A good guard shows emotion within the music. They must be good communicators and the staging by the drill designer is key for this to happen effectively.
  - Visual Effect is the marriage of the audio/visual.
  - The role of the effect judge is to make visual comments as it relates to the music.
  - Bleeding can and should occur between the different judging captions. Trust the system to work for you! Remember to refer to the Criteria Reference boxes on the back of each sheet for reference.

## Visual General Effect – Nola Jones, the only person to judge the BOA, DCI, and WGI finals all in the same year (2002).

- Find anything visual and turn the tape player on to practice!  
Practice only using Box 5, then only Box 4, then only Box 3, etc..
- Swap tapes with peers to receive feedback.
- Place mats with judging criteria provided by contest sponsor helps greatly to match comments with ranking.
- Be careful about using the very high or very low extremes of each box early on in the contest. Numbers management is one of the most important roles of a judge to ensure that one judge cannot “throw” a contest. Be careful not to run out of room with numbers at the end.

- Be sure to identify the box placement in each of the sub-captions of Repertoire, Showmanship, and Coordination.

#### Design Tools for Effect

Use of Line – when discussing form

Shape – sound (melody) should occur from the visual focus.

Texture

Balance

Focus – emphasis

Mass – incorporates form, balance, shape

Color – hues, complimentary colors, practice with a color wheel.

Motion

- A good reference book is *Design Basics* by David Laurer
- Concepts are important and the design concepts must be clear. How is the concept developed?
- Excellence is important for effect. Something is not effective if not performed well.
- Maximum credit cannot be received unless achieved.
- Do the performers look comfortable? Does it look easy?
- Visual effect must be engaging. Allow yourself to react but pace yourself especially if it is a big contest.
- “Leave biases at the door”. Your personal preferences are not important.

#### Triad of Effect

Intellectual Effect – range and quality of visual plan.

Emotional Effect – a planned response that is programmed.

Aesthetic Effect – artistry, an emotional response, a beautiful nuance.

- Programs should include all three effects.

#### Great Effect Depends on:

Pacing – through time by controlling mood.

Continuity – the smooth development from idea to idea.

Staging – where to look for “marriage” between audio/visual.

Impact – the development into a big effect i.e. a rifle toss (attack) and rifle catch (resolution). Resolutions can sometimes be difficult.

- The effect sheet depends greatly on the Derived Achievement (what is attempted “demand” and achieved “execution”) which measures the product of what is written and how successful and effective it was achieved.
- Effect is not always higher, bigger, louder, or how many props a band uses.

#### Visual Performance – Bob Buckner

- Bands that march well will stand out to the visual performance judge.
- The first thing to look for is the individual posture by members of the band.
- This judge should not react. It should be either black or white.
- This judge looks for uniformity by evaluating: control of feet, lower body control and upper body facings.
- The goal of each band should be to improve musically through movement. If a band exhibits a good marching technique, they should sound better because the instruments do not have excess movement, making it easier to play.
- The Visual Performance judge should use sampling as a tool to determine how well a band moves. Sample judging is always appropriate for performance/execution captions. It also makes each band member more accountable. Be specific, i.e. call out the fourth trumpet on side one crossing the 4 yard line.
- As with other captions, the visual judge should give comments that will help the band improve. Give solutions in how to fix problems.
- Pulse is the key to everything in this caption.
- Derived achievement is better word of demand/difficulty. Derived achievement gives credit for what they do and how they do it. Judges should always be asking themselves the WHAT and the HOW. Each sub-caption should be judged as the What and the How.
- Derived achievement should occur in each of the judging areas.

Principles of Movement – see guard handout.

Look for the center of the body. It should be strong.

The roll (glide) step is important.

Expressive effort change.

Paths – direct to indirect.

Speed – quick to slow.

Resistance –light to heavy.

Flow – free to bound

- Dress is from side to side while cover is front to back.
- Visual artistry is the design element.
- Visual orchestration is the choice of guard equipment.
- Ensemble is the nuts and bolts of the drill
- Variety is important to design.
- The level of readability should be evaluated. Is it dense? Is their enough depth?
- Unity statements are important especially on hits.
- Again, variety is key.

### **The Meaning of a Tenth (Point Spreads/Numbers Management – Nola Jones**

- Impression – Analysis and Compare.
- See the handout as it describes what is a tenth, 2-3 tenths, 4-5 tenths, etc...
- Begin by thinking what box. Then divide the box into thirds. Was it high medium or low? This will help with ranking.
- Learn the principles of movement – see handout.
- Compatibility of training and skill. Will they achieve this skill later in the season?
- Mistakes happen – How do they recover?
- Good technique is essential.
- Forced transitions are poor. Visual musicality should be #1 concern.
- Study verbiage on back of the sheets.
- The guard triad should be evident. (form-body-equipment)

### **Percussion – Dennis DeLucia (DCI commentator and designer and BOA judge)**

- In judging percussion, there are only two captions that really matter: performance quality and effectiveness/artistry.
- He brought a sample percussion adjudication sheet. – See handout. This sheet was adopted by the state marching committee with a few minor changes.
- The “new” percussion sheet does not have a marching or movement sub-caption.

### **Music Ensemble – Bruce Burritt**

- This sheet is analytical.
- Balance and blend should be evaluated from winds to percussion, ww to brass, high to low, percussion battery to pit percussion.
- Middle voices should be evident as well as a bottom end to the sound.
- Breath support is key in the caption. Common problems heard because of breath support issues are: thin sounds, rushing as breath disappears, anemic and weak sound, and intonation problems.
- The band is using good air when the sound vibrates or rings.
- Common pitch problems encountered are mellophones (alto voices) are not consistent, upper trumpets and trombones often go sharp, tubas can be flat, and piccolos that are all over the place.
- Students can tune better to a low octave and the source of the pitch should come from the bottom.
- A good tuning sequence begins with tubas sustaining a concert Bb or F, adding single low voices one at a time, then add individual trombones, baritones, b.clar. t.sax, then adding mellos, alto saxes, and finally add upper voices.
- Blend is often diminished due to percussion being too loud. Choice of mallet effects blend.

- The consistency of timbre should be considered. Is the brass edgy? Do I hear harmonics? Are the sustained notes played consistency? Are the reeds too soft?
- Tuning of the percussion is a key element. Tune to pit instruments. Bass guitars are often out of tune to the tubas.
- The accuracy and definition should be examined through ensemble cohesiveness. The pulse must be rock solid.
- Pulse control must be achieved first.
- Ensemble cohesiveness is diminished when there is a significant problem with timing (pulse).
- The band must be trained to know what to listen for. Good strategies included having band sing while the percussion plays. It must be explained what to listen for!
- Rehearse music in the drill forms from the show.
- In rhythmic interpretation, sub-divisions are key. Tempo and pulse control is always the main concern.
- Band students must understand "Believe what you see – not what you hear." Bands often do not play together because they are listening to each other instead of watching the drum major. This is especially true with the students that are further back on the field.
- Musicianship should be exhibited through good phrasing and attention to shape, expression, intensity and other expressive elements. Good taste is key and "less can be more."
- Get inside the music to really examine it.
- Remember it is the judge's responsibility to educate and encourage.
- Have balanced input for all three elements: ww, brass, perc.
- Summarize after each module and we are reminded again to ask the: what, why, and how to fix. Always give constructive criticism and speak to how to fix each problem.

#### **How to run a contest – Bob Buckner**

- The #1 goal should be to hire good judges who are compassionate, knowledgeable and able to make a decision.
- Music is the most important component but the visual will enhance the music. Hire judges who understand this.
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- The 5 member panel should include:
 

1 judge for Music Performance Ensemble –	20 pts.
1 judge for Visual Performance (marching) –	20 pts.
1 judge for Visual Effect (how music is presented) –	20 pts.
2 judges for Music Effect @ 20 points each -	<u>40 pts.</u>
	100
- The 6 member panel should include:
 

1 judge for Music Performance Ensemble –	20 pts.
1 judge for Visual Performance (marching) –	20 pts.
1 judge for Visual Effect (how music is presented) –	20 pts.
2 judges for Music Effect @ 20 points each-	40 pts.
1 judge for Music Individual (on field) -	20 pts.

The music individual and visual individual will be averaged using a 6-member panel.
- Contest organizers are strongly urged to use a six member panel as a on field judges adds more accountability for each performing member of the band. It is more educational.
- Remember if finances are an issue, the marching committee recommends eliminating the drum major, guard, and percussion judging positions, as they can be evaluated by the existing music and visual judges.
- The tabulator needs to be someone with an accounting background. The scoring system should be tested prior to the contest by using artificial scores.
- Penalties should be deducted after scores are balanced.
- The band director, not a band booster, should be the contest director to make these decisions. A band parent could co-chair to handle other responsibilities such as concessions, programs etc.
- The contest director needs to have the discretion to reduce penalties.
- In case of a tie, the band that was penalized should win. If there is no penalty the general effect scores should be used to determine the winner.

- The bands whose staff members wear drum corps jackets from their respective corps often have a negative effect on judges. They are not impressed.
- Numbers management is essential. Giving random scores without constant deliberation can cause major problems toward the end of contests when numbers begin to be crunched very closely.
- Be sure to make best use of the boxes as a tool to rate and rank. The boxes will make your life easier.
- Feel free to hold as many as the first 4 sheets at the beginning of the day to ensure judges are on the same page.