



Music Performance Assessments

GUIDE TO HOSTING A SOLO & SMALL ENSEMBLE MPA 2023

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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 MPA's

In turn, feedback is welcomed 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 "MPA's" or "Music Performance Assessments." This change simplifies and clarifies who we are and focuses upon what we do -----music performance assessment.

Hosts should also review the current *Guide to Participating in a Solo & Small Ensemble 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.

The following forms are used when hosting a Solo & Small Ensemble MPA:

- *Solo Assessment Forms for Winds, Percussion, Strings and Vocal as applicable*
- *Small Ensemble Assessment Form for Winds, Percussion, Strings and Vocal as applicable*
- *Solo & Small Ensemble MPA Rating Summary 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)

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 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

- *Solo & Small Ensemble MPA's* are normally held on a Saturday due to the facility needs for this context involving multiple rooms and the large number of students and adults entering and exiting the building throughout the day. Hosts are permitted to hold an MPA on a weekday evening if the available time frame can accommodate the number of participating students.
- 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 final rehearsals prior to an MPA not be followed by a weekend.
- When requesting permission to host, provide principals with relevant information concerning facility needs 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 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 about each school's soloists and small ensemble participants.
- 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, including at director meetings and festivals.

C. NUMBER OF SOLOS & SMALL ENSEMBLES NEEDED TO HOLD AN MPA

- Hosts offering performance assessment for *Winds* and *Percussion* may choose whether to also offer assessment for *Strings* and/or *Vocal* depending on facility considerations, projected participation, adjudicator availability, if the host's school has a string program, and other factors. Hosts may choose to have a *Strings* only or a *Vocal* only MPA. While hosts are urged to offer this performance assessment opportunity to as many students as practical, each has the flexibility to determine what instruments or voices to include that works best for the given situation.
- While no minimum number of participating students is required at this time, hosts must ensure that the total registration fees generated by the participating students covers the costs of the adjudicators.
- The maximum number of students permitted to participate is not formally limited. Hosts usually determine the starting and ending times and project the maximum number of available performance slots for each instrument and/or voice part based on adjudicator availability and facility parameters. After the planned performance slots are filled, maintain a waiting list to contact if any soloist or small ensemble withdraws.

D. CONTRACT ADJUDICATORS

- A benefit of hosting is the opportunity to choose the adjudicators. The number of adjudicators needed is dictated by the number of students registered on each of the instruments or voice parts involved. Adjudicators must have a music degree. As the assessments are not blind, adjudicators are not permitted to assess students that they are currently affiliated with at schools, private studios, or youth ensembles. The performances of all soloists playing a given instrument and small ensembles of a given instrumentation/voicing (I.e. clarinet choir, string quartet, or soprano duet) must be assessed by the same adjudicator if possible. An exception can be made due to the number of students registered on a given instrument or voice part.

- Consider as potential adjudicators active and retired teachers from the middle/high school and college levels as well as private teachers, artist performers, and youth ensemble directors, keeping in mind that adjudicators must have a music degree. Contact the MPA Coordinator for a list of those who have adjudicated past Solo & Small Ensemble MPA’s if needed.

- Contract adjudicators well in advance, as their availability is often limited. Also communicate the approximate starting and ending times as soon as known, 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 potential adjudicators that the registrations by instrument or voice part will determine the length of the time commitment and that they may only be needed for part of the day. Adjudicators who reply that they are aren’t available because they can’t commit for a full day may be a perfect fit to adjudicate a given instrument or voice part that has enough registrations to fill just part of the day.

- Adjudicators new to PMEA MPA’s 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.

- 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. Performance slots are 10 minutes in length. Honorariums are rounded up to the nearest half-hour or hour.

TIME ADJUDICATING IN 15-MINUTE BLOCKS	HONOR-ARIUM	TIME ADJUDICATING IN 15-MINUTE BLOCKS	HONOR-ARIUM	TIME ADJUDICATING IN 15-MINUTE BLOCKS	HONOR-ARIUM
1 Hour	\$25	3.5 Hours	\$87.50	6 Hours	\$150
1.5 Hours	\$37.50	4 Hours	\$100	6.5 Hours	\$162.50
2 Hours	\$50	4.5 Hours	\$112.50	7 Hours	\$175
2.5 Hours	\$62.50	5 Hours	\$125	7.5 Hours	\$187.50
3 Hours	\$75	5.5 Hours	\$137.50		

- 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 \$150 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. Manage what can be funded depending on the number of adjudicators and volunteers involved. Some hosts supplement or completely fund the allotted amount with funds from activity accounts or booster groups.

- Hosts may choose to provide a separate space as a *Director's Hospitality Room*, similar to what is provided at a PMEA festival but on a smaller scale, where directors can relax with cold and hot beverages and light breakfast and/or other snacks. Adjudicators could also enjoy the refreshments within an open slot in their schedule.

- Hosts may offer a concessions area throughout the day through their Booster or other organizations, including beverages and light breakfast and/or other snacks---even something like pizza or other lunch items as desired.

F. CONFIRM REGISTRATION

- Registration fee checks issued payable to 'PMEA' from participating schools should be received no later than four weeks in advance of the MPA. Students cannot perform unless the online Registration Form and Registration Fee check have been submitted.

- Students from neighboring states are welcome to participate in a PMEA MPA at the PMEA member rate if the sponsoring adult is a member of that state's MEA/NAfME organization.

- Refunds will not be issued for students who withdraw or otherwise do not attend after being registered, a policy intended to discourage withdrawals due to preparation concerns or ineffective planning that did not account for schedule conflicts. Hosts are not obligated to hold an assigned performance slot if payment has not been received given the priority to fill all performance slots. Gaps in the schedule don't effectively use the adjudicator's time and delay the remaining participants.

- Directors may substitute a different student soloist or a different student participant(s) in a small ensemble *ON THE SAME INSTRUMENT* for one that is already registered and paid should a withdrawal occur, given the ease of simply replacing the participant(s) in a performance slot already scheduled for the adjudicator for that instrument.

- While including as many participants as possible is a goal, the logistics of this context will permit additional soloists or small ensembles to register after the deadline only if time slots are available within the overall schedule and the registration fee payment is received in advance. Refunds will not be issued for late registrations if the students involved withdraw or otherwise do not attend.

- On the Registration form, directors must choose an Assessment context, either *Traditional* or *Comments Only*, for each soloist and small ensemble. Both contexts are common throughout the country, with the *Comments Only* context also including the adjudicator’s verbal and written comments but with no scoring or rating. The Registration Fee is the same for students participating in either Assessment context.

- The Registration Fee structure includes:

Soloist	\$10
Small Ensemble of 2-5 Students	\$7 for each student
Small Ensemble of 6-12 Students	\$5 for each student

After the performance, adjudicators will provide brief verbal feedback. This personal contact is an invaluable component of this MPA context analogous to adjudicators doing an ensemble clinic on stage after choral ensemble (and some instrumental ensemble) performances and the verbal feedback after instrumental sight-reading. Comments should be concise, focused on recognizing strengths and acknowledging the most significant concerns---with possible solutions--while being encouraging and nurturing. Remind the adjudicators to allow enough time after providing the verbal feedback to complete the Assessment Form before the end of the 10-minute time slot.

G. SCHEDULE PERFORMANCE TIMES

- Scheduling performance times is at the discretion of the host. Hosts will prioritize scheduling students from a given school within the same time frame the best they can to limit that school’s total time on site.

- Start scheduling the performance slots for each adjudicator on a ‘first-come’ basis with the registered soloists and small ensembles and keep adjudicators informed, as viable performance times are often a factor in both directors and adjudicators being able to participate. The opportunity to lock in performance times at the outset is also an incentive for directors to register and commit early.

- Avoid scheduling accompanists in the same time slot---double-booking them---who are accompanying multiple students.

- Anticipate that you will likely need to schedule your own district’s students in the openings throughout each adjudicator’s schedule, given the inherent flexibility that is welcome within this challenging process.

- For a Saturday MPA, adjudicators scheduled for more than 3.5 consecutive hours should have a 30-minute break to eat a lunch provided by the host. For an evening MPA, adjudicators scheduled for more than 3.5 consecutive hours should have a 15-minute break with at least beverages provided by the host. Some adjudicators may waive that break in order to complete their adjudication responsibilities and depart early to meet another commitment.

H. RETURN ASSESSMENT RESULTS TO DIRECTORS

- Accurately and efficiently processing assessment results throughout the MPA is one of the host's most important responsibilities. 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.
- Enter the Final Score and Rating in the designated columns on the summary ratings forms provided.
- Make a copy of each Assessment Form (front page only) to submit to the MPA Coordinator as part of the Host Report.
- As the scores and ratings are confirmed, compile the Assessment Forms from each school into a manila envelope to return to each director. Instruct directors where to pick up their envelopes, normally the check-in table or tabulation area itself. Ratings for soloists and small ensembles from other schools are not provided.

I. CONFIRM FINAL ARRANGEMENTS

- Communicate at least two weeks in advance with the participating directors to better ensure an understanding of what is involved in participating at your site, especially for those attending for the first time, including 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
 - A list of percussion instruments provided, especially if instruments beyond the minimum required are available. Directors appreciate when percussion instruments are available that they do not need to bring.
 - The final schedule of performance times and room assignments
 - A map of the facilities to assist in locating the many different Assessment Areas
 - A list of the adjudicators
 - Bus parking and where to enter the building
 - Any known traffic or road construction advisories that could impact travel time
 - Where to pick up the compiled, completed Assessment Forms for their students.
- Communicate at least two weeks in advance with the contracted adjudicators to better ensure an understanding of what is involved in adjudicating at your site, including the following.
 - The MPA date, especially if the original announced date was changed
 - The final schedule of performance times and room assignments
 - A map of the facilities to assist in locating the many different Assessment Areas
 - A list of the adjudicators
 - Parking information along with where to enter the building, obtain an official visitor's pass if needed, and report
 - Any traffic or road construction advisories that could impact travel time
 - To bring a completed W-9 form if not already submitted by email
 - 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
 - Assist in posting signs and preparing each involved area of the facilities, including providing music stands, extension cords, and keyboards in the Assessment Areas. Provide pencils and blank assessment forms for each adjudicator.
 - Check-in Table
 - Assist the participating students and accompanying adults upon arrival
 - Runners
 - Take the completed assessment forms from the adjudicators to the Tabulation Area, supply beverages to the adjudicators and assist the host, adjudicators and all involved as needed throughout the MPA.
 - Hospitality
 - Provide beverages throughout the event along with lunch to adjudicators (colleagues and parent volunteers often assist)
 - Prepare and monitor the Directors' Hospitality Room, if offered.

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 a *Solo & Small Ensemble 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
- Verify where buses are to park
- Provide ample copies of the final schedule and facility maps
- Inform the director and students where go first, usually to a *Holding/Warm-up Area*
- Inform directors where the *Directors' Hospitality Room* is located if provided
- This area may also serve as the designated space for directors to pick up the compiled Assessment Forms for their students.

B. HOLDING/WARM-UP AREAS

- Provide a *Holding Area*, normally the auditorium, as a space for instrument cases, coats, and personal belongings. The auditorium normally also serves as a waiting area for directors, accompanists, chaperones, and parents. Music stands are not normally provided. Students are permitted to use this space as a *Warm-up Area* until they perform.
- Hosts may choose to use the auditorium only as a *Holding Area* with or without playing permitted and provide multiple, additional spaces as designated *Warm-up Areas*. These spaces are usually large ensemble rooms, the cafeteria, or other larger spaces equipped with ample music stands. Hosts may offer these spaces as 'open' *Warm-Up Areas* that are not formally scheduled or offer them only for a designated number of minutes---usually 30--- prior to their assigned performance times. If enough rooms are available, hosts may assign *Warm-up Areas* corresponding to each adjudicator for students to use by themselves 10 minutes, the length of a performance slot, prior to their assigned performance times. Also, if enough rooms are available, hosts could assign a separate room for all the students from a given school to use as a *Holding Area* and a *Warm-up Area*. Hosts are welcome to develop other options possible within their particular facility layout. College/university hosts likely have additional options available given the nature of their music facilities.

C. ASSESSMENT AREAS

- The *Assessment Areas*, normally classrooms or ensemble rooms, are to be equipped with enough space, chairs and music stands for the scheduled participants, especially the larger 'small ensembles'. Students may stand or sit when performing.
- Hosts will provide an upright piano or keyboard in each Assessment Area for a live accompanist. All electronic keyboards provided must have ample range, weighted keys, and the appropriate speaker volume level and be set to produce 'acoustic piano' sounds.

- Hosts will also provide a table and extension cord for students using a recorded accompaniment. Students must provide their own playback source and speaker. *Operating the technology involved in a recorded accompaniment is the sole responsibility of the performer with the host and adjudicators not responsible for resolving issues.*
- A 10-minute time slot is scheduled for each soloist and small ensemble to include entering the space, adjusting seating and stands as needed, setting up and testing the recorded accompaniment (if used), playing a few notes to check balance with an electronic keyboard or recorded accompaniment, additional warm-up notes (optional), performing the prepared piece, verbal feedback from the adjudicator, and exiting. A performance may only be performed and adjudicated once.
- Directors, other adults, and other students are permitted to listen to performances as the capacity of the space reasonably permits and at the discretion of the performers. Adjudicators may limit capacity if necessary. Video and audio recordings are prohibited.
- For percussionists, hosts will provide an appropriately sized Assessment Area and are required to provide the following large percussion instruments: bass drum, four timpani, bells, xylophone, vibes, marimba, and chimes. Students are responsible to provide their own mallets and sticks along with any other instrument required, including snare drums, crash and suspended cymbals and any auxiliary/accessory percussion instruments. Directors should communicate with the host to inquire if any other instruments could be provided other than what are already required. (I.e. medium-sized accessory instruments such as concert toms or temple blocks).
- Provide each adjudicator with a desk or table. Include a copy of the final schedule, enough *Assessment Forms* for the scheduled soloists and ensembles, and extra pencils. Hosts are urged to prepare a set of *Assessment Forms* in advance for every adjudicator, with the header of each form already completed. Adjudicators greatly appreciate being able to concentrate the limited available time within each performance slot on assessment and their written comments instead that time-consuming clerical task.
- Upon entering the Assessment Area, students will provide a copy of the music being performed to the adjudicator (may be a photocopy) with the measures numbered in pencil. Music with multiple pages should be taped appropriately, rather than stapled, as stapled pages are difficult for an adjudicator to manipulate during the performance. Adjudicators are not to make written comments or markings on the music provided. Return the music to the student(s) before they exit.
- Assign a runner to periodically retrieve the completed Assessment Forms from each adjudicator to take to the Tabulation Area. Provide the runners with manila folders or large manila envelopes (10" x 13" suggested) to place the collected forms while transporting them.
- Stress to the adjudicator to help monitor proper care of the room and its contents. Ensure that the room is returned to its normal set-up after the MPA.
- Post two signs on all *Assessment Area* doors: 1) Enter Only Between Performances and 2) QUIET - PMEA MPA In Process.

D. TABULATION AREA

- Choose a space convenient to the auditorium for the host or designees, usually other music teachers, to proof, record the ratings results from the Assessment Forms as retrieved by the runners, and compile the forms for each school to return to the directors before they depart.
- 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.
- Note that the host is not responsible for the processing of any PMEA Medal orders, as that option offered to directors 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:

- The designated form that contains the Final Score & Rating for each participating soloist and small ensemble submitted for the PMEA MPA program's formal records
- A copy of the front page of each *Solo* or *Small Ensemble Assessment Form*. 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. This is the same amount provided to hosts of Band/Orchestra or Choral MPA's that is equal to one *Traditional* Registration Fee for these large ensemble MPA's. PMEA will issue that check 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 offset part or all of the total Registration Fee owed by their school's students for this *Solo & Small Ensemble* MPA.

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 *Solo & Small Ensemble 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.