

Festival Improvement Committee Report

January 5th and 6th, 2007

Valley Plaza, Midland

The following representatives were in attendance:

Rob Manning – District I,
Rich Brand, District II,
Jeff Ehardt, District III
Al Johnston – District IV,
JoAnn Gross – District V,
Eric Olson – District VI,
Rob Finn, District VII,
Melissa Marks – District VIII,
Seth Kilbourn, District IX,
Keith Westmoreland, District X
Elizabeth Hering, District XII,
Willie McAllister, District XV,
Kevin Matthews, District XVI
Jeff Bennett, District II President,
Stacie Detgen, State V.P. for Music Selection,
Paul Lichau – Assistant to the Exec. Director,
Eric Joslin – FIC Chair

Please note all motions, passed and defeated, are included in this report. In addition, any additions to the language of existing policies, procedures or rules are underlined. Also, every attempt has been made to present the topics and motions in the chronological order in which they were addressed in the meeting. Finally, since you should now have the new yearbook, I will be referring to locations within the 2006-07 blue yearbook.

As you are now aware, at the MSBOA meetings in November on the campus of Central Michigan University, the executive board and general membership approved an amended motion which approved what amounts to a MSBOA-wide pilot project in open classification. The amended motion stated,

“...all districts be granted the discretion to implement open classification systems in District Band and Orchestra festivals for two years, 2007-08 and 2008-09. Ensembles that choose open classification at a lower level than their MSBOA classification will not qualify for state festival.”

The purpose of the motion was two fold. First, FIC thought it time to move beyond discussion and put open classification to a test in Michigan in a less permanent form. Second, to allow districts to implement an open classification system and then share data, thoughts and impressions with the FIC for us to use to determine if we should undertake the monumental task of creating a proposal for a wide sweeping change the current MSBOA festival classification system; to help us determine if open classification keeps coming up because of a few members promoting it loudly or because a majority of the membership has an interest.

Once the motion passed it became evident to me that the motion lacked direction or guidelines for the districts that might choose to participate. FIC recognized that in order to get well-informed answers to the questions that shaped the creation of this test project, we needed to have some level of consistency in its implementation. Friday evening in Midland was dedicated to this end, the creation of a set of procedures for Districts choosing to participate in the open classification test project.

The first motion was consistent with our ideas and discussion, but we felt that the Fall 2007 date would be a too late to allow districts adequate time to consider the question of participation. The successive motions allow districts time to consider participation and the implications for district members and officers.

1) Moved by Rich Brand, seconded by Jeff Ehardt, that the FIC chair write a rough draft of the open classification procedures to be presented to FIC at the Fall 2007 meeting.

Motion failed.

2) Moved by Rich Brand, seconded by Kevin Matthews to accept the open classification procedures as presented.

Motion Passed.

On Saturday, the committee amended the open classification procedures to include a statement regarding the post- participation survey.

3) Moved by Eric Olson, seconded by Jeff Ehardt, that the following statements be added to the open classification procedure, “The surveys should be distributed on or before the of performance at district festivals via the method determined by each district. The surveys should be returned to the FIC Chair within 30 days of the completion of each district’s festival. District presidents and B&O chairs are responsible for overseeing the return of the surveys.”

Motion Passed

The resulting MSBOA Open Classification Pilot Project Procedure form is included with this report. This form will be presented to the Executive Board at its meeting in Grand Rapids. After receiving input from the Executive Board, and in the event they approve our procedures, I will be distributing the resulting form to district FIC representatives by March 1st. This should allow district members the time to look over the procedures before deciding on whether or not to participate in the pilot project.

The next motion was the result of discussion regarding the nature of the post-participation survey that will be required of the districts participating in the open classification pilot project. The survey will look to collect data from four sources: the District President, the District Vice President of Band and Orchestra, participating directors and non-participating directors.

4) Moved by JoAnn Gross, seconded by Seth Kilbourn that the FIC chair create a rough draft of survey questions to be presented at the Fall 2007 FIC meeting.

Motion Passed.

The next two motions were the result of an email from President Cynthia Swan-Eagan regarding the difference between the length of pieces on the Suggested Chamber Music List and the Solo and Ensemble performance time requirements.

5) Moved by Kevin Matthews, seconded by Robb Finn, that on page 19, section B Performance Rules, item 13, the following be inserted before the final sentence, "Any chamber music that is on the MSBOA Suggested Chamber Music List meets all qualifications for performance regardless of performance time."

Motion Passed.

6) Moved by Rob Manning, seconded by Jeff Ehardt, the Festival Improvement Committee directs the state office to include the Suggested Chamber Music List in the District and State Solo and Ensemble materials.

Motion Passed.

The next motion again began as an email question. It clarifies the nature of adult participation during marching band festival performances.

7) Moved by Keith Westmoreland, seconded by Kevin Matthews, that the following sentence be added to page 69, section A Classification, item 3, after the final sentence, "With the exception of the director(s), only students from the participating school may enter the boundaries of the performance area during the performance."

Motion Passed.

Executive Director Paul Stanifer along with President Cynthia Swan-Eagan, Vice President Jazz Activities Elon Jamison, and past VP of Jazz Activities Chris Blackmer presented an update of newly initiated discussions with the International Association of Jazz Educators. In support of this discussion and continued negotiations, the following motion was presented.

8) Moved by Robb Finn, seconded by Jeff Ehardt, that FIC supports the continuing investigation of a collaborative involvement of I.A.J.E. in MSBOA Jazz Festivals.

Motion Passed.

As a result of the discussion and investigation into the Solo and Ensemble rule addressed in motion number five above, it became clear to the committee members that item 13 on page 19, needed reorganization. The following motion was presented to begin that process.

9) Moved by Kevin Matthews, seconded by Keith Westmoreland, that on page 19, Section B Performance, item 13, the following be added after the first sentence, "12 minutes will be allowed for chamber ensembles."

Motion Tabled.

The previous motion will be revisited at the next FIC meeting in the fall of 2007.

The meeting concluded with discussion of concerns from the districts. No motions were raised at this time, however the concerns have been noted and will appear on the agenda for the next FIC meeting to allow for further discussion and possible committee action. District FIC representatives are encouraged to share and discuss these concerns/ideas with their members.

District XVI – Kevin Matthews presented a concern regarding the basic music list. In large school districts, when a student moves from a middle school band to the high school band, the basic music list seems to move in retrograde motion. This example was given. A student performs in an 8th grade band whose MSBOA classification requires playing from the class A junior high list. As a freshman their band is the second or third ensemble and now the ensemble plays from the class D high school list. The idea proposed was a graduated list, one which lists pieces easy to hard. Discussion included the statement that in accordance with the current MSBOA rules for choosing a required piece, the ensembles may play pieces from classifications above the level indicated by enrollment.

District IV – Al Johnston shared with us a situation where a student arrived at the Solo and Ensemble with a piece from a collection sold without a written piano accompaniment. The accompaniment is furnished by the publisher on a CD with the “melody cue” appearing on the right channel, allowing for the student to gradually eliminate the cue as they progress in their practice of the piece. Al researched the piece and found a piano book is not even offered for purchase. He explained that the student was allowed to perform, but had to perform without accompaniment. With the changes to media happening so quickly, FIC realized that this may become a more regular occurrence and we will have to address CD accompaniments besides Vivace/Smart Music.

District XIII – A Upper Peninsula Band and Orchestra site required a piano for performance. The only piano available to the site was the digital piano already in place in the auditorium. The rules allow for a keyboard synthesizer to be used if notated in the score or in place of specific instruments, e.g. organ, harp, celeste or harpsichord. With the exception of not allowing amplified instruments, the district could not find rules directly addressing the use of a digital piano anywhere but the Solo and Ensemble rules, which allow the use of a digital piano. At the fall meeting the FIC will be discussion the addition of “digital piano” to the B&O rules where necessary.

Respectfully submitted,

Eric D. Joslin
Chairman, Festival Improvements Committee