

Planning for Learning: Negotiating the Musical, Administrative and Logistical Elements of Festival Performance

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Why Go to a Music Festival?

- Performance opportunity
- Clinics / working with clinicians
- Listen to other groups or professionals perform
- Team building/bonding experience
- Travel opportunities
- Growth opportunity for the students – gaining independence

Choosing a Music Festival

Different Types of Festivals

- Competitive Music Festivals
 - Includes the performance, adjudication feedback and ratings, can also have additional workshops or clinics after your performance.
 - Can be a path towards bigger music festivals as well.
- Non-Competitive Festivals
 - Adjudication Only Festivals
 - Emphasis at these festivals is the clinic and adjudication you receive

When Choosing a Festival, take some time to think about:

- Your purpose for attending the festival?
- When is the ideal time for your group to go to festival?
- What kind of festival do you want to attend?

The Registration Process

- Registration for a specific date and time
- General registration day – the festival creates the schedule

Trip Planning

Forms

- Figure out what kinds of forms, trip applications, and permission you need from your division VERY EARLY!
- Depending on where the festival is, you could require multiple layers of approval and may need to be submitted months in advance.

Transportation Method

- This is one of, if not, the first things you should book! Once you have the approval to go, start booking your transportation option.
- Figure out what kind of transportation you will need: Charter bus, school bus, parent drivers, moving van

Chaperones

- Divisions will have a specific chaperone to student ratio
- If going to the festival is part of a band trip, consider your chaperones carefully
- As you get closer, consider making an info packet for your chaperones while on the trip, including schedules, list of duties, groups of students, any medical information they will need to know for students, expectations for all, contact information.

Other topics to consider in your planning process:

- Budget Planning – Who is paying?
 - Instructional budget / School budget
 - Student payments
 - Fundraising opportunities
 - Band parent council
 - How do you pay for everything?
- Accommodations (if required)
 - Number of rooms
 - Room assignments
- Cell Phone Usage throughout a trip
- Student Medication (forms and handling)
- Food Allergies / Dietary Restrictions and Accommodations
- Travel Insurance

Musical Preparations

Repertoire Selections

- Some festivals have repertoire requirements. Some are completely open.
- Festivals can provide a syllabus of pre-determined repertoire that you either must choose from or are examples of what that grade level is for related pieces.
- The MBA Level 1 Festival requires all groups to perform a chorale from their compulsory list in addition to two pieces.

When choosing rep, consider the following programming ideas:

- Two pieces vs. three or more (if given the choice)
- Contrasting styles, tempos, keys, sections within a piece
- Traditional concert band literature vs. more contemporary/newer compositions
- Tempo changes
- Instrument features
- Level of difficulty

Musical Preparations

- Give yourself and the group enough time to learn whatever repertoire you are planning to perform. Treat it as any other performance.
- Know what percussion instruments are provided by the festival and what you need to bring. Get your percussionists involved and make sure they know what needs to be packed.
- If the festival you chose has a sight-reading component, take time to practice those skills. Or any other skills that you know will be discussed and worked on during the clinic (rhythm reading, scales, echo patterns, etc.).
- Talk to you students about why you are going and what will happen at the performance. Explain who the adjudicators are, what their job is at the festival, what they are listening for, and what you all will do once the performance is over and the clinic/adjudication begins.

Packing Lists

- Repair kit – extra ligatures, valve guides, mini screw drivers, mouthpiece puller, extra mouthpieces (if possible)
- Extra reeds
- Extra instruments
- Full scores with extra copies of parts
- Student permission slips
- Baton and my scores
- Papers and scores for adjudicators
- Percussion and instrument packing list
- Cheque book

What Happens at the Festival

When going to a festival, there are lots of activities you will do, and lots of optional but worth while activities as well.

Things you must do:

- Check in at the festival - this is where you'll hand in your scores for the adjudicators and your ensemble profile page (if required). Have any forms you need to hand in completed BEFORE you get check in.
- Find your storage spot (if there is one)
- Know what time and where your warm-up is

Things you should consider doing:

- If you are going to the festival for a day, consider going to watch other groups perform either before or after your scheduled performance time. This is a great opportunity to listen to other student groups perform who are at the same level as your group, or at a higher or lower level.
- If the festival offers other activities (performance opportunities, evening concerts, city tours, etc.), they could be good to help fill out your trip.

During the Performance – Be prepared for anything!

- Help your students get settled on stage
- Wait for any announcements or introductions

- Look at the adjudicators – they will often give you a sign they are ready for you to start, especially in between pieces
- Take a moment with your students!
- Have all your scores ready and with you, in order, for easy transitions. Have your students do the same.
- Smile 😊
- Breathe

Post-Performance Clinic/Adjudication

- Be prepared to move quickly and efficiently if you must move to your next location. Take everything with you and help your students to do the same.
- If you are staying on stage, take some time with your students! Congratulate them on a successful performance, tell a joke, reassure them. There is often a few minutes between ending the pieces and when the adjudication will begin.
- While the clinic is happening, be prepared to assist the ensemble as needed (moving percussion, fixing things on the fly) but try to focus on what the adjudicator is saying and working on with the ensemble. **The post-performance clinic is just as much a clinic for you as it is for the students.** Often, clinicians will ask you questions about the music or group as they are working. Sometimes, they will work directly with you.

Great Performance! Now What?

- Post-Concert Reflections – There are so many different concert reflection assignments you could do. Listen and/or read the adjudications and create a format that works best for what you want the students to get out of it.
- Debriefing session - Sometimes a full written concert reflection isn't what's needed. Take the time to hear your students' thoughts and opinions first, then you can share yours, or listen/read the adjudication
- Are you performing the pieces again? Let the feedback guide your next few rehearsals. Use them as a reference when working on the piece again.
- Self – Reflection – take time to think about what the adjudicators said and worked on at the festival. Make notes for yourself about what they did, how they did it, what analogies or stories they use to get concepts across, anything!