



# Adjudicator Briefing

## GENERAL INFORMATION

### Adjudicator Report Form:

- One report, per festival will be issued providing the necessary information. **The District Festival will be your point of contact from this point forward.** They will provide you with a program, accommodation information, and time and place of the briefing.

### Travel, Local Accommodation, Expenses

- The District Festival will confirm your arrival/departure dates, flight arrangements (if required), arrange your accommodation, and meals or provide a cash diem.
- Review your contract for details on reimbursable expenses and the conflict of interest policy.
- Submit an invoice <http://smfa.ca/adjudicators/>, (with receipts) to the District Festival for applicable expenses.

### Adjudicating

- Please be prepared – review the program in advance.
- A **verbal** and **written** adjudication is given at the conclusion of each class. Grouping 2 or 3 successive small classes together is acceptable.
- Find out from the festival committee whether they wish for quick adjudications or longer, workshop-style ones.
- When adjudicating a less-familiar area of specialization base your judgments on the musical qualities of the performance. You may not be able to give detailed technical assistance. Please don't say "I know nothing about the \_\_\_\_\_".

### Marking

- Familiarize yourself with the marking standard.
- While numerical marks *may* be used for all competitors in order to choose the winner, only those of winner and runner-up of each class may be announced. Other performers are given a letter rating on the adjudication sheets and public postings.
- Check with the District Festival as to their preferred range of marks. Marks in the 70's are used **very sparingly** with an emphasis placed on encouragement.
- **Avoid first place ties.**
- A minimum mark of **87** must be attained before a student may be recommended for Provincial Competitions, or **88 or higher** for the National Class.

### Special Classes, Substitutions

- When a student has entered the wrong class, or is performing an unauthorized selection, these selections will be for adjudication only and will not be eligible for any scholarships.
- Keep the current Syllabus with you to provide you with class requirements, regulations, etc.
- At times, the committee may create a new or special class. The secretary will advise you whether or not they will be for adjudication only.

**IMPORTANT REGULATIONS – for complete listing, see <http://smfa.ca/syllabus-regulations/>**

### Memory

- Memory work is encouraged but not mandatory at the District level.

### Accompaniment

- The piano is to be used for accompaniment except where other options are stated. Acoustic guitar or organ is acceptable in appropriate classes. Professionally recorded accompaniment tracks may be used only in School Music Classes.
- Accompaniment is not required for participation.

### Editions

- Editions are a perennial problem. Some, we know, are better than others, but it is best not to be too dogmatic about this matter. Make suggestions by all means, but avoid being overly insistent, especially with young students.
- The use of **unauthorized photocopied copyright music by competitors or accompanists is unacceptable.** Please notify the committee if this situation arises.

### Miscellaneous

- Any person may enter a festival "for adjudication only".
- A change of selection from the printed program is not allowed unless authorized by the committee.

## SCHOLARSHIPS AND DISTRICT WINNERS

### Scholarships and Awards

- All awards, including scholarships, trophies, prizes, etc., and the naming of District Winners and National candidates, are the responsibility of the adjudicator.

### Provincial Finals

- Provincial Class/District winners are eligible to compete for scholarships and awards at the Provincial Finals by attaining a mark of **87 or higher** and recommendation (competitors must also have entered and competed in at least two solo classes in the same discipline. Instrumentalists must have competed in two solo classes on the same instrument.)
- District Winner Recommendation Charts, outlining Provincial classes are provided. The naming of alternates is encouraged in the case that the District winner is unable to attend.

### National Competitions

- Students wishing to compete in the National Music Festival must first enter a District Festival in the appropriate National Class.
- A mark of **88 or higher** and a written recommendation is required to advance from the District National Class to the Provincial Level of National Competition.
- National Recommendation Charts, requiring your signature, are provided. The naming of alternates is encouraged in the case that the winner is unable to attend.

## ADJUDICATING BASICS AND TIPS

- **BE POSITIVE AND BE BRIEF:** the verbal adjudication gives you the opportunity to deal with general as well as specific problems, and to demonstrate if necessary. Spend a minute or so on each person, depending on your time, and perhaps 2 or 3 minutes for a few general remarks to all. Be constructive in your assessments.
  - Emphasize that the comments on the adjudication sheet are of far greater importance than the mark received.
  - Talk about nerves, about the fact the audience just want to be entertained...that no one is here to see you fail...
  - Do not be so positive the performer does not "hear" any criticisms. Be honest with the student in your written adjudication but *NEVER destroy confidence*.
  - If you have extra time due to a generous schedule or cancellations, **do make use of the time you're given**.
- Speak so you are heard and refrain from making inappropriate comments. Your adjudication is also for the benefit of everyone in the audience.
- Create a relaxed and encouraging atmosphere
- **NEVER ACT "SUPERIOR":** You are, **an employee of the festival or competition organizers**.
- **The spotlight must ALWAYS be on the performer and NOT on the adjudicator.** Part of your role should be to entertain the audience and to keep the "show" going. Explaining the intricacies of a piece or the challenges in playing an instrument can be entertaining and informative. It may well enhance the audience's enjoyment of the session and encourage their support for music education in general.
- You may find situations in which it is clear that a performance problem is not the students'; it is the teacher's. **NEVER criticize a teacher in front of his or her students.**
- **ALWAYS BE HONEST** with your own limits. If you do not, play or have a significant amount of experience with a particular instrument, do not bluff. Admit that you are not familiar with the intricacies of the instrument but that you are going to talk about the musical approach or rhythmic accuracy.
- Never adjudicate an accompanist (unless of course, that is part of the class you are judging).
- **STAY ON TIME.**
- Be appreciative of your adjudicator secretary. **Make absolutely sure that at some point near the end of the festival you thank everyone involved, including sponsors/donors.**

Many new adjudicators struggle to define the types of thing on which they should comment. It will vary a LOT of course depending on the level of the performer and should include advice as to how to fix or improve the issue. The following is a list of possible things to include (keeping in mind that you don't need to comment on all):

- Breathing
- Sound (in all ranges: it may differ)
- Technique/facility
- Right notes
- Intonation
- Phrasing
- Length of notes
- Style
- Tempos and "time" feel
- Rhythms
- "Ensemble"
- Dynamics and contrast
- Blend/balance
- Attention to conductor
- Stage Deportment
- Your remarks might conclude with one on overall impression and musicality.

Inevitably there will be situations that arise when you are adjudicating from which there seems no "safe escape". It is your job to provide the escape route.

- a. **Performer breaks down crying:** This, of course, largely a nervous reaction and requires a great deal of tact. Have a private, quiet conversation with the student. Consider taking a break. Perhaps look at the possibility of allowing them to play later with no audience. Do what you can to relieve the tension.
- b. **Student is unable to finish the performance (nerves):** You need to offer the options of graceful exit or the chance to continue.
- c. **Student argues with decision:** Do not allow a public argument. Relegate it to a later time in the day. Generally, festival committees will not allow students to argue directly with the adjudicator.
- d. **The performance is so awful that everyone knows it, most of all the performer:** In cases where the player seems unconcerned, obviously you shouldn't be either. There will, however, be times when the student clearly worked on the piece but for whatever reason it goes awry. Remain encouraging and honest; perhaps use this opportunity to discuss ways of practicing the piece. Do allow price and grace.
- e. **You award the first place to someone who missed more notes than another:** That of course, is your judgment call and you will have reasons for doing that. There will be surprise in the audience (and perhaps from the performers). Expect it. Consider a comment on your feelings on musicality and presentation before announcing the results.