

## SECTION IV

### Adjudication

#### Preface

The Bay Section CMEA Music Festivals are the most visible activity of the Association. The Festival Adjudicator acts as a representative of Bay Section CMEA, and as a proponent of the objectives and philosophy of the organization.

The CMEA organization has a two-fold responsibility: first, to the student and director, and second, to the professional educator who has been willing to step forward to act as an Adjudicator.

The section of the handbook that follows is directed at clarifying what is to be expected from both adjudication and the Adjudicator and the responsibilities of students and directors in the adjudication process.

#### Adjudicator Selection, Training, And Evaluation

- I. Purpose: To develop and maintain a responsible and consistent evaluation service for music students and their teachers. The objective is to assist the well-qualified teacher in becoming a skilled adjudicator, through: 1) an apprentice training program, and 2) workshops and periodic evaluation.
  - A. Selection: Prospective adjudicators will be chosen from CMEA members who have demonstrated consistent success over a number of years:
    1. By achieving three or more consecutive years of Superior ratings at large group festivals, and/or
    2. By achieving three or more consecutive years of Superior ratings at solo and ensemble festivals, and/or
    3. By being an active successful professional musician, and/or
    4. By recommendation of a Board member or an Adjudicator who is familiar with his/her work, and
    5. Having successfully completed the required training program, as outlined below.
    6. Nominations must be approved by unanimous vote of the Board.
  - B. Training:
    1. Apprentice adjudicators will be assigned by the Adjudication Director to train at one or more festivals, including a minimum of one-half day each in performance, sight-reading, and/or one full day in solo and ensemble events. The apprentice will be supervised by a Mentor Adjudicator who will compare written and verbal comments, give suggestions

and assist the apprentice in developing good adjudication techniques.

- a. Apprentice training will be required of all new adjudicators to the Bay Section, regardless of their previous experience. This training is to familiarize them with the Bay Section concepts and procedures for festival adjudication.
  - b. The apprentice will receive lunch or dinner.
  - c. The restriction against adjudicating in one's own area does not apply to apprentice training.
  - d. The Mentor Adjudicator will report to the Adjudication Director his/her evaluation, and recommend further apprentice experience or acceptance as a qualified Adjudicator. This will be done immediately upon completion of the festival in which the training was complete, using the "Adjudication Trainee Performance Evaluation" form, available to download from [cmeabaysection.org](http://cmeabaysection.org).
  - e. Upon recommendation of the Adjudication Director, based on the training and evaluation described above, the apprentice's name will be proposed to the Board for approval and addition to the list of adjudicators.
2. All active Adjudicators, including apprentices, must attend an adjudication workshop every two years, at the Winter Conference or at other times or locations announced.
  3. Evaluation: All Adjudicators will be evaluated periodically, on a rotating basis, to aid them in maintaining a positive, informed, and helpful approach. Evaluation may be by a Mentor Adjudicator and/or qualified Board member.
    - a. All first-year Adjudicators will be evaluated.
    - b. All Head Adjudicators will evaluate those adjudicators assigned to his/her festival, immediately up on completion of that festival, using the "Head Adjudicator's Festival Report" form available to download from [cmeabaysection.org](http://cmeabaysection.org).
    - c. Participating teachers are requested to evaluate Adjudicators at each festival they attend. The form provided at each festival for this purpose should be returned to the Adjudication Director.

At the end of the festival season, evaluations for each Adjudicator are recorded by the Adjudication Director and the forms then sent to the respective Adjudicators to let them know their strengths and weaknesses as perceived by the directors.

- d. Rating summary forms are sent to the Adjudication Director by Site Hosts after all festivals. These are needed to help in the evaluation of Adjudicators' rating standards. These forms are provided to the Site Host with other festival materials and available to download from [cmeabaysection.org](http://cmeabaysection.org).

- e. At the conclusion of the festival season, the Adjudication Director will compile all available information, based on evaluations and other communications, and record such information. A report will then be made to the Executive Committee who will review the list of Adjudicators, making changes according to apprentice training and evaluation results.
- f. An Adjudicator may not receive assignments due to: failure to attend workshops as required; repeated non-acceptance and/or cancellation of contracts; disregard of handbook requirements and procedures; or failure to respond to communications.
- g. An adjudicator's name may be deleted from the list due to poor evaluation results.

## II. Duties And Responsibilities

### A. Pre-Festival:

- 1. Early in the school year, Adjudicators will be sent required forms for the forthcoming festival season. These forms include: a cover letter giving current information; an "Adjudicator Profile"; a "Festival Schedule/Availability Form"; and a "Festival Adjudicator's Contract." The evaluation forms completed by directors from the previous festival season will also be included in this packet. All required forms shall be completed and returned to the Adjudication Director by the given deadline or it will be assumed that the Adjudicator no longer wishes to be considered for further adjudication assignments.
- 2. Adjudicators are employed as Independent Contractors at a rate of pay set each year by the Board of Directors. Signing and returning the aforementioned "Festival Adjudicator's Contract" will be effective for all assigned and accepted festivals throughout the forthcoming festival season, as outlined in subject contract. If the assigned adjudicator is unable to fulfill any given assignment, the Adjudication Director must be contacted immediately.
- 3. Adjudicators must familiarize themselves with the handbook section on adjudication as well as the sections concerning the type of festival and event they are to adjudicate.

### B. Assignments:

- 1. All assignments will be made via email as outlined below. Adjudicators will "Accept" or "Reject" each assignment via email within one week of receipt of subject email. Non-response will result in the assignment being given to another Adjudicator, without further notice.
- 2. Jazz festival assignments will be made in November of each year. The jazz Adjudicators are selected from the Bay Section list by the Adjudication Director after consulting with the Jazz Representative.
- 3. Other large group festival assignments will be made in December of each year, based on festival dates and location.
- 4. Solo and Ensemble festival assignments will be made in January of each year after entries are received and specific needs are determined for each festival.

5. Adjudicators are generally not assigned to festivals in the area in which they are music educators.
6. Adjudicators are rotated by area so that performers do not encounter the same Adjudicator again for at least two years.
7. Adjudicators are rotated in sight-reading assignments, which must be accepted.
8. An attempt is made to vary the teaching levels of the adjudicators at large group festivals, so that there is representation from middle school, high school, college as well as a professional musician on each team.
9. A Head Adjudicator will be assigned to each festival. His/her duties are as outlined later in this section.
10. A Mentor Adjudicator will be assigned to each festival where an Apprentice is assigned. His/her duties are as outlined later in this section.

B. Festival:

1. Adjudicators will meet at least ONE-HALF HOUR before the first performance. This meeting is to be conducted by the Head Adjudicator in conjunction with the Area Representative and the Site Host.
  - a. The Site Host will go over last-minute information including cancellations, time elements, locations of events, meals, etc.
  - b. The Area Representative will represent the Bay Section Board, giving any pertinent information from that group.
  - c. The Head Adjudicator will go over festival procedures, requirements, ratings, and review other information, as needed. At large group festivals the Head Adjudicator will inform the others of the rotation schedule for clinics.
2. Solo and Ensemble Festivals:
  - a. One Adjudicator is assigned to each event, and will adjudicate performances of no more than five minutes within a ten-minute time schedule. Comments will be written on adjudication forms provided, and the Adjudicator will assign a rating for that performance unless the performer indicates otherwise. The Adjudicator MUST, as time permits, rise and go forward to speak with the student(s) following the performance. The adjudicator may award Command Performance cards to those considered to have given a performance unique or special which should be heard by others. Care must be taken to not use this subjective recognition as another rating above Superior.
  - b. The student must present a copy of the solo, or score, to the Adjudicator upon entering the performance area. The performer should pick up this music upon leaving the area after the performance. If no score is provided, the adjudicator MUST LOWER THE RATING ONE GRADE LEVEL.

3. Large Group Festivals:
- a. Each event will have four Adjudicators, three who will adjudicate the performance of each group. The fourth Adjudicator will be the sight-reading Adjudicator.
  - b. Adjudicators are to be seated separately and are not to confer during the performances. At the end of the performance, a conference may take place if any of the Adjudicators feel this is necessary or helpful. In no case should such a conference take place within hearing of others, with the exception of the Area Representative or the Site Host.
  - c. The maximum performance time for choral groups is 13 minutes within a 20-minute time period. Instrumental groups may perform up to 17 minutes within a 25-minute time period. The time period shall include entry, setup, performance, and exit of the group. A group which exceeds these time limits WILL BE STOPPED but WITHOUT PENALTY to the rating.
  - d. Each group will have three Adjudicators giving recorded comments.
    - 1) All Adjudicators are required to bring a recorder they are familiar with; tapes are provided at the site.
    - 2) All Adjudicators are required to check the categories on the provided adjudication forms, writing any additional comments desired.
  - e. At the end of the performance each group will be involved in either sight-reading or a clinic, which will be 20 minutes for choral groups and 25 minutes for instrumental groups. This time may include moving to another area, as well as entry, setup, sight-reading or clinic, Adjudicator's concluding comments, and exit.
    - 1) Sight-reading will also be recorded (see sight-reading section).
    - 2) When an Adjudicator goes with a group to give a clinic, the sight-reading Adjudicator moves to the performance event.
    - 3) It is strongly preferred that the sight-reading adjudicator not evaluate the same group in both performance and sight-reading.
    - 4) In no case should a clinic be given by an Adjudicator who did not hear the group's performance.
    - 5) At any given festival all sight-reading shall be administered by the same adjudicator.
    - 6) If on occasion the schedule requires the sight-reading Adjudicator to evaluate a performance and then go with that group to evaluate them in sight-reading, this is allowable. The Head Adjudicator should try to avoid this when making up the rotation schedule, if at all possible.

- 7) All Adjudicators should be aware of which groups they are going to clinic throughout the day.

### III. Head Adjudicator

- A. At each festival, one of the Adjudicators will be assigned the responsibility of Head Adjudicator. This person will be responsible for answering questions concerning requirements and problems which may occur, and for assessing reduction in ratings for failure to abide by procedures as outlined in this Handbook. It is important that he/she be familiar with the Handbook and have a copy at the festival. At many group festivals, there will be one Adjudicator from outside the Bay Section and/or one first-year Adjudicator. It is essential that the Head Adjudicator be able to answer any and all questions they may have.

Responsibilities at large group festivals:

1. When the schedule arrives from the Site Host, the Head Adjudicator must make up a preliminary rotation schedule for clinics:
  - a) All sight-reading must be done by the same Adjudicator, who must be able to move between sight-reading and performance/clinic roles without impairing the adjudication process.
  - b) It is strongly preferred that the sight-reading Adjudicator not evaluate the same group both in performance and sight-reading, if at all possible.
  - c) In no case should a clinic be given by an Adjudicator who did not hear the group's performance.
  - d) Directors with multiple groups should have different Adjudicators for their clinics when possible.
2. Arrive at the festival site early enough to check Adjudicator areas to be used, seating, recording materials and forms, sight-reading music and schedule changes, making changes in Adjudicator rotation, as necessary. Make sure the headquarters staff understands the rating summary format. Discuss posting of ratings, and the fact **THAT THE RANGE OF RATINGS FOR A GROUP MAY NOT BE MORE THAN ONE RATING APART. NO RATINGS MAY BE CHANGED ONCE THEY ARE POSTED.** Notify the Adjudicators and headquarters staff of the rotation of Adjudicators.
3. Assist in keeping the festivals running on time.
4. Have all Adjudicator Rating forms given to you to check before turning them into headquarters for posting, resolving any composite ratings involving more than two different rating levels (Superior – Excellent – Good, etc. See Section V.).
5. Complete the Head Adjudicator's Festival Report and submit it to the Adjudication Director within 24 hours of the festival completion via fax or email. Problems or unique events during the festival should be reported to the Area Representative, who should act as the Bay Section representative.

#### IV. Mentor Adjudicators

Mentor Adjudicators are a select group of experienced Adjudicators who have demonstrated their knowledge of Bay Section policies and procedures, who are currently active in Bay Section adjudication, and who have outstanding adjudication skills. Their duties are:

- A. Work with Apprentice Adjudicators in a regular festival situation.
  - 1. In Solo and Ensemble Festivals, the Apprentice will observe the Mentor actually evaluating students and giving them comments for the first half-day, and will then actually participate the last half-day, sharing duties with the Mentor.
  - 2. In Large Group festivals, the Apprentice will spend one-half day with the Mentor, making taped and written comments of performances (which are for training purposes only and will be seen only by the Mentor). These may be discussed during the following lunch or dinner. The following half-day will be spent doing the same with the Sight-Reading Adjudicator and Clinicians.
- B. Complete the “Adjudication Trainee Performance Evaluation” form, evaluating the Apprentice’s performance, making recommendations for future adjudication, and submitting the form to the Adjudication Director within 24 hours of the festival completion, via fax or email.

#### V. Standards

- A. The Adjudicator is considered to be a master teacher and a figure of authority. His/her actions, attitude and comments must contribute to the improvement and encouragement of the performers.
- B. There are no restrictions as to the difficulty level of selections performed. It is recognized that the adjudication will reflect not only the quality of the performance but the quality of the music selected and its suitability to the individual/group.
  - 1. This judgment lies solely with the Adjudicator. In addition to these factors, the Adjudicator must take into consideration the experience, size of the group, number of rehearsal hours per week, etc., as indicated on the provided adjudication form. If this information is not provided, the Adjudicator should ask for it from the director or student before the performance begins.
  - 2. It is **REQUIRED** that art music, as opposed to popular music, be performed at all festivals, and that failure to do this **MUST BE REFLECTED IN THE FINAL PERFORMANCE SCORE** by the adjudicator. The music chosen should also allow a group to demonstrate its ability to perform in a variety of styles and tempos.
- C. When persons are asked to adjudicate, they should have wide experience in listening to performers of the level they are to adjudicate. In no other way can they properly form ideas as to the standards of performance they can reasonably expect from students of different levels and backgrounds.

Adjudicators should realize their responsibility for helping to establish and maintain proper standards of performance, but they should not forget the importance of stimulating and lending encouragement, ESPECIALLY to weaker performers. The mark of a truly outstanding adjudicator is not how well he/she works with advanced students, but how much help and encouragement he/she gives to students who have not yet attained excellence. An Adjudicator should be a person who sincerely wishes to ENCOURAGE young musicians by recognizing their achievement and to IMPROVE their performance by pointing out, in a positive manner, how they can strengthen their weaknesses. In short, an adjudicator should be a teacher. In this way the Adjudicator can maintain and improve the standards of music education in the schools.

## VI. Adjudicator Comments

- A. The adjudicators should first listen to a performance and appraise it in terms of the categories on the adjudication form, using the Performance Criteria, as outlined in the Appendix of this handbook. If they are to be helpful as well as critical, they must be specific in their comments, and they must justify and clarify verbal and written comments and/or checkmarks and ratings. They should acquire a vocabulary with which they can record their impressions and suggestions clearly and concisely. This does not mean simply to point out such obvious things as “this instrument played a B-flat instead of a B-natural in the third measure of Z,” but to call attention to fundamental characteristics of the group, i.e., the presence or lack of good tone quality, intonation, precision of execution, phrasing, musicality, etc.
1. Adjudicators are to give constructive and positive criticism through written, taped and/or verbal comments. The adjudicator should keep the focus of the comments on the student(s), and try to convey a sense of sincere encouragement. Comments should not only point out problems but must include ways to solve the problems.
    - a) Verbal comments MUST be consistent with the written comments and the rating awarded.
    - b) Check marks and/or scores must be consistent with the rating awarded, and must be backed up with constructive comments, especially in the case of low ratings.
  2. Adjudicators must clarify their ratings through written and/or verbal comments on tape and in the clinic situation. Participants will be more willing to accept a lower rating when the Adjudicator points out the conditions which brought about the rating and offers concrete suggestions for improvement. In terms of education value, critical comments are the most important contribution made by the Adjudicator, but in the minds of the participants and often of the directors, the rating is too often the ultimate goal. Failure to make clear the basis for the rating negates the valuable results which are intended.
  3. The adjudicators must be capable of expressing themselves legibly, concisely, and diplomatically. They should avoid writing, or making a verbal comment which a director cannot share with either the students or administrators.
  4. The Adjudicator must translate what is heard into terms of the categories on the Adjudication form. Care must be taken to assure that comments are consistent

with the scores and/or check marks. A director cannot be blamed for being dissatisfied if comments are generally full of praise while the rating is low, or if a form is filled with “Outstanding” and “Superior” marks while the comments are generally negative.

5. Adjudicators should set high, yet attainable standards. These standards should not be solely based on performances comparable to those of college-level or professional musicians.
6. Adjudicators should not set their standards too low giving nothing but high ratings in order to “encourage” the students. In failing to be sufficiently critical of below-standard performances, an injustice is done to those who have achieved higher standards—the truly “Superior” performers. Thus, we see festivals in which nothing but “Superiors” and “Excellents” are awarded. This is obviously an unrealistic use of the rating system.
7. Adjudicators will not use electronic devices such as metronomes, tuners, etc., in their adjudication process.

## VII. Adjudicator Ratings

- A. The categories to be considered in determining the rating are specified on the adjudication form (see Appendix), and it is the responsibility of the Adjudicator to limit assessment to these categories.
- B. Persons who listen to many performances of standard works will be aware of the fact that there may be several different interpretations of the same work, each of them valid. An Adjudicator may prefer one over the other, but should not penalize a performance because he/she does not like the interpretation, so long as it is logical and does not violate the rules of style and good taste.
- C. The rating system is designed to ensure that a single category does not over-balance the others. The Adjudicator must not lower the overall rating because of a weakness in a single area. Again, the final rating must be consistent with the markings of the individual categories.
- D. When hearing groups or soloists of different grade levels, the Adjudicator must remember that it is just as possible for a middle school or elementary school group, or a small group, to receive a high rating as it is for a large group or one from a higher grade level to receive a lower rating.
- E. An individual or group may receive disqualification or the lowering of a final rating as a result of not following the festival rules and regulations as outlined in this Handbook. The following penalties will be assessed by the Head Adjudicator for Large Group Festivals and the Event Adjudicator for Solo and Ensemble Festivals and are not negotiable.
  1. Disqualification from receiving a rating (however, an individual or group may perform for “Comments Only”).
    - a. A performance group having participants not from the same school.
  2. Required lowering of each final rating by one grade by each Adjudicator.

- a. An ensemble being conducted in a Solo and Ensemble Festival, with the exception of percussion entries.
- b. More than three on a vocal part in a Solo and Ensemble Festival.
- c. More than one on an instrumental part in a Solo and Ensemble Festival.
- d. The use of electronic devices not specifically called for in the arrangement in Solo and Ensemble and Large Group Festivals.
- e. Failure to stop performing when directed to by the Adjudicator in Solo and Ensemble and Large Group Festivals.
- f. Failure to provide a score (or solo part in Solo and Ensemble Festivals) for each Adjudicator, properly assembled and with measures and cuts clearly numbered.
- g. Failure in Large Group Festivals for a choral group to sing from memory.
- h. Failure of the entire group (as parts are provided and available) to perform; and/or personnel augmenting a group in sight-reading (only by sight-reading Adjudicator).
- i. Performing choral sight-reading with accompaniment in Large Group Festivals.

F. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES MAY RATINGS BE CHANGED BY ANYONE ONCE THE RATINGS ARE PUBLICLY POSTED.

## VIII. Rating Standards

Standards of ratings are outlined below, with some explanatory remarks. Full details are provided in the “CMEA Bay Section Festival Performance Criteria” and the “Sight-Reading Performance Criteria” found in the Appendix of this Handbook.

NO PLUS OR MINUS SIGNS ARE TO BE EMPLOYED IN ANY RATINGS. The following references to final ratings are to be applied only to designated rated festivals. NO FINAL RATINGS ARE TO BE GIVEN AT DESIGNATED NON-RATED FESTIVALS OR TO GROUPS REQUESTING “COMMENTS ONLY”.

### A. **SUPERIOR** – (Outstanding)

This rating represents the finest conceivable performance for the event and the level of participants being adjudicated; worthy of being recognized as among the very best.

While the Adjudicator might find some minor points to criticize and make some helpful suggestions for further improvement, their comments and/or check marks would show a preponderance of “Superiors.” Comments would be generally complimentary for outstanding work.

**B. EXCELLENT – (Above Average)**

This rating reflects a fine performance in many respects but not one worthy of the highest rating due to minor defects. It is, however, a performance of distinct quality. This performance usually shows the results of sound, fundamental training, but the performance lacks the polish and artistry necessary to qualify for a “Superior.” There would probably be some “Superior” and perhaps a few “Needs Improvement” comments and/or check marks, but more comments and/or check marks would be in the “Excellent” area rather than the “Good” or “Fair” areas. It is relatively easy for an adjudicator to comment on such a performance, because the weaknesses stand out clearly against a generally first-rate background. Suggestions can usually be focused on something specific and helpful.

**C. GOOD – (Average)**

This rating is awarded for a good performance, but one that is not excellent. The performance shows accomplishments and marked promise, but is lacking in one or more essential qualities.

This rating indicates room for improvement in many of the fundamental items listed on the Adjudicators’ comment sheets. Such forms might show one or two marks in the “Superior,” “Excellent” and/or “Needs Improvement” areas, but would show quite a few “Goods” and “Fairs.” There would probably not be time or space to record each separate error as it occurred, but the group would have some basically fine qualities and there should be ample opportunity for the Adjudicator to make suggestions for general improvement of fundamental weaknesses.

**D. FAIR – (Below Average)**

This rating describes a performance that shows some obvious weaknesses. These may reflect handicaps in the way of instruction, instrumentation, or lack of rehearsal time.

This rating represents a performance which is generally weak and uncertain. There are numerous errors in most of the fundamental categories. The Adjudicators’ sheets will show a great many “Needs Improvements.” Adjudicators will probably not devote much space to pointing out specific errors.

*Comments should be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement. They might suggest such things as schedule and rehearsal improvements, or more careful suggestions for ensemble or individual studies and exercises which would contribute to the development of a soloist or group. (Perhaps a private note to the director with suggestions might be in order for this rating.)*

**E. NEEDS IMPROVEMENT**

This rating indicates a performance which reveals much room for improvement. The director should check his/her methods, instrumentation, etc., with those of a more mature organization.

This rating is rarely used even by the most critical Adjudicator, since performers of this level usually do not participate in festivals. It indicates a lack of preparedness and musical understanding. In some cases, this may be due to immature students attempting music which is too advanced for them. In others, it may be due to an accumulation of careless playing habits.

The comment sheets will, of course, contain mostly “Needs Improvement” comments and markings. Adjudicators must use a great deal of tact; if there are any commendable features in the performance, they should be singled out. Remarks should be honest but never sarcastic. They should point out the basic weaknesses and make suggestions for improvement, and above all, urge the participants to work toward improvement.

#### IX. Non-Rated Performance

Soloists and/or groups always have the option of performing at any festival for “Comments Only.” This is an excellent option for a newer program or one that does not meet the criteria for performance as outlined in this Handbook. This applies to Solo and Ensemble as well as Large Group festivals.