

A DOZEN SUGGESTIONS FOR JUDGING BANDS/CORPS

BY DENNIS DE LUCIA

- A. I once asked my mentor, Dr. Bernard Baggs, “What makes a good judge?” He said that “a good judge is a person who
 - a. Has compassion for the kids who are performing;
 - b. Has the ability to recognize greatness when it occurs; and
 - c. Has the courage to reward it properly.”

- B. There are only two important [broad] topics to address:
 - a. How well do the performers PLAY?
 - b. How EFFECTIVE is the percussion section in its contribution to and understanding of its role as an integral part of the ENTIRE musical product [winds and percussion]? The percussion section DRIVES THE CAR and COLORS THE PORTRAIT!!!

- C. The primary role of a judge is to RANK the units in the proper order and to RATE them appropriately [give them a fair and accurate score].

- D. Consider the FIVE T’s:
 - a. Time
 - b. Technique
 - c. Touch
 - d. Taste [musicality]
 - e. Tuning

- E. LISTEN FIRST, then REACT, then ANALYZE. Don’t feel the need to talk all the time!!!

- F. Try to make a positive comment before a “constructive” [negative] one. [e.g. “nice roll, snares, but the balance is too strong for the winds”]. This establishes a frame of reference for your listeners [instructors, players] in terms of what you consider to be a “plus”, and makes him/her/them more receptive to the “but” part of your commentary.

- G. The process by which you judge “Effect” is similar to your reaction to a movie or concert:
 - a. Emotional Response:
 - i. Did you LIKE the show?
 - ii. Were you moved?
 - iii. Did the performers communicate to you and to the audience?
 - iv. React first [emotionally], then use your expertise to analyze, inform [“teach”], rank, and rate.

CHAPTER IX. 20 RULES FOR WRITING PERCUSSION ARRANGEMENTS

1. **Listen to and research the original source** of the music.
2. **Confer with the brass/wind arranger.** Seek his/her input on how you can make the chart better. Ask him/her to sketch a rhythm, or vibe part, or strong cymbal crashes, etc. onto the arrangement. Even though two or more people collaborate on band/corps arrangements, the goal is to create and perform one great piece of music.
3. **Construct a flow chart** before you write any notes on your manuscript (see sample flow chart). Use it as a guideline to keep yourself from over-writing. It will help you know where your musical journey – the chart – will end before you begin!
4. **Know the strengths and limitations** of every percussion instrument and accessory.
5. **Combine two idioms:** the idiom of the original material and the marching music idiom. Your job is not to literally transcribe what's on the original, but to make the marching version sound and feel great on a football field! If you're writing a "groove" tune, let the percussion lay down the groove so that the winds can float on top of it!
6. **Orchestrate** for percussion with the same degree of skill, selectivity and creativity as Copland orchestrated for the full orchestra. Create unusual textures: add a triangle to a bells/vibes figure; strike a sizzle cymbal with a 5-A in one hand and a felt mallet in the other; play the snare part with Split-Stix, etc.
7. **Use rests and space** to allow the music to breathe a la Miles Davis, Ahmad Jamal, Aaron Copland, Tommy Igoe. Never feel that you must write every instrument into every measure.
8. Write only those figures that will **contribute positively** to the total musical score. If the music doesn't need it – don't write it!!!
9. **Is the primary intent of a phrase crystal clear** to the audience?, the judge?, you?? If the xylophone is playing the lead line in a given phrase, write sparingly and softly so the xylophone will speak clearly. Ditto for any voice rhythm or idea.
10. **Always keep the big picture in mind** – the total ensemble statement, the audio/visual impact.
11. **Use instruments and accessories that are appropriate to the composition** (e.g. – no timbales in "Pines of Rome"!)
12. **Use a variety of linear and vertical (block) scoring devices** to keep your charts fresh and interesting. Don't automatically double the rhythm of the melody with percussion – create interesting counter-rhythmic lines and accents.

13. **Avoid writing conflicting figures** that might work on a trumpet and clarinet but will merely clutter and distort a snare/quad statement (e.g. don't write four sixteenths in the snares over an eighth note triplet in the quads).
14. **Write dynamics, expression and accents** onto the chart. Don't assume that the players or staff will be able to read your mind regarding the chart's interpretation.
15. **Tune and Stage the percussion ensemble properly.**
16. **Avoid** the temptation to keep the mallet percussionists busy by writing **needless, annoying, unmusical chordal rolls that (badly) duplicate a chord that already exists in the brass/woodwind ensemble!** Be creative with the keyboard percussion. If you don't need them, don't use them! If the band/corps is playing *fff* you won't hear a marimba, so have the players contribute to the impact on suspended cymbals, gongs, bass drums, etc.
17. **Do not double the keyboards with the woodwinds very often.** This can be an interesting musical device if used sparingly and wisely, but it can create or exacerbate and/or rhythmic articulation problems. Again, be creative: treat the mallet instruments as if they were one gigantic piano, or a counter-melodic voice, or a unique and texturally beautiful choir unto themselves!
18. **Ask yourself if the brass/woodwind ensemble sounds better or worse once the percussion is added.**
19. **Be willing to re-write and improve** the percussion chart after you've heard the full ensemble and seen the drill.
20. **Re-write it again..... and again..... and again.**

THE FLOW CHART

Constructing a **flow chart** before you start writing can be a valuable aid. If used correctly, it will:

1. Encourage you to envision the whole composition before you write any part of it.
2. Prevent you from over-writing.
3. Force you to think creatively and selectively in regard to voicing, textural layerings and timbral interest.

MUSIC STYLES

Listen to the 15 musical examples. Identify the styles from the following list (some answers may be used more than once, some not at all; some tunes may fit into several categories). Make note of the most significant percussion sound(s) or rhythms that you hear. Consider **Rhythmic and Textural Characteristics**, and the **Intensity/Density** of Percussion.

- | | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Samba (Brazilian) | Classical - Baroque |
| Bossa Nova (Brazilian) | Classical - Romantic |
| Afro-Cuban | Classical - Contemporary |
| Latin - Jazz (Contemporary) | Rock |
| African | Funk |
| Swing | Latin - Rock |
| Be - Bop | Ballad (Pop) |
| Broadway | Shuffle/Hip - Hop |
| Waltz | Cha - Cha - Cha |
| Mozambique | Nanego |

<u>Style/Groove</u>	<u>Significant Percussion</u>
1. _____	_____
2. _____	_____
3. _____	_____
4. _____	_____
5. _____	_____
6. _____	_____
7. _____	_____
8. _____	_____
9. _____	_____
10. _____	_____
11. _____	_____
12. _____	_____
13. _____	_____
14. _____	_____
15. _____	_____

Country/Culture Identification:

By: Dennis DeLucia

A. Identify the country of culture from which the following grooves originated:

<u>Groove</u>	<u>Country</u>	<u>Groove</u>	<u>Country</u>
1. Tango	_____	8. Mambo	_____
2. Merengue'	_____	9. Polka	_____
3. Samba	_____	10. Swing	_____
4. Nanego (6/8)	_____	11. Rhumba	_____
5. Mozambique	_____	12. Reggae	_____
6. Bossa Nova	_____	13. Cha-Cha	_____
7. Tsamiko	_____	14. Songo	_____

B. Identify the country associated with:

1. "The Moldau"	_____	7. Tchaikovsky	_____
2. "Concerto de Aranjuez"	_____	8. Bernstein	_____
3. "...Dargason"	_____	9. Bach	_____
4. "Finlandia"	_____	10. Dvorak	_____
5. "Pictures.. Exhibition"	_____	11. Beethoven	_____
6. "Hat Dance"	_____	12. Holst	_____

C. Identify the country portrayed in ...

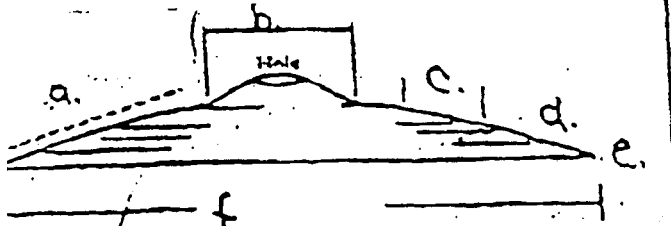
1. "Riverdance"	_____	4. "Sound of Music"	_____
2. "West Side Story"	_____	5. "King & I"	_____
3. "Les Miserables"	_____	6. "Miss Saigon"	_____

D. Identify the National Origin of:

1. Surdo	_____	12. Timbales	_____
2. KeikoAbe	_____	13. Talking Drum	_____
3. Djembe	_____	14. Cuica	_____
4. Olatunji	_____	15. Udu Drum	_____
5. Dumbek	_____	16. Agogo Bells	_____
6. Leigh H. Stevens	_____	17. Shekere	_____
7. Taiko	_____	18. Guiro	_____
8. Zildian	_____	19. Kokiriko	_____
9. SABIAN	_____	20. Pandeiro	_____
10. Yamaha	_____	21. Guira	_____
11. Congas	_____	22. Marimba	_____

SABIAN CYMBAL QUIZ

Name the parts of a cymbal:



a. _____
 b. _____
 c. _____
 d. _____
 e. _____
 f. _____

1. Good Cymbals are made of:
 - a. Bronze
 - b. Pyrite
 - c. Kryptonite
2. Size (diameter) primarily affects:
 - a. Pitch
 - b. Volume
 - c. Looks
3. Weight (thickness) affects:
 - a. Pitch
 - b. Volume
 - c. Arm strength
4. In cymbals of the same size, the heavier cymbal produces: (choose 3)
 - a. A higher pitch
 - b. A lower pitch
 - c. A slower response
 - d. A quicker response
 - e. A shorter sustain
 - f. A longer sustain
 - g. More cholesterol
5. The higher the profile,
 - a. The softer the volume
 - b. The higher the pitch
 - c. The more visible the cymbal
6. A large bell produces:
 - a. More overtones
 - b. Less overtones
 - c. No overtones
7. A suspended cymbal sounds best when played: (choose two)
 - a. With sticks
 - b. With yarn mallets
 - c. With timpani mallets
 - d. At "5:00 and 7:00"
 - e. At "6:00"
 - f. At "4:00 and 8:00"
8. Compared to "machine-hammered" cymbals, "hand-hammered" cymbals sound:
 - f. _____

- a. Brighter and more cutting
 - b. Warmer and more blending
 - c. Exactly the same
9. Use the terms "light", "medium", or "heavy" to describe the following hand cymbals:
 - a. French _____
 - b. Viennese _____
 - c. Germanic _____
 - d. Conc. Band _____
 - e. March Band _____
 - f. Drum Corps _____
 - g. Classic Band _____
 10. Most orchestral players hold their cymbals with:
 - a. Leather straps with pads
 - b. Leather straps without pads
 - c. Wood handles
 - d. All of the above
 11. Most corps/marching band players hold their cymbals with:
 - a. Leather straps with pads
 - b. Leather straps without pads
 - c. Wood handles
 - d. A friend
 12. "Brilliant" finish is administered by
 - a. Heated wax
 - b. High-pressure buffing
 - c. MENSEA
 13. When playing a pair of hand cymbals, most professional percussionists start the stroke with the cymbals
 - a. Held vertically in front of the body
 - b. Held horizontally in front of the body
 - c. Held on a 15-30 degree angle in front of the body
 - d. On the floor
 14. Which three terms illustrate acceptable hand-cymbal strokes?
 - a. "flam"
 - b. "zing"
 - c. "chick"
 - d. "slam"
 - e. "air-pocket"

JUDGING EXPERIMENT

UNIT SCORE	STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES			
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