

Hey all,

Shirlee liked the format of “10 important questions,” so she followed that with this next discussion of effect. It’s important to remember that effect is worth 40% of your score, by far the most important part of the show. As such, it truly requires a committed approach to working through these questions and being sure you can maximize the opportunities for effect in your program. As with many of these articles, feel free to share with your band directors (and percussion folks) as there is great applicability to the field show as well as the winter show.

The only thing I have to add (I hope you haven’t grown tired of me “adding”!) is a personal story from my time spent with Shirlee on this very topic. When I go to trial judge at the SoCal Regional, Shirlee often runs that session and groups up the students after the show to pick our brains and give us advice. When she turns to the effect judges, she invariably asks this questions of them: “What was the best effect of the day [in that class]?”

It never ceases to amaze me that the effect judges squirm when asked that question. But, really and truly, that is an important question. Then I always think back in my caption of EA and ask myself what the best ensemble moment was (I’m kind of an EA geek like that!). Once they answer that question, she’ll ask them who they had ranked first. Then the same question: “What was their best effect?”

Seems kind of simple, huh? When you program the show, think about your best effect. If Shirlee was watching, what would she say when asked what your best effect moment was? Once you have that best moment programmed in your head, what about the second best? The third? Maximize these moments and make them memorable. Then when Shirlee asks, there won’t be any squirming, just a simple answer and the answer you wanted the judge to say.

If your fall is over, CONGRATULATIONS!!! If you still have a show to go to, hang in there and keep pushing. Winter is almost upon us!! :) Thanks for your efforts for our kids and best of luck getting ready for winter (then band camp is right after that!),

Chris

PLOTTING THE SHOW FOR EFFECT

10 More Questions and More big Payoff

By now you have your show tunes, or you're well on your way to making that final decision. When you do have the music selected and roughly edited you're now ready to plan your effects. Effect doesn't happen by accident and it isn't guaranteed. It requires you to design the moment, place it strategically both within the show and upon the stage and assure that the performers understand and achieve their part in its production.

- **QUESTION 1: What is your first effect**, and on a 1 to 10 in "impact," how does it score?
- **QUESTION 2: What is your desired reaction from both the Judges and the Audience?** (Continue to the next effect repeating questions 1 and 2 until you have done this through the entire show.) This will help you when listening to judges' tapes as you gauge their "reaction" to those planned moments.
- **QUESTION 3: How much time elapses between each effect?** This addresses the rhythm of the pacing of the effects. You can have a sequence of rapid fire effects or a separation between each of them. Get the feel of that rhythm and go back to question 2 to assure you are getting the reaction you desire.
- **QUESTION 4: Where on the stage have you placed your effect moments?** Have you offered varied staging or is everything "front and center?" Does it coordinate well with other elements of the guard?
- **QUESTION 5: Does the viewer's eye travel easily to where you have placed your effect?**
- **QUESTION 6: Have you offered a variety of effects? What are they?** Flag, rifle, saber, dance or drill features; are they Intellectual (fascinating, showing depth) Emotional (exciting, nostalgic) or Aesthetic (familiar and accessible to the viewer)? Variety is the spice of life. It's also a scoring consideration.
- **QUESTION 7: Is the effect musical?** This shows up on every score sheet and is a vital investment on your part.
- **QUESTION 8: Have you factored in the element of *Surprise*** or is each feature predictable?
- **QUESTION 9: How does all of this feed into the overall PRODUCTION VALUE of your show?** Have you given total thought to the "look" through costume, color, props, floor design and how that all illustrates the Sound Design of your show?
- **QUESTION 10: Is the overall package memorable, unique and creative?** Here I'd like to offer you a gentle reminder. Don't confuse "shock value" with being unique. Good taste is ALWAYS critical in your decisions. Pay attention to costuming and be sensitive to changing young bodies. Performers MUST be COMFORTABLE in what they wear. Good design and fit will assure this. Young ladies should not be "tugging" on their costumes and both males and females need the proper undergarments.

When you have applied these considerations to your entire show, you will be fully prepared to gage your success or weakness through the judge's taped reaction/response. It also lets you gauge the audience's response. It sets you up for intelligent expectations and provides a basis of dialog with the effect judges in critique.

This is all about YOU and your preparedness. I promise you that if you take care with these points your life will be infinitely easier throughout the season.