

Do You Hear What I Hear: A Study of Judges Comments for Comparison With Performance Recordings

Lee Ponder Friday, January 16, 2015 4:00 PM

The Rubric

This document does a lot to help clarify the thinking involved in assigning a rating to a performance. If you haven't looked at it for a while, it would be good to review it. I look it over before I begin to judge any MPA.

Using the "Plusses and Minuses" on the FBA Judges Sheet

The instructions on the judges sheets when I first began judging were to use the plus and minus signs in places where the group had strengths and weaknesses and to leave areas that were neither strong points or weaknesses blank.

The Letter grades were to be assigned based on how many plusses and minuses were in a given area.

For the last few years there has been a new instruction given to the judges: The new sheets read that the judge is instructed to assign the letter grade and then use the plusses and minuses to show what areas were noticeably stronger or weaker than the letter grade.

Sometimes this leads to judges sheets with few plusses and minuses. With the introduction of really good recorded comments this should not be a problem as the judges comments are heard by the director right over the sound of the band playing the part of the music the judge is commenting about.

For the Purpose of this Clinic I would like us to use the old system.

The judges sheet we will use today is one I have developed for use with my students to sharpen their listening skills. This sheet works better with the old system of assigning plusses and minuses and then assigning the letter grade.

I will play each selection for about five minutes. This will give you time to locate obvious strengths and weaknesses in the performance and assign plusses and minuses where you think appropriate.

Next, decide (with the rubric) on a letter grade.

After you have three letter grades, use those to determine Superior, Excellent, Good, Fair or Poor.

I have synthesized the judges comments and the rating sheets into plusses, minuses, letters and ratings and will tell you what the actual rating was.

What we are doing has several weaknesses:

1. The recording seldom lives up to the live performance.
2. You do not have scores.
3. We are only listening to a small portion of the performance.

With that in mind I hope this will be as helpful to you as a similar clinic was to me many years ago.