

Judging sight reading

Florida Bandmasters Association
Music Performance Assessments

Performance standards and procedures

Adjudicator training

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Is FBA sight reading at MPA like a box of chocolates?

You never know what “you’re gonna get.”

- ▶ Procedures
- ▶ Standards
- ▶ Materials

In what ways have you been surprised in the sight reading room?

Your comments?

The Florida Bandmasters Association has made recent changes to standardize (as much as possible) procedures and performance standards in the FBA MPA sight reading in order to give validity to the assessment.

Performance standards

How do the sight reading standards differ from the concert standards?

Fundamentals

Characteristic sounds and intonation that blend and balance

In the concert portion (on stage)...

Superior/A: Near-perfect timbre and intonation creating beautiful sonority.

Excellent/B: MINOR lapses

Good/C: Lapses occur OCCASIONALLY

Fair/D: Fundamental problems occur FREQUENTLY

Poor/E: Fundamental problems occur MOST OF THE TIME

***In sight reading, these standards should be the same
as concert standards.***

Performance standards

How do the sight reading standards differ from the concert standards?

Technical accuracy

Notes, rhythms, precision, interpretive articulation

In sight reading, we should leave room for some error in this category as compared to concert evaluations.

Superior/A: What is “near perfect” on stage in this category should be adjusted to MINOR errors that recover quickly and tend to correct themselves on repeated sections/themes.

Excellent/B: OCCASSIONAL errors

Good/C: Errors occur OFTEN

Fair/D: Errors occur MOST OF THE TIME.

Poor/E: Errors occur FREQUENTLY THROUGHOUT performance.

The “outliers” and “surprises” such as unusual accidentals, exposed entrances and the like should be considered when evaluating bands in sight reading.

Performance standards

How do the sight reading standards differ from the concert standards?

Musical effect

Artistic phrases, dynamics, style, emotional understanding.

In sight reading, we should leave room for some error in this category as compared to concert evaluations.

Superior/A: On stage in this category, we tend to think of students conveying artistry throughout the performance (near perfect). This should be adjusted to MINOR lapses that improve on repeated sections/themes.

Excellent/B: Lapses occur OCCASSIONALLY with no improvement.

Good/C: Lapses occur OFTEN with no improvement.

Fair/D: Lack of emotional understanding MOST OF THE TIME.

Poor/E: COMPLETE LACK of emotional understanding THROUGHOUT.

The “outliers” and “surprises” such as unusual/subito changes and the like should be considered when evaluating bands in sight reading.

Procedures

It is important to remember...

...you, the sight reading adjudicator, are the only adjudicator who directly interacts with the people involved in the process.

...Always conduct yourself in a professional manner, be as encouraging and as positive as you can when you are serving as a sight reading adjudicator.

...Take time to interact with everyone in a positive way.

Procedures

Before you start...

- ▶ Double-check the classification of the ensembles.
- ▶ Make sure you have the classification information and page numbers to be used.
- ▶ Check scores and determine what instruments have divided parts.
- ▶ Check the individual books for parts (1st/2nd/3rd) and make notes if needed.

Procedures

As the ensemble enters the room...

- ▶ Welcome everyone.
- ▶ Let them know to feel free to adjust the set-up of chairs, percussion equipment, etc.
- ▶ At this time, give the conductor access to the scores of both selections so they may see how parts are split, and to let their percussionists know what to cover, as well as to give them time to look over the selections.

THOUGHTS...

This may look different from person to person, but remember you never get a second chance to make a first impression.

If you're finishing the previous band's comment sheet, let them know in a welcoming way. Don't ignore.

BOTTOM LINE: The superintendent could be in your sight reading room!

Procedures

► Script

The Florida Bandmasters Association has adopted a script to be used for this assessment.

The use of our script will help create a consistent experience for all students in Florida.

Please adhere to the script after your initial interaction, getting settled, etc.

Procedures

- ▶ When the sight reading materials are being distributed to the band, step away and address the parents, friends, administrators who have joined the ensemble and welcome them! Let them know they are about to witness the highest level of concentration and brain function of any other assessment. Students have to decipher a complex symbol system and turn it into music instantaneously, collectively and to very high standards. Invite them to applaud after each selection as they would for any other performance.

Procedures

- ▶ While their teacher is reviewing the music, take time to write a few things on the comment sheet such as the group's appearance, the way they entered the room, their attention to you, their teacher, as well as the way the teacher reviews the music with the students.
- ▶ Remember to give the conductor a one-minute notification if they requested it.

Procedures

- ▶ As you write comments, avoid being too specific with measure numbers, specific notes, etc. Write things like “Students, be reminded to observe key signatures” rather than “students missed the a-flat concert in measures 4, 7, 21 and 103.”
- ▶ Make as many prescriptive comments as you can. Rather than simply pointing out errors, give suggestions how to be better at reading. Do you have some examples?

Procedures

- ▶ Avoid talking too much about what they did well (or poorly). That is a task their teacher needs to accomplish.
- ▶ General comments about their attention, participation, engagement are helpful.
- ▶ Instruct them to listen to their conductor for instructions to leave the room.

Student conductors

- Remember, THIS IS A HUGE DEAL to this student. Build them up, celebrate their strengths and touch on something for them to improve.
- Review the adjudication sheet ahead of time. Comment on as many points as you can.
- GET UP and move around as they are conducting the band. You will be making an audio recording for this, so talk softly and make an effort to point out as many details as you can.
- Of course, you are being aware of the time as you are working with the student conductor!

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- ▶ Your comments/suggestions/questions



- ▶ Thanks for your attention and for sharing!

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