



North American Brass Band Association

Judging Process and Paradigm
A quick overview

NABBA Paradigm: *Rewarding Achievement*

After examining other music performance evaluation arenas and a review of the established research in music performance assessment, NABBA adopted the concept of evaluating and rewarding achievement of a band's performance as the essential and only responsibility of the adjudicator. Achievement is the result of the adjudicator evaluating what an ensemble has chosen to perform, the technical and artistic challenges present in the chosen repertoire, and how they are performing their chosen repertoire reflected by the quality of realization of the written score. It is this process of *intentionally considering the content* (the what) being performed that separates the current NABBA adjudication system from previous NABBA evaluation systems. The judge continually asks: "Which band is being artistically and technically challenged to a higher degree?" Coupled with this is the judge's assessment of the quality of the realization of the challenges. The judge is NOT counting mistakes or errors.

Achievement is

Content (or the *What*)

The technical and artistic challenges present in the chosen repertoire.

Plus

Performance (or the *How*)

“What is the quality of realization of the written score?”

Determining the Score

The judge asks these questions:

What is the depth and range of technical responsibility in the composition?

What is the depth and range of artistic responsibility in the composition?

What the NABBA system requires the judge to do is actively listen and analyze the quality of the performance relative to the challenges being presented to the performers. ***The function of the adjudicator is not to count mistakes.*** Their function is to **recognize** and **reward** achievement.

Assigning a numerical value

Using the process of Impression-Analysis-Comparison, the judge assesses the performing ensembles assigning a numerical value (rating) and places them in order of perceived achievement (ranking).

A second but equally important part of judge' responsibility is to *evaluate the relative numerical distance between bands* so that the given number has meaning. Number assignment is guided by the *specific verbiage a judge uses* while providing real time commentary to the ensembles. The judge's verbiage must match the score assigned. The numerical spreads between bands, must have uniform meaning. In other words, a spread of three points in Box 4 must have the same relative meaning as a spread of three points in Box 3 or in Box 5.

i.e. a three point spread in box 4: 79 to and 81 "says" the same thing as a three point spread in box 5: 91-93. That the bands are essentially equal and that it is only a feeling that one band is better in this particular performance than another band. In any given future performance, the results might be reversed.

Impression – Analysis - Comparison

The process of Impression - Analysis - Comparison of the WHAT and the HOW is the essential process in deriving a band's score.

1. **IMPRESSION** - The judge's reaction to the band's performance based on their professional experience.
 2. **ANALYSIS** - The judge's analysis of the band's performance presents reasons to support and modify the impression of the judge. This is the objective part of the evaluation.
 3. **COMPARISON** - The mechanical process of cross checking the judges' impressions and analysis with the scores they have assigned to other bands in the contest. For the first band in the contest, comparison relates to other contests and the paradigms within the judges' experience.
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A point means something

The “VALUE OF A POINT” applies to the bottom-line overall score for each selection.

- 1-2-3 Point spread in overall score: The units are essentially equal except for minor issues with differing strengths leading to a narrow spread.
- 4-5-6 Point spread in overall score: The units have identifiable but narrow differences which make it clear that one unit is better than the other in this sub-caption. The judge should be able and prepared to identify these differences between groups.
- 7-8-9 Point spread in overall score: There are at least 1-2 significant differences between units. These differences can be identified in the descriptive words used in commentary. Large variations in performance achievement and quality will be noted and recognizable between groups.
- Greater than a 10 Point spread in overall score: There are multiple significant differences between bands.

Over time, an understanding of numbers and their meaning will be developed between the performing community and the adjudication community. A shared understanding that a score of “95” means something fairly specific will be established.

Competition Suite

Judges will be using a program/app called Competition Suite to record real-time audio files as well as scoring. This will require each band to sign up for Competition Suite (free). More information regarding Competition Suite will be sent to each band. Please register as soon as you receive the information. We will need the email that you use to register.



Band_Class _____ Event _____ Date _____ Test / Choice

The **“what”** of the performance is comprised of the composition’s technical and musical challenges provided the band as demonstrated through the performance of the performers. The **“how”** of the band’s performance focuses on the excellence in overall sound quality and accuracy; appropriateness and quality of balance, blend, sonority, and fidelity; ensemble cohesiveness, expression and uniformity of style and interpretation, and mastery of musical challenges. Consideration is given to all musical and technical components of the band’s performance and the level to which the ensemble demonstrates those components through performance quality, consistency, and understanding of the musical opportunities presented in the content.

Technical Achievement (50%)		Artistic Achievement (50%)	
Depth and range of required technical skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Characteristic Sounds • Accuracy of Pitch and Intonation • Precision of Rhythmic Accuracy and Timing • Clarity, Uniformity, and Appropriateness of Articulation • Balance and Blend 		Depth and range of required musical skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Musicality • Interpretation • Expressive Qualities • Clarity and Uniformity of Style • Phrasing 	
Clarity of Compositional Intent Through Technique	Score (Out of 100)	Clarity of Compositional Intent Through Expressive Devices	Score (Out of 100)

Box 1	Box 2	Box 3	Box 4	Box 5
40 (45) 49	50 (55) 59	60 (67) 74	75 (82) 89	90 (95) 100
<i>Rarely</i> 40 to 49	<i>Sometimes</i> 50 to 59	<i>Usually</i> 60 to 74	<i>Consistently</i> 75 to 89	<i>Almost Always</i> 90 to 100

Total
(Possible 200)

Final Total Score Spread (Note: Can use half-points: “.5”)

Very Comparable	Minor Differences	Definitive Differences	Significant Differences
1 to 3 points	4 to 6 points	7 to 9 points	10 and higher

Adjudicator’s Signature _____