

## Standards for Stage Ratings of MPA Performances

*A copy of these standards should be with each judge during the adjudication.*

**Superior: "I"** The rating is comparable to the grade of "A". This rating reflects an outstanding performance for the event and experience level of participants being evaluated. The performance of all selections demonstrates that the group is able to meet all of the technical demands of the music with a thorough awareness of the composer's intent. Bands that receive this rating should perform beyond the basic performance of notes and rhythms, and into the area of artistic expression. While the adjudicator may find some minor points to critique and may make suggestions for improvement, his comments sheet would show a majority of A's. for the various captions and his remarks would be generally complimentary for outstanding work.

**Excellent: "II"** The rating is comparable to the grade of "B". This rating reflects a high level of performance for the event and experience level of participants being evaluated. The performance demonstrates that the group is able to meet nearly all of the technical demands of the music and may reflect a broad awareness of the composer's intent. Bands that receive this rating perform frequently, but not consistently, with the same technical proficiency as a band that received a rating of "Superior", but they lack the finesse and style associated with artistic expression. The performance shows the result of sound fundamental training, but lacks the polish and finesse to qualify for a rating of superior. The adjudicator may find consistent areas to critique, but these areas do not significantly distract from the overall quality of the performance. His/her caption ratings would consist of mostly B's while his/her remarks would be indicative of a quality performance.

**Average: "III"** The rating is comparable to the grade of "C". This rating reflects a mediocre level of performance for the event and experience level of participants being evaluated. The performance demonstrates that the group is able to meet some of the technical demands of the music, but reflects an absence of awareness for the composer's intent. The performance reflects consistent limitations in fundamental training and lacks the polish and finesse to qualify for a rating of excellent. The adjudicator will find consistent areas to critique and these areas will significantly distract from the overall quality of the performance. His/her comments sheet would consist of mostly C's.

**Below Average: "IV"** The rating is comparable to the grade of "D". This rating reflects a level of performance that is consistently weak and filled with technical errors and intonation problems. The performance reflects inconsistent and limited demonstration of music performance fundamentals. The adjudicator will find many areas to critique that significantly distract from the overall quality of the performance. His/her comments sheet would consist of mostly D's. These may reflect handicaps in the way of instrumentation or lack of rehearsal time. This classification represents a performance which is generally weak and uncertain. Comments should be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement. The adjudicator might suggest such things as a more favorable schedule to allow more regular rehearsals, more effective individual practice and/or ensemble rehearsals, or more careful screening of players. The adjudicator might even make specific recommendations for ensemble or individual studies and exercises which would contribute to the development of the individual players.

**Poor: "V"** The rating is comparable to the grade of "F". The performance is unacceptable both technically and musically. It demonstrates a lack of technical proficiency and musical understanding. Careless and bad playing habits are prevalent, providing significant and ongoing evidence of poor preparation and training. The group and director should concentrate on fundamentals and/or perform less difficult music. This rating indicates a performance which reveals much room for improvement. The director should check his methods, instrumentation, etc. with those of more successful organizations. This rating is rarely used by even the most critical adjudicators. In some cases the teaching methods of the director may be in question. If there are any commendable features in the performance they may be singled out. Perhaps there is one outstanding player in the group. He could be held up as a model. Sometimes only the stage deportment and appearance can be commented on favorably but even this may be some comfort. Remarks should be honest, but never sarcastic. They should point out the basic weaknesses and make suggestions for improvement, and above all, urge the participants and director to work toward qualifying for a higher rating next year.

**Note:** Adjudicators should make every effort to employ all the rating categories when appropriate. The ratings should be interpreted literally by the titles: Superior, Excellent, Average, Below Average, and Poor. Success is not measured only by a superior rating. The other ratings have credibility and should be used in a positive and constructive way