



# Music Performance Assessments

# 2023 GUIDE TO HOSTING A CHORAL MPA

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West Allegheny SD - Retired  
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# INTRODUCTION

The fundamental goals of this *Guide* have not changed since the first *Manual* was released in 1986:

- To provide directors with the information needed to successfully host an MPA
- To answer common questions about hosting an MPA
- To provide an ongoing reference for those who have hosted in the past
- To identify any changes and new aspects of hosting
- To provide practical suggestions for hosts, especially those new to hosting MPAs

In turn, feedback is welcome from all involved for this Guide to best serve as a relevant resource.

The name of this program changed from "PMEA Adjudication" to "PMEA Music Performance Assessment" in 2008. The events themselves continue to be called "MPAs" or "Music Performance Assessments." This change simplifies and clarifies what we are and focus upon what we do --- music performance assessment.

Hosts should also review the current *Guide to Participating in a Choral MPA* for an overview from that perspective.

All forms and items needed to participate in and to host an MPA are posted within the Music Performance Assessment area of the PMEA website at [www.pmea.net](http://www.pmea.net).

The following forms are used when hosting a Choral MPA:

- *Choral Music Performance Assessment Form*
- *Choral MPA Rating Summary Form*
- *Choral MPA Rating Summary – All Ensembles Form*
- *PMEA MPA Deposit Form*
- *Adjudicator Application*
- *Fillable W-9 Form for Adjudicators*

Online forms issued from PMEA include the following:

- *Host Information Form*
- *Host Expense Form*
- *Registration Form* (for participating directors)
- *Declaring Prepared Pieces Form* (for participating directors)

Potential hosts are strongly recommended to participate in at least one PMEA MPA before hosting. However, significant experience participating in or hosting a performance assessment event, competition or festival may enable a first-time participating and prospective first-time host director to be comfortable enough to host a PMEA MPA.

Contact Tom Snyder, MPA Coordinator, with questions, at [tsnyder@westasd.org](mailto:tsnyder@westasd.org) or (724) 816-0420.

For mailing, use his home address; **401 Bon Air Court, Cranberry Township, PA 16066**

# SECTION 1: PLANNING

## A. SELECT A VIABLE DATE

- MPAs are most commonly scheduled within a two-month window between mid-March and mid-May. While most MPAs are held during the school day, an MPA that starts immediately after school or held on a Saturday is permitted. MPAs held over two school consecutive weekdays or a Friday-Saturday are also permitted.
- Avoid conflicts with PMEA festivals and PSSA testing. Dates near Easter may limit participation, as schools have varying lengths of spring break before and after Easter. Directors may also be wary of participating immediately after a break. Mondays are not recommended, as many directors prefer that the final rehearsal prior to an MPA not be followed by a weekend.
- When requesting permission to host, provide principals with relevant information concerning facility needs, how any displaced music or other classes will be accommodated, and where students from other schools will be entering, using, and exiting the building. Once a date is confirmed, arrange for any assistance needed from colleagues, parents, students, the stage manager, and custodians.

## B. PUBLICIZE YOUR MPA TO POTENTIAL PARTICIPATING DIRECTORS

- Inform the MPA Coordinator with your date as soon as it's confirmed for it to be included within the official *MPA Calendar* posted within the MPA area of the PMEA website.
- Complete PMEA's online *Host Information Form*. PMEA will use that information to customize an online Registration Form for interested directors to register directly through a link embedded in the MPA Calendar. PMEA will provide hosts with access to monitor the summary document that includes essential information for each ensemble.
- In addition to publicity through PMEA, promote your MPA through your PMEA District's newsletters as well as emails to friends and colleagues. Encourage participation within informal phone calls and conversations at meetings, and festivals.

## C. NUMBER OF ENSEMBLES NEEDED TO HOLD AN MPA

- A minimum of six ensembles is required to hold an MPA for the event to be financially viable.
- The maximum number of ensembles permitted to participate is not formally limited. Hosts usually determine the starting and ending times and the maximum number of ensembles that can be accommodated based on ensemble scheduling needs and adjudicator availability. After the planned performance slots are filled, maintain a 'waiting list' in case an ensemble withdraws.

## D. CONTRACT ADJUDICATORS

- A benefit of hosting is the opportunity to choose the three adjudicators. A formal adjudicator contract is not required.
- Hosts are recommended to contract a blended panel of retired and active college/university and high school/middle school directors. Contact the MPA Coordinator for a list of those who have adjudicated past MPAs if needed.

- Adjudicators new to PMEA MPAs are required to submit the *Adjudicator Application* to the MPA Coordinator. Either direct them to the PMEA website to obtain a copy or email them directly with an attached pdf of the form. A formal adjudicator contract is not required. Adjudicators are strongly recommended, but not required, to be PMEA members.
- Contract adjudicators well in advance, as their availability is often limited. Communicate the approximate starting and ending times, as their availability often depends on afternoon and evening commitments. Contract adjudicators who can travel to and from the event on the same day.
- Communicate to prospective adjudicators in advance the amount of the projected honorarium. Note that mileage and tolls cannot be reimbursed. PMEA will process and mail payments to the adjudicators within two weeks of receiving the Host Expense Report.

<b>MAXIMUM ADJUDICATING TIME INVOLVED</b>	<b># ENSEMBLES IN 30-MINUTE BLOCKS</b>	<b>HONORARIUM</b>
3 Hours	6	<b>\$105</b>
4.5 Hours	7-9	<b>\$158</b>
6 Hours	10-12	<b>\$210</b>
7.5 Hours	13-15	<b>\$263</b>
9 Hours	16-18	<b>\$315</b>

- Each adjudicator must submit a W-9 to PMEA each calendar year. Provide contracted adjudicators a fillable W-9 to complete and return for you to attach to the Host Expense Report emailed to PMEA. An adjudicator who has already submitted one earlier in the year does not need to submit another unless the home address has changed.

**E. CONFIRM HOSPITALITY ARRANGEMENTS**

- Hosts are reimbursed up to \$100 as part of the Hosting Expenses for hospitality for adjudicators and volunteers, normally including beverages and food provided upon arrival and throughout the event along with lunch, often provided by a nearby restaurant or the school’s food service department. Some hosts supplement or completely fund the allotted amount with funds from activity accounts or booster groups.

**F. CONFIRM ARRANGEMENTS FOR PROVIDING A PERFORMANCE RECORDING OF EACH ENSEMBLE**

- Arrange for recording the Prepared Pieces performed by each ensemble either with school personnel and equipment or outsourced to a vendor. The performance recording is an invaluable educational resource for directors and for classroom use with their students. It is also essential for directors to submit as part of an application such as for the PMEA In-Service Conference.
- Hosts may spend up to \$20 per ensemble paid by PMEA to contract an outside vendor to record the performances if the necessary technology is not available at the school. If an outside vendor is contracted, submit the invoice as part of the Host Expense Report.

### G. CONFIRM ENSEMBLE REGISTRATION

- Registration fee checks issued payable to 'PMEA' from participating schools should be received no later than four weeks in advance of the MPA. An ensemble cannot perform unless the online Registration Form, Declaring Prepared Pieces form, and Registration Fee check have been submitted.
- Non-NAfME/PMEA members may participate but at a slightly higher fee as indicated on the Registration Form. Ensembles from neighboring states are welcome to participate in a PMEA MPA at the member rate if the director is a NAFME member in that state.
- Registration Fee checks may be refunded or returned if the ensemble withdraws prior to three weeks before the MPA. The Registration Fee will not be refunded for an ensemble that withdraws within three weeks of the MPA, a policy intended to discourage withdrawals for non-extenuating reasons, such as preparation concerns or ineffective planning. Extenuating circumstances causing a withdrawal within three weeks of the MPA will be considered. By being notified three weeks or more in advance, a host can best implement schedule adjustments, such as replacing the ensemble with another from a waiting list or better accommodating scheduling preferences.

### H. CONFIRM EACH ENSEMBLE'S DECLARED PERFORMANCE LEVEL

- Directors declare their three selected Prepared Pieces on the online *Declaring Prepared Pieces* form using the link provided in the confirmation email to each director after submitting the online Registration Form. Within this form, directors provide the Title, Composer/Arranger, Year Published and approved PMEA Grade Level for each of the three pieces, followed by the summary 'Declared Grade Level for PMEA MPA'. PMEA will also provide hosts with access to monitor the summary document containing the information compiled from this form for use in planning.

### I. DEVELOP A SCHEDULE TEMPLATE

- The time slots for warm-up and performance shall each be 30 minutes in length. A sample schedule for an event with eight ensembles and a lunch slot for the adjudicators follows:

SLOT	TIME	WARM-UP	PERFORMANCE
#	8:30-9	Ensemble #1	-----
1	9-9:30	Ensemble #2	Ensemble #1
2	9:30-10	Ensemble #3	Ensemble #2
3	10-10:30	Ensemble #4	Ensemble #3
4	10:30-11		Ensemble #4
5	11-11:30	Ensemble #5	<i>Adjudicator Lunch</i>
	11:30-Noon	Ensemble #6	Ensemble #5
6	12-12:30 PM	Ensemble #7	Ensemble #6
7	12:30-1	Ensemble #8	Ensemble #7
8	1-1:30		Ensemble #8

Schools are permitted to schedule two or more ensembles to perform consecutively when the additional ensembles contain students who are also performing in the first or when the same director conducts each of the additional ensembles. Directors may choose to warm-up all their students together then

simply adjudicate one after another with the students not involved on stage waiting and listening while seated in the auditorium.

Each 30-minute time slot would include: entering the stage, accessing the risers, adjusting student placement, on the risers, adjusting the conductor’s podium and piano, placing any other accompanying instruments, the performance of the Prepared Pieces, the clinic, and exiting the stage.

**J. SCHEDULE PERFORMANCE TIMES**

- Schedule performance slots on a ‘first-come’ basis with interested directors as soon as possible, as a viable performance time is often a condition of directors being able to participate, especially for schools bringing more than one ensemble with the same director. The opportunity to lock in performance times at the outset is also an incentive for directors to register and commit early.

**K. PROCESS THE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT RESULTS IN THE TABULATION AREA**

- Once the runners bring the assessment forms to the Tabulation Area, first check each adjudicator’s math on the Assessment Forms for accuracy. If there is an error, don’t assume intent---just send the form back to the adjudicator to adjust as needed and initial any changes made.
- For ensembles participating in the *Traditional* performance context or for ensembles participating in the *Festival* performance context when the director chooses *Ratings & Comments* as the Evaluation Option, the host/designee is responsible to transfer the Final Ratings from each adjudicator’s assessment form to the *Choral MPA Rating Summary Form*.

The Final MPA Rating earned from the performance of the three Prepared Pieces is then determined by combining the Final Ratings from the three adjudicators according to the following table:

DETERMINE THE FINAL MPA RATING OF THE PREPARED PIECES BY COMBINING THE THREE FINAL RATINGS FROM EACH ADJUDICATOR					
RATINGS FROM THE THREE ADJUDICATORS	I, I, I	I, II, II	I, III, III	I, IV, IV	I, V, V
	I, I, II	I, II, III	I, III, IV	I, IV, V	II, V, V
	I, I, III	I, II, IV	I, III, V	II, IV, IV	III, V, V
	I, I, IV	I, II, V	II, III, III	II, IV, V	IV, V, V
	I, I, V	II, II, II	II, III, IV	III, IV, IV	V, V, V
		II, II, III	II, III, V	III, IV, V	
		II, II, IV	III, III, III	IV, IV, IV	
		II, II, V	III, III, IV	IV, IV, V	
			III, III, V		
<b>FINAL MPA RATING</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>

FINAL RATING	PMEA DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	APPROX. PSSA EQUIVALENT
I	Superior	A+	Outstanding
II	Excellent	A	Advanced
III	Good	B	Proficient
IV	Fair	C	Basic
V	Unprepared	U	Below Basic

- Once the Final Rating is determined, transfer it onto the *Choral MPA Rating Summary Form* along with the Final Ratings from each adjudicator's assessment form. Hosts may type the results into the blanks provided on the Word .docx or write in the ratings results by hand on a printed paper copy.
- Then, type or clearly write in the rating results for each ensemble on the *Choral MPA Rating Summary – All Ensembles Form* to include with the Host Report to the MPA Coordinator before returning the Assessment Forms and Rating Summary Form to the director. This entire process must happen quickly while the students are gathering personal belongings and returning to their buses. Most ensembles are on a tight schedule for a meal stop and/or return to school and should not be asked to wait on site any longer than necessary.

#### **L. RETURN THE ASSESSMENT RESULTS AND COLLECTED MATERIALS TO THE DIRECTOR**

- Return the following items to each director before departure:
  - *Choral MPA Rating Summary Form*
  - Three *Choral Music Performance Assessment Forms*, one from each adjudicator  
(Make a copy of the three Assessment Forms to be included with the Host Report to the MPA Coordinator.)
- The choral music that the director provided for the adjudicators

#### **M. CONFIRM FINAL ARRANGEMENTS**

- Communicate at least two weeks in advance with the participating directors to confirm the final arrangements at your site, especially for those attending for the first time, that includes the following.
  - The MPA date, especially if the original announced date was changed
  - Confirming that the Registration Fee check was submitted to and received by PMEA
  - The final schedule of warm-up and performance times
  - A list of the adjudicators
  - Information about bus parking, where to enter the building, and other facility information
  - Any known traffic or road construction advisories that could impact travel time
  - A reminder to submit three manila envelopes (10x13 recommended), one for each adjudicator, labeled with the school's name, ensemble name and 'Adjudicator #1, 2 or 3'. Each envelope must contain music for each of the three Prepared Pieces with the measures numbered if not already numbered by the publisher. Music must be originals unless the piece is out of print. Copies may then be made, but only with written permission of the publisher provided. If copies are made, pages should be taped, rather than stapled. Music does not need to be provided for any warm-up music used.
  - Percussion, electronics, and other instruments to be provided for accompaniment (i.e. drum set, bongos, an amplifier, etc.)
  - Where to access adjudicator and performance recordings
  - A reminder that ensembles may attend other performances and, if so, that students are to enter and exit only between performances, not between pieces, and that students may applaud at the end of pieces.



- Communicate at least two weeks in advance with the contracted adjudicators to confirm the final arrangements involved in adjudicating at your site, including the following.
  - The MPA date, especially if the original announced date was changed
  - Any traffic or road construction advisories that could impact travel time
  - Parking information along with where to enter the building, obtain an official visitor's pass if needed, and report
  - To bring a completed W-9 form if not already submitted by email
  - What digital audio recording technology will be used
  - That PMEA will mail the stipend checks within two weeks after receiving your Host Expense Report
  
- Confirm that an ample number of students have committed to assist throughout the MPA. Hosts may also utilize other music department colleagues and parents as volunteers in the following areas:
  - Set-up                      To assist in preparing each involved area of the facilities, including setting the stage, warm-up area, posting signs, and equipping the adjudicators' workstations
  - Check-in Table            To assist the participating ensembles upon arrival
  - Holding Area              To watch over the instrument cases, coats, purses, and other belongings
  - Host Escorts                To stay with a given ensemble from check-in to the holding area through the performances, then back to the holding area and departure. To serve as a liaison to the host while answering questions helping solve problems.
  - Announcer                 To introduce each performance of Prepared Pieces from a script prepared by the host that introduces the school, ensemble, director, adjudicators and where each teaches/taught, and the titles and composers of the three Prepared Pieces. Include phonetic spellings as needed. The host, another music teacher, a parent volunteer, or students may serve in this role.
  - Stage Crew                 To assist ensembles entering the stage with moving and setting the conductor' podium, piano and any accompanying instruments
  - Runners                     To take envelopes of choral music to the adjudicators. To take the completed assessment forms and conductor scores from the adjudicators to the Tabulation Area. To swap out recorders, if used, between ensembles. To take results and all materials from the Tabulation Area back to the directors before departure. To supply beverages to the adjudicators and assist the host as needed throughout the MPA.
  - Adjudicator Hospitality    To provide beverages throughout the event along with lunch. Colleagues and parent volunteers often assist.

## SECTION 2: FACILITY NEEDS

Concerns about facilities are common for the prospective first-time host. Please contact the MPA Coordinator with questions rather than permit potential facility-related issues to deter hosting.

An overview of hosting an MPA concerning facilities follows:

### A. CHECK-IN

- Place a check-in table at the designated group entrance, staffed by another music teacher, students, or parent assistants
- Communicate where buses are to park
- Collect the three envelopes containing music for the three Prepared Pieces and take them to the host director to distribute to the adjudicators
- Inform the director where the students are to go first, usually the *Holding Area*

### B. HOLDING AREA

- Provide this secure space for coats, and personal belongings
- Do not permit students to sing or play any accompanying instruments in this space
- Groups are permitted to watch other performances instead of waiting in the Holding Area for their *Warm-up* time

### C. WARM-UP AREA

- Provide a warm-up area, usually a band or chorus room with ample chairs
- Hosts must provide a piano that has been recently tuned.

### D. AUDITORIUM

- Set choral risers with enough units to accommodate the largest participating ensemble. Hosts are permitted to use platform risers, if necessary, but must inform participating directors in advance that platform risers will be used.
- Hosts must provide a piano that has been recently tuned.
- Provide a conductor's podium for directors who choose to use it.
- Ensembles are responsible to provide their own instruments used for accompaniment, such as percussion, electronics, or other instruments, and are responsible for moving them from bus to warm-up to the stage. While most directors prefer to use their own equipment, instruments that their students are accustomed to using and hearing, they may contact the host about possibly assisting in this area. Directors often appreciate not having transport instruments, such as a drum set or congas, on a school bus if not necessary.
- Provide students or parent volunteers as a 'stage crew' to assist throughout the day moving the conductor's podium, piano and any instruments and equipment used for accompaniment.
- Provide a microphone for the announcer
- Provide a table and chair for the school personnel or vendor who will be recording the performances
- Post the schedule and signs on all auditorium doors, including 'Enter Only Between Performances'
- Confirm that the auditorium performances are not interrupted by PA announcements and that change of class bells are turned off in the auditorium if possible

**E. ADJUDICATOR NEEDS.** Provide each of the three adjudicators with the following items:

- A desk or table with ample workspace along with a comfortable chair
- A lamp to supplement the hall lighting if needed
- A copy of the final schedule
- A blank assessment form for each ensemble. (To assist further, complete the headings in advance.)
- An extra copy of the assessment form to use as a reference
- Extra pencils
- The Ensemble Profile information extracted from the online summary Registration doc provided by PMEA to enhance awareness and overall frame of reference within which the given performance is perceived and assessed, including the following information:
  - This Ensemble's status at this school (Top, Second, Only Band/Orchestra, etc.)
  - Average number of scheduled rehearsals per 5-day week and length of rehearsal period
  - Grade levels of student members of the given ensemble
  - School district's High School PIAA Classification for football to convey relative size of the district where applicable

**F. DIGITAL RECORDING BY ADJUDICATORS**

In recent years, hosts have utilized a variety of technology for their adjudicators to provide digital audio commentary for each ensemble, including:

- Using a set of 6 digital recorders, interface cable and batteries provided by the PMEA Office. Indicate within the Host Information form if these recorders are needed. If used, the adjudicators alternate recorders with each ensemble with runners picking up and returning the recorders after the audio file are downloaded. The host is responsible for returning the recorders by mail to the PMEA Office within one week of the MPA, as they are often needed soon by another host.
- Using a set of 6 digital recorders owned by the host's music or school technology department
- Using set of 3 iPads/tablets owned by the host's music or technology department using an appropriate app, often with the adjudicator emailing the audio file to the host
- Using microphones for each adjudicator directly wired or connected to a central computer where the audio files are collected, then compiled and distributed to the participating directors. Some hosts use school equipment. Others contract a vendor to record the performances and compile the adjudicator's audio files.
- Asking the adjudicators to use a recording app on their own phone or tablet, then emailing the audio files to the host to compile and distribute. Hosts choosing this option should confirm these plans with each adjudicator in advance to ensure that each has the appropriate app and brings a phone charger to use if needed. PMEA MPA is cannot yet require that adjudicators provide their own digital recording device given the differences between audio file formats, downloading cables, internet connectivity, etc., from site to site and adjudicator to adjudicator. If adjudicators use their own devices, hosts need to provide extension cords for chargers.

## **G. TABULATION AREA**

- Choose a space convenient to the auditorium for the host or a designee, usually another music teacher, to compile the ratings results and gather materials to return to the directors.
- Hosts often choose to utilize two adults in the Tabulation area given the extent of the tasks involved. Students and parents are not permitted to serve in this role due to the importance of the task and the professional confidentiality required.
- Provide student runners to collect the completed Assessment Forms, the copies of the choral music provided to the adjudicators, and recording devices (if used) from the adjudicators to take to the *Tabulation Area*.
- If digital recorders are being used with adjudicators alternating between recorders while the files are being downloaded from the other recorder, ensure that the runners know to pick up and deliver the 'A' and 'B' recorders to adjudicators in a timely manner so that no adjudicator is left without a device when an ensemble is starting its performance. Ensure that the adult in the Tabulation Area knows how to label and download the audio files from the recorders and how to compile and deliver the files to each participating director. If any other recording device or process is being used, communicate the applicable instructions to all involved.
- Note that the host is not responsible for the processing of the PMEA award plaques, certificates, or medal orders as that is handled by the PMEA Office.

# SECTION 3: AFTER THE MPA

## A. SUBMIT TWO SEPARATE HOST REPORTS WITHIN ONE WEEK OF THE MPA

Keep a copy of all forms and documents submitted within the two reports for one year as a back-up in case an item is inadvertently misplaced or otherwise not accessible.

### 1. HOST REPORT TO PMEA

- Mail the *PMEA MPA Deposit Form* listing all Registration Fee checks along with the checks to **PMEA at 56 South Third Street, Hamburg, PA 19526-1828.**
- Submit the online *Host Expense Form* and include pdf's of any receipts or invoices involved. Email any W-9's submitted by the adjudicators to Kelly Gressley (kelly@pmea.net). PMEA will process and mail all payments and reimbursements involved within two weeks of receiving the Host Report.

### 2. HOST REPORT TO THE MPA COORDINATOR

Scan and email OR mail this *Host Report* to **Tom Snyder, MPA Coordinator, at 401 Bon Air Court, Cranberry Township, PA 16066** containing the following items:

- *Choral MPA Rating Summary – All Ensembles Form.* This critical form is the summary of the scores and ratings from each adjudicator and the final rating earned provided for the official PMEA MPA program records. List each ensemble in alphabetical order by school, either typed into the form or handwritten on a paper copy.
- *Choral Music Performance Assessment Form* for each ensemble from each adjudicator. Only one-sided copies of the front pages are needed. While we understand that complying with this requirement may be challenging since copying these forms must happen before returning them to directors prior to departure, this information is needed to better provide feedback to our adjudicators and improve the overall assessment aspect of the 'system'.

## B. HOST HONORARIUM

Hosts will receive an honorarium check for \$185 from PMEA within two weeks of the PMEA office receiving the Host Report. Equal to one *Traditional* Registration Fee, that check will be issued payable to the host's choice of either the school's 'activity account' or a parent booster group, In lieu of the honorarium, hosts may instead use the honorarium amount to fund one Registration Fee.

## C. HOSTS AS MEMBERS OF THE PMEA MPA COMMITTEE

The annual meeting of the *PMEA Music Performance Assessment Committee* is held at the PMEA In-Service Conference. Each Host is automatically considered a member of this committee and is strongly encouraged to attend, both in appreciation for the efforts invested on behalf of PMEA MPA and to share insights from that experience. While the meeting is informal, this forum includes the 'state of PMEA MPA' along with discussing issues and proposals. This meeting has been an invaluable, productive opportunity to consider possible 'next steps', establish priorities, and exchange perspectives within collaborative dialogue not possible within individual conversations and emails.

#### **D. ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

- Email directors and adjudicators to express appreciation for their participation and to seek feedback concerning any aspect of the MPA---what worked well and observations concerning what needs attention moving forward.
- Thank all administrators, colleagues, parents, and students who assisted for their efforts and seek their feedback.

To prospective Host directors----I hope that this *Guide* provides the information needed to successfully host a *Choral Music Performance Assessment* sponsored by *PMEA MPA*.

To experienced Host directors----I hope that this *Guide* serves as an ongoing reference to refresh memories and answer questions concerning any aspect of hosting a *PMEA MPA*.

Please do not hesitate to contact the MPA Coordinator with questions and suggestions.