

This document is intended to be used in conjunction with the Official Rulebook and Evaluation Criteria, and not as a substitute for either. Download the Official Fine Arts Rulebook and the Evaluation Criteria at [www.faf.ag.org/rules.cfm](http://www.faf.ag.org/rules.cfm).

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## **BAND CATEGORIES**

### **1. BE PROFESSIONAL.**

- **DO** be on-time for every scheduled rehearsal and event
- **DON'T** be distracted - Stop wasting precious rehearsal time on your phone
- **DO** show up fully prepared. Got your music, gear, sticks, etc.?
- **DO** assist your fellow musicians with set up and tear down
- **DON'T** continue to jam while others are sound-checking or your leader is working with someone individually
- **DO** be patient and polite with your sound-person
- **DON'T** start your entry off with some sappy story about how your guitar player has a hangnail, your drummer has an upper respiratory infection, or how you somehow forgot what time your entry was slotted for. BE PROFESSIONAL! Go up there, do your thing, and get off the stage.

### **2. GET A COACH AND REHEARSE.**

Obvious right? The difference between a well-coached and well-rehearsed entry is...well...obvious. The more time you spend together in rehearsal is directly related to how tight you'll be. Your coach should be an experienced, skilled musician who is willing to pour their life and experience into your lives. They should be wise enough to guide you through meaningful rehearsals where you develop, and stick to the plan.

### **3. STOP OVER-PLAYING AND OVER-SINGING.**

Seriously, this is what separates good musicians from great musicians. Is it possible that what you don't play or sing is more important than what you do play or sing? The answer is, yes. Space, simplicity, location, omission, distance, scope, modesty, clarity, restraint... those are all key words in deciding what to play or sing, and when to play or sing it. At the end of every arrangement, ask yourself if you've implemented at least two of these descriptive words. You might be surprised at what you'll discover.

### **4. BE DYNAMIC.**

Picture a heartbeat monitor. Peaks and valleys, right? Great songs, and subsequently great arrangements happen in waveform. And the further the peak is from the valley, the more dynamic a song is. Let swells in volume and intensity create interest in your arrangements and playing.

### **5. COMMUNICATE.**

Tunnel vision is the mark of an amateur musician – head down, ears off, zoned out. WAKE UP! You're on a team! It is imperative that you're proactively communicating with each other from start to finish. The more accustomed you become to this, the less thrown off you'll be by varying sound environments. Let's face it, the stage at Fine Arts is going to sound completely different than what you're used to. Are you prepared for that? Additionally, eye contact with each other will help with hitting cues, locking in tempo, and overall team dynamics (especially between drummer and bass player).

### **6. BE TEACHABLE.**

Why does Derek Jeter have a hitting coach? Why does Tiger Woods have a swing coach? And why does Michael Phelps have a swim coach? Because it doesn't matter how developed your skills become, there is always room for improvement. Not only can you learn from your coach, you can learn from your contemporaries. Listen closely to other bands. Watch what they're doing on stage. What are they doing better than you? And don't be afraid to take the evaluators' constructive criticism to heart. That evaluation sheet is more than just a score. It's filled with helpful insights that are tailored specifically to you.

### **7. KEEP IT IN PERSPECTIVE.**

Fine Arts isn't a Christian talent show. Cee Lo Green isn't going to turn his chair and beg you to be on his team. So why are we doing this? Simply put, Fine Arts exists to help equip you to better function in your gifting. Another way of putting it is...you're here to learn and grow. Let that be your motivation.

## **8. FIND SONGS THAT FIT.**

Right song selection is crucial. That latest Hillsong tune that sounds amazing on your iPod may not be the best choice for your band, and here's why. Millions of dollars are spent on production values, studio editing, and the best musicians to make what would otherwise be an average song sound like, well...a million dollars. You don't have that luxury. Would the song still be great with nothing more than an acoustic guitar? Choose songs that can shed the production fluff and not lose their effectiveness.

## **9. MASTER THE BASICS.**

How many different styles of music can you think of? There's no shortage of tastes, genres, preferences, etc., right? But what are the non-negotiables of music? What are the things we all agree on? Get this right and you'll be ahead of the game.

- Tuning/Intonation/Pitch - Tune your instrument! Then re-tune it. Then just before you perform, tune it again. Get proficient at tuning quickly and inconspicuously. If you're a singer, warm up your voice beforehand.
- Rhythm, Tempo - Lock it in! Rehearse with a metronome to reduce tempo fluctuation. If you're setting the tempo or starting the song, bring the metronome right up on stage with you and take a peek just before you begin. If you've never used a metronome, get ready to be shocked by your tempo inconsistencies.

## **10. RELAX!**

It may sound cliché to hear someone say, "Go up there and have fun!" But the truth is that having a blast on stage is more important than getting every note right. It's the very thing that separates musicians from robots. Emotion and music are inextricably tied together, and in the case of a live event, they are co-dependent. So go ahead and enjoy it!