



# Music Performance Assessments

# 2025

# GUIDE TO PARTICIPATING IN A BAND AND/OR ORCHESTRA MPA

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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 2019. 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*.

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 participating in a Band or Orchestra MPA:

- [Band Music Performance Assessment Form](#)
- [Band Sight-reading Assessment Form](#)
- [String Orchestra Performance Assessment Form](#)
- [String Orchestra Sight-reading Form](#)
- [Medals Order Form](#) (Optional)
- [Selective Music List Requests Form](#) (if needed)

Online forms for each MPA linked within the MPA Calendar include the followings:

- *Registration Form*
- *Declaring Prepared Pieces Form*

Contact Tom Snyder, MPA Coordinator, with questions at [mpa@pmea.net](mailto:mpa@pmea.net) or (724) 816-0420.

# SECTION 1: BAND & ORCHESTRA MPA'S - THE SYSTEM

## A. GOALS

- The overall goals of the *PMEA Music Performance Assessment* program include:
  - To provide interscholastic, educationally valid assessment contexts in which any instrumental or vocal music student from Pennsylvania schools may participate
  - To foster musical achievement
  - To provide extrinsic recognition for the musical achievement of individuals and ensemble through plaques, certificates, and medals
  - To enable directors to select repertoire appropriate for their large ensembles from graded levels of music within the *PMEA Selective Music Lists*
  - To provide students and directors the opportunity to hear performances by ensembles and soloists from other schools when possible

## B. MUSIC PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM INFRASTRUCTURE

- The *Music Performance Assessment Coordinator* is initially responsible for administering the MPA system, to promote participation by PMEA member directors and their students, to chair the *PMEA MPA Committee*, and to attend the annual meetings of the Student Performance Events Council (SPEC) as a voting member. The MPA Coordinator reports to the Chair of the Student Performance Events Council, the PMEA President and the PMEA Executive Director.
- The *PMEA MPA Committee* meets annually at the annual PMEA In-Service Conference to provide input concerning direction, policies and procedures. The PMEA MPA Committee is informally composed of the PMEA District MPA Reps, all MPA hosts, and the chair of the MPA Music Review Committee, currently Dr. Tad Greig (Westminster College – Retired) for Band and Orchestra and Dr. Ryan Keeling for Chorus (Westminster College). All participating directors and other interested PMEA members are welcome to attend and actively participate in the dialogue.

## C. TYPES OF MPA'S

- The following types of Music Performance Assessments (MPA's) are currently available:
  - BAND & ORCHESTRA      Band, Full Orchestra, and String Orchestra
  - CHORUS                      Mixed Chorus, Treble Chorus, and Tenor-Bass Chorus
  - SOLO & SMALL ENSEMBLE      Woodwind, Brass, Percussion, String and Vocal
  - JAZZ ENSEMBLE
- PMEA Music Performance Assessment does not currently provide an MPA for Vocal Jazz Choirs or Show Choirs.

## D. ELIGIBILITY

- Participating directors are urged to be members of PMEA. If the director is not a PMEA member, \$50 will be added to the Registration Fee. Ensembles from neighboring states are welcome to participate at the member rate if the director is a NAFME member in that state.

- A student must be enrolled in an ensemble’s curricular class to participate with that ensemble in an MPA. A student may not participate in more than one ensemble unless the student is enrolled in each ensemble’s curricular class. Directors with ensemble members participating within extenuating scheduling circumstances are urged to contact the MPA Coordinator.

#### **E. CALENDAR**

- The most current *MPA Calendar*, listing dates, sites, hosts, contact information, and links to online Registration forms, is posted within the [Music Performance Assessment](#) area of the [PMEA website](#).

#### **F. SCHEDULING PERFORMANCE TIMES**

- The Host schedules performance times. Directors are urged to verify participation early while also confirming a viable performance time given travel distance and return time parameters.
- Scheduling as soon as possible is even more essential for schools planning to bring more than one ensemble, especially those with the same director.
- Directors are also encouraged to include time to watch other ensembles when possible.

#### **G. PERFORMANCE CONTEXT: TRADITIONAL OR FESTIVAL**

- Directors may choose to participate in either the *Traditional* or the *Festival* performance context. The *Traditional* context is the most common nationally. The *Festival* context, unique to PA, includes a menu of available options for directors to customize a performance assessment experience that best meets the needs of their students at that time.

- **TRADITIONAL:**

- **Two Prepared Pieces from the PMEA Selective Music List**

Directors may complete the online *Selective Music List Requests* form to request permission to perform a piece not on the SML, to perform fewer movements of a given piece at a lower grade level than listed for the entire piece, or for a piece to be reviewed to possibly be reclassified at a higher or lower grade level than listed.

- **Sight-reading**

The Sight-reading component is described in Section 2 – I, J and K below.

- **Ratings & Audio/Written Commentary**

Ensembles receive audio commentary in real time and written comments on the Assessment Form from each adjudicator in the auditorium as well as written comments from the Sight-reading adjudicator.

- **Wording for Award Plaque**

Directors are asked to choose which rating terminology to include on the PMEA Award Plaque, either the traditional PMEA terms (Superior, Excellent, Good or Fair) or the terms adapted from PSSA’s (Outstanding, Advanced, Proficient or Basic).

- **Medals (Optional)**

Directors of ensembles that earn a rating of *I: Superior/Outstanding*, *II: Excellent/Advanced* or *III: Good/Proficient* have the option to use the [PMEA MPA Medal Order Form](#) to order medals for their students to proudly display evidence of their ensemble’s achievement on their concert attire and graduation robes.

- **FESTIVAL:**
  - **Two Selections of Choice**  
Directors may choose any two pieces as their Prepared Pieces from among what is already being rehearsed in class. The pieces are not required to be included within the *PMEA Selective Music List*. The grade levels of the pieces are not required to be submitted.
  - **Options for After Performing the Prepared Pieces**  
Participating in the Sight-reading component is optional.
    - If Sight-reading is selected, directors may choose the grade level of the music to sight-read that they feel would be most appropriate.
    - If Sight-reading is not selected at MPA’s where both the Performance and Sight-reading are on stage, the ensemble will receive a clinic from one of the three adjudicators during the time remaining within the 45-minute slot after the performance.
    - If Sight-reading is not selected at MPA’s where the Performance and Sight-reading are in separate areas, the director may choose to receive a clinic from the Sight-reading adjudicator during the 30-minute slot on a topic that the host coordinates between the director and adjudicator.
    - Directors may choose ‘Neither’ and not participate in the Sight-reading component or a Clinic.
  - **Assessment Options**  
Directors may choose to receive **Ratings & Comments** through the real-time audio commentary and the ratings and written comments using the Assessment Form **OR Comments Only** with the same commentary but with no scoring or ratings issued.
  - **Wording for Award Certificate if Ratings & Comments Assessment Option is Selected**  
Directors are asked to choose which rating terminology to include on the official PMEA Award Certificate recognizing participation, either the traditional assessment terms (Superior, Excellent, Good or Fair) or the terms adapted from PSSA’s (Outstanding, Advanced, Proficient or Basic).
- A side-by side comparison of both performance contexts follows:

<b>MPA PARTICIPATION</b>	<b>TRADITIONAL</b>	<b>FESTIVAL</b>
<b>Choice of Repertoire</b>	Two pieces selected from the PMEA Selective Music List (SML) or as approved	Any two pieces that the ensemble is already rehearsing whether or not they are listed within the PMEA SML
<b>Grade Level</b>	Declared by the director from the graded repertoire included in the PMEA SML or as approved	Grade levels do not need to be declared.
<b>Sight-reading (Instrumental)</b>	Required at a defined grade level lower than that of the Prepared Pieces	Optional. Directors may choose to participate in Sight-reading and, if so, may choose the grade level of the music used. Or, the ‘Clinic’ option. Or, neither option.
<b>Scoring and resulting Rating using the PMEA Assessment Forms</b>	Included	Optional

<b>Adjudicator Comments through digital audio commentary in real time and written on the PMEA Assessment Form</b>	Included	Included
<b>Award Recognition</b>	PMEA Award Plaque	PMEA Award Certificate
<b>Rating Terminology</b>	A choice between Superior/Excellent/Good/Fair or Outstanding/Advanced/Proficient/Basic as adapted from PSSA terminology	If receiving a Rating, a choice between Superior/Excellent/Good/Fair or Outstanding/Advanced/Proficient/Basic as adapted from PSSA terminology
<b>Individual Student Medals</b>	Optional – purchased separately	Not available

## H. REGISTRATION

- The PMEA office generates an online *Registration Form* customized for each MPA linked within the MPA Calendar document posted within the PMEA website. Directors click on that link to complete and submit the Registration Form that provides both hosts and PMEA with information necessary for planning. Directors are recommended to register online as soon as permission to participate is confirmed and immediately contact the host to confirm a performance time.
- Directors are asked to mail a check for the Registration Fee issued payable to PMEA to be received by the host no later than three weeks in advance of the MPA. PMEA will send a confirmation email with a copy of the completed online Registration Form for directors to print and use as an invoice if needed. Contact the MPA Coordinator if a different invoice format is needed.
  - Registration fee for an Ensemble participating in the *Traditional* performance context = \$235
  - Registration fee for an Ensemble participating in the *Festival* performance context = \$200
  - The difference in the registration fees is the approximate cost of the Award Plaque and its mailing compared to that of the Award Certificate.
- Directors must complete the online *Registration* and *Declaring Prepared Pieces* forms for each of their participating ensembles and submit payment for the Registration Fee to confirm participation.
- Registration fee checks may be refunded if the ensemble withdraws two weeks or more before the MPA. The Registration fee will not be refunded for an ensemble that withdraws within two weeks of the MPA, a policy intended to discourage withdrawals for non-extenuating reasons, such as preparation concerns or ineffective planning. Extenuating circumstances will be considered. Being notified two weeks or more in advance enables the host to best adjust schedules to benefit all involved.
- For large ensemble MPA's, information is compiled from the submitted online registration forms submitted about the ensembles and schools. Unique to Pennsylvania, this 'Ensemble Profile' document is provided to the adjudicators to enhance their awareness, perspectives, and overall frame of reference within which each performance is perceived and assessed according to the performance level standards.

## I. DECLARING PREPARED PIECES FOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT

- Directors are required to declare their two required Prepared Pieces within the online *Declaring Prepared Pieces* form customized for each MPA linked within the MPA Calendar document posted within the PMEA website. Within this form, directors provide the Title, Composer/Arranger, Year Published and, for *Traditional*, the approved PMEA Grade Level for each piece.

- Next on that form, directors provide the ‘Declared Summary Grade Level for PMEA Performance Assessment’. The Declared Summary Grade Level determines the grade level of the Sight-reading piece and, for *Traditional*, is also included on the PMEA Award Plaque. When both pieces are at the same grade level, that would be the Declared Summary Grade Level. If the two pieces are at different grade levels, the Declared Summary Grade Level would be as indicated within the table below:

PIECE 1	PIECE 2	DECLARED SUMMARY GRADE LEVEL FOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT	PIECE 1	PIECE 2	DECLARED SUMMARY GRADE LEVEL FOR PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT
1	1	I	3	4	III
1	2	I	3	5	IV
1	3	II	3	6	IV
1	4	II	4	4	IV
2	2	II	4	5	IV
2	3	III	4	6	V
2	4	III	5	5	V
2	5	III	5	6	V
3	3	III	6	6	VI

- Directors also declare on this form their preferred rating terminology for the PMEA Award Plaque or Certificate (where a rating is issued) as described above.

#### J. ASSESSMENT FORMS

- The PMEA *Assessment Forms* for all MPA contexts updated for 2025 reflect current assessment practices. Forms are available within the MPA area of the PMEA website under ‘Information for Participants’/’Band & Orchestra MPA’s’. Directors are urged to use these assessment forms as classroom tools.

#### K. ADJUDICATORS

- Hosts contract four adjudicators for a *Band/Orchestra MPA*, three to adjudicate the two Prepared Pieces and one to adjudicate the Sight-reading component or provide a Clinic if that option is selected by ensembles performing in the *Festival* context.

#### L. COMMUNICATING WITH THE HOST PRIOR TO THE MPA

- All directors, especially those participating for the first time, are urged to be proactive in communicating with the Host in advance to confirm the final arrangements involved, including the following:
  - The final schedule of warm-up and performance times
  - Instructions concerning bus parking and where to enter the building
  - Percussion instruments provided, especially if the host can provide additional instruments beyond the minimum required
  - A list of adjudicators
  - How and when adjudicator recordings can be accessed
  - Plans to watch other performances if possible



### **M. TO SUBMIT AT THE ON-SITE CHECK-IN**

- Directors are 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 an original score for each of the two Prepared Pieces with the measures numbered if not already numbered by the publisher.
- Scores 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 two-sided and taped rather than stapled.
- Directors are recommended to order any additional scores needed well in advance to permit enough time to receive them from the publishers or for obtaining permission to make copies if the chosen piece is out of print.
- Scores do not need to be provided for the warm-up piece or other warm-up materials.

## **SECTION 2: BAND & ORCHESTRA MPA'S - THE EVENT**

### **A. CHECK-IN**

- The director must first check in at the designated group entrance to confirm that the ensemble has arrived, submit the three envelopes containing scores for the adjudicators, and confirm where the students are to first proceed, usually to a *Holding Area*.

### **B. HOLDING AREA**

- The *Holding Area* is a space to store instrument cases, coats and personal belongings. No playing is permitted. Students or parent volunteers normally monitor this area throughout the MPA.
- Most ensembles arrive wearing their concert attire. Hosts are not required to provide locker room access or dressing rooms, often not possible during the school day.
- The ensemble normally stays in the holding area until proceeding to the *Warm-Up Area*.
- If time permits prior to the scheduled warm-up, directors may have their students watch another ensemble perform. Directors have relayed that watching another group is valuable in and of itself and often lowers the performance anxiety of their own students.

### **C. WARM-UP AREA**

- The formal *Warm-Up Area* is normally a large ensemble room with enough chairs to seat all the students. Music stands are not normally provided.
- The length of the warm-up slot is 45 minutes if the Sight-reading component is being held on stage after the Prepared Pieces or 30 minutes if the Sight-reading component is being held in a separate area.

#### **D. AUDITORIUM STAGE**

- The auditorium stage is where the formal assessment of the two Prepared Pieces takes place. Hosts have the option of holding the Sight-reading component immediately afterwards on stage or in a separate room, usually the band/orchestra room. The length of the performance slot in the auditorium will be 45 minutes if Sight-reading is being held on stage or 30 minutes if held in a separate area in a subsequent 30-minute slot. This time frame includes entrance, set-up, optional warm-up, performing the Prepared Pieces and Sight-reading as applicable, and exit.
- The stage will be set with enough chairs and stands to accommodate the largest participating ensemble, a conductor's podium, and concert percussion. Chairs and stands are normally pre-set in concentric semi-circles on a flat stage. Risers are not to be used. Hosts may contact participating directors for a seating chart for their stage crews to use to re-set as needed between ensembles. Directors may quickly adjust the seating configuration after entering. Extra chairs and stands usually remain on stage.
- Hosts are required provide the following concert percussion at the minimum: concert bass drum, four timpani, bells, xylophone, marimba and chimes. Hosts are often able to provide additional percussion instruments and will communicate that list in advance. Directors should contact the host in advance to address specific percussion needs.
- The participating ensembles are responsible to provide their own mallets and sticks, snare drums, crash and suspended cymbals, and accessory percussion instruments as called for within their Prepared Pieces. Most directors prefer to use their own equipment when practical, instruments that their students are accustomed to using and hearing.
- If the Sight-reading component is held on stage, the standard concert percussion required for this component is already present. If the piece used for Sight-reading for that ensemble calls for a particular accessory percussion instrument that is not available, the part is omitted with the ensemble not penalized.
- In addition to the adjudicators, the only audience would be the ensemble's chaperones, students from other ensembles, or students from the host's ensembles. The audience is permitted to clap after each piece.

#### **E. WARM -UP**

- Directors may choose to perform a warm-up piece---often a march or chorale---- or an exercise sequence.
- The total on-stage warm-up should be completed within three minutes.
- The performance of the warm-up is not assessed.
- Scores or information about the warm-up music do not need to be provided.

#### **F. PERFORMING THE PREPARED PIECES**

- After the announcer introduces the ensemble, director, pieces, and adjudicators, the director may conduct the first piece.
- After the piece is finished, step off the podium and wait until signaled by the center adjudicator to proceed.
- A multi-movement piece can be conducted normally with no need to wait for adjudicators between movements.

## G. HOW THE ADJUDICATORS USE THE ASSESSMENT FORMS

- The adjudicators assess the overall performance and assign a score from 1-15 for each of five Evaluation Areas: Tone, Intonation, Accuracy, Technique and Expression, according to the following rubric and descriptors:

SCORE	RATING	PMEA DESCRIPTOR	LETTER GRADE	APPROX. PSSA EQUIVALENT
13-15	I	Superior	A+	Outstanding
10-12	II	Excellent	A	Advanced
7-9	III	Good	B	Proficient
4-6	IV	Fair	C	Basic
1-3	V	Unprepared	U	Below Basic

- The three-point range within the scoring for each evaluation area provides adjudicators with considerable flexibility in conveying their assessment within a given rating. Adjudicators decide which ‘third’-- lower, middle or upper --- within the three-point scoring range best reflects that determination within each Evaluation Area. For example, within the performance level of ‘II’, 10 is the lower number, 11 is the middle number, and 12 is the upper number.

UPPER NUMBER – an upper number reflects that many of the descriptors are displayed with a distinction that leads towards the descriptors of the next higher rating.

MIDDLE NUMBER – a middle number reflects when the performance typically displays most of the attributes of the given rating itself without enough distinction to lead in the direction of the next lower or higher rating.

LOW NUMBER– a low number provides a bridge between the next lower rating and the middle of the given rating. While the performance reflects most if not all of the descriptors involved, it has areas of concern in many of the components that reflect more of the descriptors of the next lower level.

- The scores for each of the five Evaluation Areas are then added together with the resulting Total Score generating the corresponding Final Rating as the cumulative assessment of the overall performance.
- The lowest Total Score within each Rating Level was calculated as the lowest possible summary of the five Evaluation areas as follows:

RATING LEVEL	E.A. #1	E.A. #2	E.A. #3	E.A. #4	E.A. #5	LOWEST TOTAL SCORE
Lowest I (13-15)	13	13	13	12	12	63
Lowest II (10-12)	10	10	10	9	9	48
Lowest III (7-9)	7	7	7	6	6	33
Lowest IV (4-6)	4	4	4	3	3	18
Lowest V (1-3)	1	1	1	1	1	5

- The scoring ranges indicated below within the Total Score can also be divided into ‘thirds’—lower (-), middle or upper (+) ---to best reflect achievement within the summary performance assessment.

FINAL RATING	TOTAL SCORE to FINAL RATING with DESCRIPTORS
Convert the Total Score to the Final Rating according to the table on the right using the Roman numeral only. Do not include a '-' or a '+'	63-75 I A+ (63-66 I- 67-71 I 72-75 I+) Superior Outstanding
	48-62 II A (48-52 II- 53-57 II 58-62 II+) Excellent Advanced
	33-47 III B (33-37 III- 38-42 III 43-47 III+) Good Proficient
	18-32 IV C (18-22 IV- 23-27 IV 28-32 IV+) Fair Basic
	5-17 V U Unprepared Below Basic

- Adjudicators provide additional feedback is available using pluses '+', 'blanks', or minuses '-' to quickly indicate positive and negative aspects of the performance among 'Specific Aspects' within each Evaluation Area.

<b>EVALUATION AREA</b>	
<b>SPECIFIC ASPECTS</b>	
<b>+</b>	Area of strength; Noticeably strong within rating
<b>Blank</b>	Commensurate to rating
<b>-</b>	Area of concern; Noticeably needing attention within rating

- An area listing 'Other Factors' is included in the lower left corner of the assessment form. Feedback is also provided through pluses and minuses. This evaluation is not scored or part of the Final Rating. Some space is available to the right of the table for comments.

<b>OTHER FACTORS (+, Blank or -) (Not scored; does not affect Final Rating)</b>	
	Conduct & Approach
	Appearance & Posture
	Choice of Repertoire
	Conducting/Response to Conducting

- A large space is available on the front of the form for written comments that provide additional input that is clear, focused and concise. Comments should briefly identify strengths and areas that need to be addressed along with recommended 'next steps'. Space is available on the back of each form as an option for additional comments. For large ensembles, that space is divided to permit specific comments for each of the Prepared Pieces.

#### H. DETERMINING THE SUMMARY RATING OF THE PREPARED PIECES

- The *Summary Rating* earned from the performance of the two Prepared Pieces is determined by combining the Final Ratings from the three adjudicators according to the following table:

<b>DETERMINE THE SUMMARY RATING FOR THE PREPARED PIECES BY COMBINING THE THREE RATINGS</b>					
<b>RATINGS FROM THE THREE ADJUDICATORS</b>	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>SUMMARY RATING</b>	<b>I</b>	<b>II</b>	<b>III</b>	<b>IV</b>	<b>V</b>

## I. SIGHT-READING AREA

- Hosts have the option of staging the Sight-reading component in a separate room, usually the band/orchestra room. Chairs and stands are normally pre-set in concentric semi-circles if the room is flat.
- The following concert percussion must be provided for the Sight-reading area at the minimum: concert bass drum, at least three timpani, bells, and a xylophone. Ensembles will use the accessory percussion brought for their Prepared Pieces and others provided by the host if possible. If a particular percussion instrument called for is not available, the part is omitted with no penalty.

## J. SIGHT-READING COMPONENT

- Ensembles participating in the *Traditional* performance context are required to participate in an adjudicated sight-reading component immediately after performing the two Prepared Pieces with the rating received factored into determining the Final Rating earned.
- Within the *Traditional* context, ensembles will sight-read a piece at a grade level below the Declared Summary Grade Level of the Prepared Pieces according to the following table:

DECLARED SUMMARY GRADE LEVEL OF THE PREPARED PIECES	GRADE LEVEL OF THE MUSIC TO BE USED FOR SIGHT-READING
6	4
5	3
4	2
3	1 ½
2	1
1	½

- Ensembles participating in the *Festival* performance context also have the option to participate in an adjudicated Sight-reading component. If that option is selected, directors may choose the grade level of the sight-reading piece.
- The Sight-reading adjudicator will provide one piece at each grade level. The director should be given an original, unmarked score, not a copy or one marked with conductor notes. The adjudicator has the option to provide two pieces and either choose one for the ensemble or permit the director to choose.

## K. SIGHT-READING PROCESS

1. Immediately following the Prepared Pieces, the ensemble will remain on stage or proceed to a separate area.
2. The adjudicator and assistants will distribute music that is to be turned over or music folders that are to remain closed until the students are directed to view the assigned piece.
3. The adjudicator will review the sight-reading process and instruct the students to turn over the music or retrieve a specific piece from the folder. The director may assist in confirming that everyone has the correct piece and part, including percussion assignments.
4. The adjudicator will then formally start a timed two-minute preparation period to be used by the director and students to silently peruse the music. The adjudicator will notify the director and students when thirty seconds remain.

5. The adjudicator will then formally start a timed three-minute period for the director to communicate suggestions for successfully sight-reading the assigned piece. Instruments cannot be played. The director and students may sing, clap, finger, count, address questions or otherwise highlight any aspect of the music. The adjudicator will notify the director and students when one minute, and then thirty seconds remain.

6. The adjudicator will then instruct the director to begin the sight-reading performance. During the performance, the director may clap or tap on the stand, sing parts, count, call out rehearsal numbers/letters and give verbal instructions without penalty. While the less the director needs to be involved verbally, the better, providing appropriate verbal assistance is encouraged.

7. The director may choose to stop and re-start the ensemble. The adjudicator will then identify the point where the ensemble will restart, which should be a rehearsal number/letter just before where the director stopped the performance. While the fewer stops and re-starts, the better, the director is urged to stop and re-start as necessary in the best interests of the overall assessment experience.

8. After the performance, the adjudicator will provide feedback during the remaining time before collecting the music and the students exit the area before the next ensemble enters.

- Directors are strongly recommended to prepare their students for success within this component by establishing and practicing an approach to effectively implement each step involved in the process.
- Directors are urged to regularly practice sight-reading along with their warm-ups, skill development exercises and concert music. Some directors successfully utilize a separate, designated 'Sight-reading folder' or method book focused on sight-reading.

#### **L. DETERMINING THE FINAL MPA RATING**

- For ensembles participating in the *Traditional* performance context, the two tables below are used to derive the *Summary Rating* of the Prepared Pieces and then combined with the rating received for sight-reading to derive the *Final MPA Rating*.
- For ensembles participating in the *Festival* performance context when the director chooses Ratings & Comments as the Evaluation Option AND to participate in the sight-reading component, the two tables below are used the same way.
- For those that do NOT choose to participate in the sight-reading component, just the first table is used to derive the *Final Rating*.
- Final MPA ratings are not posted or published.

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

USE THIS TABLE TO DETERMINE THE SUMMARY RATING OF THE PREPARED PIECES OR TO DETERMINE THE FINAL RATING FOR ENSEMBLES IN THE 'FESTIVAL' CONTEXT THAT DO NOT CHOOSE TO SIGHT-READ					
COMBINE THE 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		
SUMMARY RATING OR FINAL RATING	I	II	III	IV	V

The *Final MPA Rating* is then determined by combining the *Summary Rating* of the Prepared Pieces (PP) with the rating received for sight-reading (SR), according to the following table:

COMBINE THE SUMMARY RATING OF THE PREPARED PIECES (PP) WITH THE RATING FROM THE SIGHT-READING (SR) COMPONENT TO DETERMINE THE FINAL MPA RATING									
I		II		III		IV		V	
PP	SR	PP	SR	PP	SR	PP	SR	PP	SR
I	I	I	III	II	IV	III	V	V	IV
I	II	I	IV	II	V	IV	III	V	V
		I	V	III	II	IV	IV		
		II	I	III	III	IV	V		
		II	II	III	IV	V	I		
		II	III	IV	I	V	II		
		III	I	IV	II	V	III		

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

#### **M. MPA RESULTS AND MATERIALS RETURNED FROM THE HOST**

- The following items will be returned to each director before the ensemble departs:
  - [Band/Orchestra MPA Rating Summary Form](#)
  - Three *Band or String Orchestra Music Performance Assessment Forms*, one from each adjudicator
  - The *Band or String Orchestra Sight-reading MPA Form* (as applicable)
  - Six Conductor scores, three for each of the two Prepared Pieces provided for the adjudicators
- The host will provide information concerning how and when to access the audio recordings from the adjudicators.

#### **N. AFTER THE MPA**

- Directors are recommended to consider the following actions after the MPA:
  - Thank the administrator who granted permission for the ensemble to participate, any colleagues who assisted, and any parent volunteer chaperones for their support
  - Use the adjudicator recordings and assessment forms as educational classroom tools to enhance the overall experience for the students
  - Email the host expressing appreciation for hosting while also providing positive feedback and constructive suggestions
  - Email to the MPA Coordinator with feedback from the overall experience along with constructive suggestions concerning any aspect so that the 'system' can continue to evolve to improve the educational experience for all involved
  - For those ensembles participating in the *Traditional* performance context, consider the option to download the [Medal Order Form](#) and order medals for your students

#### **O. DIRECTORS 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. Participating directors and all interested members are encouraged to attend, contribute to the dialogue, and ask questions.
- While the meeting is informal, this forum includes reflecting on the current season along with discussing possible 'next steps'. This meeting has been an invaluable opportunity to consider options, determine priorities, and exchange ideas within dialogue not possible within individual communications.

To newly interested Directors----I hope that this *Guide* provides the information needed to successfully participate in a *Band or Orchestra MPA* sponsored by the PMEA Music Performance Assessment program.

To experienced participating Directors----I hope that this *Guide* serves as a helpful reference to refresh memories, introduce updates for the upcoming season, and answer new questions about any aspect of participate in a *PMEA MPA*.

Contact the MPA Coordinator with any questions.