



Classical Competitive Festivals

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ARRANGING YOUR PROGRAM

Timing:

Timing your program well benefits the entire festival. One of the main purposes of the festival movement is to provide instruction for everyone in the audience, not just the performer. If your programs are crowded, the adjudicator's time is cut short therefore the purpose of festival is not fulfilled. Give your adjudicators every chance to do their best work on your behalf.

*Some suggestions are given to help you time your sessions. You may have to adjust according to your own needs, but these ideas **do work**.*

1. **Add the performance times** noted on the entry forms of all entries in the class and then:
 - ✓ allow an **extra 2 minutes** for each competitor to reach and return from the stage, tune instruments, set organ registrations, etc.
 - ✓ allow an **additional extra 2 minutes** for each competitor for adjudications (**senior classes will require more time**)
 - ✓ a general formula for group entries is a total time of **15 minutes** per choir or band
 - ✓ schedule your sessions to include coffee breaks
2. **Remember that the general rule is one session off after every five sessions for your adjudicator.** However, many adjudicators prefer to work more sessions in a row in order to return to their regular work sooner, so that six sessions concurrently is allowed for a two-day assignment. If your adjudicator is needed for more than two days, you must schedule sessions off for them.
3. **Programming:**
 - ✓ Within each class try to avoid scheduling conflicts, if other sessions are running, and be aware of accompanists scheduling.
 - ✓ Some festivals prefer to begin the first day with the younger students.
 - ✓ Senior students usually like the opportunity of performing in the evening, especially singers.
 - ✓ Recital classes and younger students usually attract good audiences, intersperse such classes throughout your sessions to ensure good attendance.
 - ✓ Bands and choirs attract audiences, too, so try to begin and end the evening sessions with them.
 - ✓ Mixed evening programs are good: for example, have two or more adjudicators or a variety of classes, etc. but remember they always take more time.
 - ✓ You may find that having a stage manager on your committee to assist in moving a piano, risers, etc. would be beneficial.
 - ✓ Try to be flexible and approachable so that your students can request time changes if they are necessary. The secretary and adjudicator should be notified of any changes before the class commences.



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HINTS ON TIMING FESTIVAL PROGRAMS

by Mossie Hancock

For many festivals - no problem. You've learned from previous years, have an experienced program committee, allow enough days for the festival, adequate time for performances, adjudications, coffee breaks and the recommended one session off in every six for the adjudicator. Congratulations!

Difficulties can arise with new festivals, a new executive, a new program committee or an unexpected increase in entries. Those festivals that rotate every year among three or four centres may have all those difficulties at once, but even long-running festivals hit snags.

It can be discouraging for a committee that's worked hard all year to produce a smooth festival, to find all sessions are crowded and running late with tired performers and audiences. If the adjudicator falls behind and tires, sessions will drag even more - especially if no sessions off are allowed to replenish energy and enthusiasm.

What to do?

Well, despite the fact that no two festivals are the same, they do share common goals and some common characteristics.

Goals?

- ✓ Performers come first, right? We want the festival to be a positive experience and try to create a good atmosphere so each performer is encouraged to do his/her best. We want them to feel comfortable. We also want it to be a learning experience for everyone - performers, teachers, family, and the audience which we need and whom we'd like to make feel involved.

Common characteristics?

- ✓ Far more junior entries than senior. These are most apt to cause timing problems.
- ✓ Except for larger festivals, often single entry classes.
- ✓ More entries of own choice classes than test piece classes.
- ✓ Periodic wide swings in number of entries and categories. Perhaps a teacher leaves, or the schools decide not to enter, or the band program folds, or entries zoom up because a new teacher comes in, the schools finally decide to enter lots of choruses, choral speech and individual verse, or a band program starts up.

So?

- ✓ Let's look first at prevention measures which many festivals use and find workable, although an experienced committee knows how quickly adjustments may have to be made for local conditions. Modify to suit your festival. Most of the hints come from observing or adjudicating about 50 festivals in the last 10 years in three provinces.



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(Continued)

What Seems to Work?

- ✓ Send programs to Provincial Office and adjudicators before the festival. Often errors can be spotted early (entry in wrong class, etc.) or a too-crowded program can still be re-arranged.
- ✓ When entries drop festivals usually shorten the time booked. If entries go up suddenly arrange for an extra day or even an extra adjudicator. (Sure - problems with getting space, but better than overcrowding and leaving a lasting poor impression on entrants and audience.) Where there are two or three adjudicators (piano, i.e.), the senior might do more of the juniors to avoid light senior sessions and heavy juniors. (45 minutes for two senior sonata movements? It happens.)
- ✓ Get very familiar with General Regulations.
- ✓ Get in touch with Provincial Office when difficulties arise.
- ✓ Try to keep the first morning's session fairly light. Murphy's Law - if something can go wrong, it will go wrong. Find out in time to do something about it.
- ✓ **Inform adjudicators of additions or changes to the program** well ahead of time. Have the session secretary announce such changes at the beginning of the session and again where the change occurs in the program.
- ✓ The secretary could request performers sit in the front rows, at least for the adjudication.
- ✓ When more than one person plays the same piece in own choice classes, put them in succession - sharpens attention. Senior classes can be an exception.
- ✓ Beginners, juniors and intermediates pay the same entry fee as seniors; avoid regarding them as a means of subsidizing the older performers who use more time. Unfair to put 80 in a morning!
- ✓ Mark the time the first class actually starts, and even when each batch of adjudications finishes (often more than one class is done at a time) and when the last class finishes. You can see where the problem areas are. It can at least help you next year.
- ✓ Allow adequate time for determining scholarships with the scholarship committee.
- ✓ No long classes. Divide into (a) and (b) - certificates for both. Avoid more than 12 if possible.
- ✓ Discourage dawdling as people move in and out. Keep it moving - everyone stays alert, including performers.
- ✓ Allow time for certificate presentation, clearing of room, and for students to pick up their music.