

Manager's Notebook – Orchestra

(Special thanks to Denise Gendron for her assistance with compiling this notebook)

1. Select an assistant manager. This is the person who will be assisting you during the audition day, with preparations for the Festival rehearsals, and throughout the Festival itself. When approaching an educator to be an assistant manager, make sure s/he can be available for all of the audition and Festival dates. It is **vital** that both of you are on hand at all times.

2. Present at least two conductors to the Executive Board for approval. Copies of the potential conductor's biography **MUST** be presented (make at least twenty copies for distribution).

- If you are unsure of viable Festival conductors, the Executive Board, String Coordinator, or other colleagues may have suggestions. Contact these conductor suggestions in order of your preference.
- When contacting potential conductors, make sure to note the Festival dates (both regularly scheduled and snow dates), site(s) of the Festival, and the compensation for conducting and reimbursement for travel expenses (contact the Chairperson or Treasurer for the latest fee schedule). The past programs of your group (available on the District website) should also be sent as a link to give your conductor an idea of the level of literature performed.
- **The conductor should be approved no later than the May meeting for Senior District and the June meeting for Junior District.**
- The Past Festival programs page on the District website contains all of the programs and conductors from the past several years. Conductors cannot be considered to conduct the same ensemble within five years for Senior District and four years for Junior District.
- Make it known to every potential conductor that several are presented and only one is approved based on the Executive Board's thoughts on who would be the best choice for the respective District ensemble.

3. Once a conductor has been approved, two program choices must be created and one of the two approved by the Executive Board. **This can be done at the same meeting as the conductor's approval (to save time with ordering music) or at the following meeting.** These programs should be labeled "preferred" and "alternative" and be representative of a variety of styles. Substitutions can also be suggested. Scores **MUST** be provided for the presentation.

- At least one selection in each program choice **MUST** be in the District Library (online at the District website).
- Any selections from either program choice should not have been played within the last four years for both Senior and Junior District.
- It is recommended for your conductor to review past performed programs for him/her to get a sense of the achievement level of the ensemble, thus proposing

appropriate programs. You may also want to have the String and Woodwind/Brass/Percussion Coordinators review the proposed programs for appropriateness for a District ensemble.

- The length of the program should be approximately 20 minutes.
- Make sure that any non-District Library selections are still in print and can be ordered. If a selection is out of print, you will need to find, or ask the conductor for, an original set(s) and may need to ask for photocopying permission from the publisher. Repertoire may also be secured from the libraries of the other four Districts.
- **The program should be approved no later than the June meeting for Senior District and the September meeting for Junior District.** This will enable you to order the music before the auditions and ensure that we have the music to mail out as soon as the auditions are completed.
- Be sure to note instruments that are not in the standard orchestra instrumentation, i.e. piano, harp, contrabass clarinet, contrabassoon. You will need to secure these instruments and players.
- Be sure to note percussion instruments that are not standard instruments. You will need to secure these instruments unless prior arrangements have been made with the conductor.
- All percussionists need to be active in all selections. It is not of educational value to have some percussionists play only one selection in the program.
- Make sure to note how many of each woodwind, brass, and percussion students will be needed for each program choice.

4. Once the conductor has been approved, contact the conductor and let him/her know that they have been selected. Please alert them to the fact that the District Treasurer will be contacting them with contracts. You will also want to ask them for all program information at this time, as well as a congratulatory/informational letter that they might want to have you include in the student packets.

- Send all contact information to the District Treasurer. Please include full name, mailing address, phone number, cell phone number, and email address. Keep a copy of this information for yourself in case of emergencies near the day of the festival.

5. After your program has been approved, order the music that is **not** in the District Library immediately from Gerry's Music Shop (534-7402). Three folios for each composition are usually ordered. The District will be billed for all purchases. For District Library selections, contact the District Librarian (listed on the Contacts page of the District website) to make arrangements to have the selections sent to you. Please order ten additional copies from the projected number of students in the ensemble. Past programs can give you a general number to project from.

- Once you receive the District Library selections, be sure to check the number of copies we have in our library and determine if any additional copies need to be ordered based on the number of students in the Orchestra from past Festivals.

6. E-mail a list of necessary percussion equipment to the Senior Festival or Junior Festival concert/rehearsal host(s) to ensure that the equipment is available. Unorthodox percussion equipment will need to be provided from other sources. Discuss this with the Chairperson – alternative transportation may have to be arranged.

7. Obtain the following from your conductor as soon as possible and send to the program manager:

- Conductor's biography not to exceed 100 words
- Conductor's photo – Black and white or color is fine. A headshot is best. **DO NOT** take the photo from a website as the resolution will not be clear enough for the printers.
- Manager's biography – A short sentence describing what and where you teach.

8. Consult the conductor regarding the existing bowings for each of the selections. If the conductor disagrees with the composer's choices, the conductor will need to supply you with his/her preferred bowings.

9. Assemble student folders with the following before the auditions:

- Music for all Festival selections
- Your manager's letter which includes a congratulatory statement to the student for being accepted into the Orchestra, a brief biography of the conductor, a list of the music they should find in their folder, the regularly scheduled dates **and** the snow dates (be sure to mention that students will need to be present for the entire duration of the rehearsals, including snow dates if used), times and locations of rehearsals and concerts, media outlets for postponement information, and concert dress. You will need to photocopy this letter yourself or let the Executive Board know that you need to have this photocopied. **Do not allow a music store to photocopy any items, including scores and parts.** District letterhead may be obtained from the Chairperson.
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- Full length mp3 files on CD or MIDI recordings to expedite music learning.
- The conductor is more than welcome to include a letter of her/his own to include expectations and specific practice directions.
- Prepare a letter to percussionists to be distributed in their particular folders. Outline what parts each will be playing and what instruments they will be responsible for bringing to the rehearsals/concert.

Following are details regarding concert dress, lunch at the Festival, and media outlets for postponement information. This information should be contained in your Manager's letter.

Senior Festival Concert Dress:

- **Men:** Black dress shoes and socks, black dress pants, white long sleeve, collared, button-down dress shirt, long tie, and black jacket (no jeans or sneakers).
- **Women:** All Black. Women may wear a black dress or combination black top and black skirt or pants. Top must cover shoulders, and skirts/dresses must cover knees while seated. Black leggings do not qualify as black pants.
- Students will need to come to the second rehearsal dressed in their concert attire.

Junior Festival Concert Dress:

- **Men:** Black dress shoes and socks, black dress pants, white long sleeve, collared, button-down dress shirt, long tie (no jeans or sneakers).
- **Women:** Black shoes, black pants or skirt, black stockings, white blouse. Top must cover shoulders, and skirts must be below knees while seated. Black leggings do not qualify as black pants.
- Students will need to come to the second rehearsal dressed in their concert attire.

- Lunch: Students need to bring lunch on both days. The site host(s) **MAY** sell snacks at rehearsal breaks. This varies from year to year.
- Music stands: Students **MUST** bring wire music stands for both rehearsal days. Students should label both parts of their stand with their name. Students should also keep their music folders so we can easily identify missing parts after the concert.
- Bring a pencil!
- Order forms for CD recordings of Festival concert (if available)
- Media outlets for Festival postponement: The District website (www.mmeawd.org) is the primary source for official news and information regarding cancellations and updates. Postponement announcements will also be carried on the websites for WWLP-TV and WGGB-TV. We will make every effort to put the announcement on the television scrolling list for these two stations.
- List your contact information in case of questions.
- In the event of a highly confident forecast for a snowstorm that would make traveling to the Festival site dangerous, every effort will be made to announce a postponement by midday of the Friday before the Festival to alert students and alter school transportation arrangements.

10. Before the auditions, make sure to obtain scores of the approved program and make note of your instrumentation, as well as any important solos and exposed sections. You

will need to discuss the Orchestra's needs with the other ensemble managers the night of the auditions and choose the students who will serve those needs best. Discuss any major solos or unusual instrumentation with the Brass/Woodwind/Percussion coordinator before auditions so that the information can be given to the adjudicators first thing in the morning.

11. For the auditions, arrive for the first auditions in the morning and do the following:

- Assist the coordinators with any audition issues that may arise. Bring any discrepancies to the proper coordinator's attention **immediately** for resolution.
- Assist with tabulation in the tabulation room throughout the day.
- After all of the scores have been tabulated and entered into the auditions database, discuss the Orchestra's needs with the Concert Band, Chorus, and Jazz Ensemble managers. The four of you need to come to agreement on who should be accepted to what ensemble based on needs of each group, students' double and/or triple auditions, their preference of performing ensemble, and audition scores.
- Be sure to note how many percussionists will need to be accepted into the Orchestra based on instrumentation needs. You will need to decide this before the auditions.
- Determine a cut off score for the District and for the All State recommendation (for Senior District auditions only)
- Create a violin seating explanation. This is crucial to create as students and directors will be asking about how students were seated.
- Assist with the collation of audition result envelopes to be mailed to schools.

FOR JUNIOR DISTRICT ORCHESTRA: STRING INSTRUMENTATION

Usually 40-45 violins, 5-10 violas, 10-14 cellos, 1-3 basses. If not enough violas audition, may accept substitute a Violin 3 part.

VIOLIN SEATING:

Usually alternate the top 8 players between violin 1 and 2 (1 X 1, 2 X 2, or 4 X 4), then fill in the rest of the firsts. At the Junior District level, it is not appropriate to put students with lower scores into the first violin section. **INCLUDE AN EXPLANATION OF SEATING WITH THE AUDITION RESULTS TO AVOID PHONE CALLS FROM CONFUSED PLAYERS/TEACHERS.**

CHOOSING THE NON-STRING PLAYERS:

Consult with the band manager. The best option is to take high scoring students who put orchestra as their first choice, then those who put it as their second choice, then those students who only indicated band. Expect to alternate the top players between band and orchestra, but try to make sure the students you accept are in the top ten. Guidelines:

- VIOLIN 1: Third position is usually included. Usually accept 18-20.
VIOLIN 2: Very limited third position, if any. Usually accept 20-22.

VIOLA: Usually a small section, so solos should be doubled or plan on including Violin 3; no treble clef. Often accept 5, more are preferred.
 CELLO: Fourth position is usually required, no higher than harmonic A. Usually accept 10-14.
 BASS: No higher than D above middle C; solos should be doubled on cello, trombone, or tuba, in case numbers are low. Usually accept 1-3.
 PICCOLO: Limited use OK, but not an auditioned instrument.
 FLUTE: Usually accept 4; 1st, 2nd, 1st, 2nd.
 OBOE: Usually accept 2; 1st, 2nd.
 CLARINET: Usually accept 4; 1st, 2nd, 1st, 2nd.
 BASSOON: Not always available, look for doubling in cello, bass, or trombone
 SAX: Not usually accepted, but may ask conductor
 TRUMPET: Usually accept 4; 1st, 2nd, 1st, 2nd
 FR. HORN: Usually accept 3-4; 1st, 2nd, 1st, 2nd (or one for each part)
 TROMBONE: Usually accept 1 on each part (or 2, if only one part)
 TUBA: Not always available, so look for doubling in trombone, cello, and bass parts.

PERCUSSION: Check total number needed (do not plan to accept a student for only one piece). It is often possible to adapt a piece which requires too many percussionists to fit your other choices. Check the tympani part for difficult pitch changes within a piece. Also, check how many tympani will be required (remember that you may be responsible for supplying the instruments; compare notes with the band manager). It is usually best to choose one student for all the tympani parts and then rotate the rest. Make a chart indicating who is playing what in each piece before the auditions and fill in the names of accepted students.

12. Immediately following the auditions:

- Directors have seven days (combined school and weekend days) from receipt of results to appeal. If an adding error has occurred which affects seating placement of a student or potential membership in the ensemble, a copy of the student's audition sheets **MUST** be photocopied and sent to the manager. The manager may then adjust the ensemble/section accordingly.
- An appeal for other matters may be sent first to the manager, then to the Chairperson for discussion within the original seven day time period. The Chairperson's decision is final.

13. Once the appeals period has passed:

- All scores are final. Immediately send the student names and schools they attend to the program manager. This can be sent as a Word document or Excel file.
- Attach labels with students' names, schools, and instruments to folders and give to Gerry's Music Shop representative for distribution to area schools. The sooner this is done the sooner students receive their music to practice.

14. Secure a set-up chart for the Orchestra from your conductor. Using this as a reference, correctly fill out the Fine Arts Center (FAC) tech sheet and check off your ensemble's needs on the form, such as piano, podium, etc. Follow the template for creating a set-up chart for the FAC Production Services staff and fax to the Festival concert host. If done on the computer, this may be e-mailed directly to the Festival concert production services host. **This needs to be done shortly after the appeals process has passed.**

15. Ask your conductor if s/he would like to have sectionals during the first Festival rehearsal day. Determine the number of necessary rooms and an ideal time to hold the sectionals. Inform the Chairperson of these details as soon as they are known. This needs to be incorporated into the master Festival schedule. Start securing coaches for the sectionals before the Festival so these coaches can prepare accordingly.

16. Continue keeping in touch with your conductor regarding his/her needs, answer questions from directors, and continue to keep the Executive Board of your progress and to ask any questions.

- Before the first Festival rehearsal, create a seating chart on large poster board for students to look at and know what section and seat they are sitting in to facilitate traffic flow and alleviate confusion. Another alternative is to have the students name written on a folded 8 1/2 x 11" paper that is placed over the top of the stand. You may also place name tags on seats for students to find their seat and wear.
- Devise a system for you to take attendance easily and quickly throughout the course of the day. We need to make sure that students are accounted for at all times.
- Invariably, students will ask to be excused from rehearsals for vacations, sports meets, concerts, etc. The signed Student Endorsement Form clearly states that a student who chooses to participate is promising to come on the stated dates for the entire duration. You should inform any student who asks that an unexcused absence will result in his not being allowed to participate the following year (whether in Junior or Senior). Students, through the assistance of their directors, may write to the Executive Board to secure an excused absence. The procedure is in the District Handbook on the District website and must be followed exactly as detailed for consideration to be given. If there are any questions regarding absences, please consult the Chairperson.
- Replace students who withdraw from participation in the Festival with the next person on the auditions list. Facilitate the process for the music to be sent to that student.
- If you will be having sectionals, be sure to have copies of each score for each sectional coach. It would also be nice to have a score for each piece for observing directors in the back of the rehearsal room.

17. After the Executive Board meeting on the Friday before the first Festival rehearsal, start to set up your ensemble with the help of other Executive Board members and your assistant manager:

- Put chairs in the proper arrangement. If stands are available, you may arrange them as you see fit. Put percussion equipment in its proper formation.
- Put your large seating chart in a conspicuous place for students to read.
- Make sure to have any extra Festival music with you in case students forget theirs.
- It may not be a bad idea to bring extra strings and other string instrument parts, as well as woodwind/brass repair tools and parts in the event of an instrument malfunction.

18. On the day of the first Festival rehearsal day:

- Meet your conductor and introduce him/her to your assistant manager
- Direct students to locations for their personal belongings and instruments
- Direct students to their seats
- At 9:00, introduce yourself, tell students to shut off their cell phones, take off hats, put trash in the proper receptacles, and state that any requests must be directed to you or your assistant manager. Introduce your conductor.
- **No food or drink, except clear liquids, are allowed during rehearsals.**
- Once rehearsal has started, check the registration desk for missing students. Consult their directors/chaperones, who should be on site, as to the reason for their absence. If sick, they **MUST** bring a note from a medical professional, such as their family physician or school nurse, to the second rehearsal. Make note of those who had unexcused absences. They will not be allowed to participate in the second rehearsal or concert. If necessary, call the students at their house with the number listed on their Student Endorsement Form.
- At the first break, inform students on where the bathrooms are and what time to be at their seat. Also, direct them to be respectful of other students and conductors rehearsing elsewhere. Supervise students with the assistance of other directors. Stress to students that CD recordings will be made of the concert. You should have order forms available.
- Remind students that they are responsible for their music at all times. If music is lost, students will be charged a lost music fee for replacement.
- At lunchtime, tell students where to go, to put trash in proper receptacles, and when to return to their seats. Directors will supervise students. Help to expedite getting the conductor away from students to allow them the proper time to eat and bring him/her to the directors' hospitality room for lunch. You will eat with them.
- If you will be having sectionals, meet with your sectional coaches to tell them what to focus on and how much time they have. Each should have copies of the scores.
- Continue rehearsing with breaks as deemed necessary by you and the conductor.
- If there are any behavior problems, address them appropriately and be sure to inform the student's director/chaperone.
- After rehearsal is done, assist the site host with clean up of the rehearsal room and adjacent spaces. Collect any lost and found items.

19. For the second Festival rehearsal day:

- Direct students to locations for their personal belongings and instruments if the second site is different from the first. Remind students to turn off cell phones and take hats off.
- Strictly follow the rehearsal schedule. The time on stage for each group's dress rehearsal is one hour with fifteen minutes to get on and off. It's very tight and needs to be followed exactly. Dismiss the percussion students from rehearsal early to move percussion equipment in ahead of time. One of you needs to help assist the set-up crew. Make note of any last minute set-up changes. Have students lined up in order and wait outside the stage door with instrument and music ready to walk in on signal. During the rehearsal, go into the audience and assist the conductor with blend and balance issues. Once your time is up, you **MUST** leave the stage area so the next group may rehearse.
- At lunchtime, tell students where to go if this site is different from the first.
- Obtain the conductor's and assistant manager's addresses for her/his complementary CD recording.
- Before the concert begins, escort students to the balcony area of the Fine Arts Center Concert Hall. They may watch until a time deemed appropriate by you and the conductor. Percussion students should move percussion equipment to the wings of the backstage area. If the rehearsal room cannot be locked, advise students that they may want to take their valuables with them into the Concert Hall.
- Assist the set-up crew with setting the stage. Percussion students should move percussion equipment onstage. Students need to be lined up to walk onstage.
- After the performance, direct students to put their folders with music in the District Library bins. Clean up the rehearsal room with the assistance of the site host. Collect any remaining lost and found items and give to the Chairperson.

20. After the Festival:

- The District Librarian will send you the list of music that was not returned immediately following the Festival concert. Contact directors of students to determine if music can be recovered or is lost. If the music is recovered, the music may be sent to the District Librarian via Gerry's Music Shop or mailed directly to the Librarian's school. If the music is lost, the student will need to pay a lost music charge of \$10 per folder. Checks may be payable to MMEA-WD.
- Keep the Student Endorsement Forms for one month after the Festival.
- Create a Final Manager's report for the Executive Board meeting following the Festival (February for the Senior Festival, April for the Junior Festival). The report must include the following:
 - Program and conductor
 - Thank you's to hosts, student helpers, and any others deserving them
 - Any general comments regarding the ensemble, students, and the conductor
 - Suggestions/Recommendations for future ensemble managers

- Student attendance issues - this includes two categories of students:
- Those that were absent due to illness and have sent you a medical professional's note stating such illness
- Those that were disqualified from participating in the concert. Send the Chairperson a list of all disqualified students, including those who were disqualified from participation before the first rehearsal. In a separate e-mail/letter, send the Chairperson the addresses of the students as listed on your student endorsement forms and their directors.
- The Treasurer will not pay the stipend for the manager and assistant manager until the Final Report is presented and filed at an Executive Board meeting following the Festival.

21. Give any necessary forms or information to the assistant manager, who then becomes the manager.

22. Relax and be proud of the hard work you have done!