

# **Maximizing Contest Ratings (Part 3) 10 Years Ago in Bandworld**

**by Gladys Wright**

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## **The Day of the Contest**

1. If time permits and you live near the contest site, meet at school, warm up and tune, and run through portions of the contest numbers. Why? Because it takes the stress off the 30-minute warm-up period, you can solve last minute problems and "recency" is a major factor in learning.
2. Check the loading of the music boxes. Check for the scores. Are they numbered?
3. Relax in the official warm-up room. **DON'T EVER PLAY AHEAD OF SCHEDULE** to accommodate someone. Your parents have a right to expect to hear your band at a designated time.
4. No one should be in the warm-up area except you, your staff and the students. Have a parent watch the door. Also keep a parent in the home room to prevent vandalism by other students.
5. Warm-up on scales: The beginning of the march, perhaps a short section in an overture, **THEN TUNE AGAIN** quickly. It should be the same as in your own rehearsal. If the room is over-heated, simply tune the strobe to your top players and tune accordingly. Don't make the fatal mistake of pulling out because the room caused the instruments to tune sharp, then find out on the stage, everything has returned to normal. 'When in doubt tune the instruments as you do in band.
6. Explain again - judging is subjective. Our band even plays differently from one day to the next. **DO YOUR VERY BEST**. That is all we expect of you. The rating is secondary what you have learned is the most important factor. And we have improved a great deal.
7. Allow plenty of time to set the physical site. Use the percussion section. Five minutes before the band goes on stage have the section leaders check each section for correct number of chairs.
8. Don't play a scale or chorale on stage. **PLAY THE MARCH** immediately. Don't tune in between numbers unless absolutely necessary and you really know what you are doing. Usually band directors get in deeper trouble and further expose the intonation problems.
9. At the completion, have the band stand, take your bow, and then have the band leave the performing area.
10. After the performance let the Students listen to the other bands. Other bands always sound better to the student often causing anxiety on their part. The goal is to build confidence so don't encourage them to listen prior to your performance. The students can then evaluate the bands with a simplified judging sheet, which will give you something concrete to evaluate their listening and give them grades.

- (Students from other schools often think it is some official judging your students are doing, which gives your students an added boost in their egos.)
11. Try to have recordings made at the contest. Usually the performance is at a peak and it makes a nice souvenir later for students.

### **After the Contest**

1. Read the comment sheets to the band. Play the tape recordings of the judges, pass out the medals, and generally pat yourselves on the back for a job well-done.
2. Follow up with publicity to the newspaper and a letter of thank you to the parents.
3. Have an exciting activity planned: a big concert, a trip, etc so that the momentum can be used to do exciting band activities, or if things didn't go as well as you expected, there is something happening soon to get their mind off the lower rating. Usually, however, we are more disappointed than the band. The contest is important, but protect make the students feel they failed if the band does not receive the coveted SUPERIOR. It's the daily rehearsal and the complete yearly experience that makes band a meaningful experience and your attitude toward your students.