

## THROUGH A JUDGE'S EYES AND EARS

1. The selection of tunes:
  - . Appropriate for Grade
  - . Musicality
  - . The Construction of the Medley
  
2. Tonal Issues:
  - . Pitch
  - . Intonation
  - . Timbre
  - . Tuning
  - . Balance
  - . Other Blowing Concerns
  
3. Attack and Introduction
  
4. Breaks and Transitions
  
5. Finish
  
6. Musical Issues:
  - . Tempo
  - . Expression
  - . Phrasing
  - . Rhythm
  - . Conforming to the Idiom
  
7. Technical Issues:
  - . Clarity of the Melody
  - . Rhythmic Clarity
  - . Articulation & Accuracy of Movements
  - . Staying True to the Intent of the Composition

HOW DO YOU, AS A BAND PIPER, PREPARE FOR COMPETITION?



# JUDGING – WHAT TO LOOK FOR

## **A. UNISON PLAYING**

*This generally refers to how well the hand plays together. Passages not in unison should be noted, and the degree of clarity of the unison should be assessed.*

### ***ATTACK***

- Are the drones struck together?
- Are there any drone sounds between the rolls?
- Are the Es hit together?
- Are the Es in tune creating instant tone?
- Are the first several bars in unison?
- Are the first several phrases at the same tempo as the roll in?

### ***BREAKS***

- Is there an identifiable transition between one tempo and the next?
- Is there an identifiable transition between one rhythm and the next?
- Is the first beat note and lead-in notes, if any, hit precisely together?
- Are the first several bars in unison?

### ***EXECUTION***

- Is the finger technique clear and precise?
- At what level is the clarity of execution movements, one gracenote, two gracenote or three gracenote doublings?
- Are there any consistent failings, taorluaths, tachums, GDES, top hand doublings, triplets, etc.?

## ***FINISH***

Is the cut off sharp and precise with all chanters ending together?

Are there any drone sounds after the final chanter sound?

Is the last note of the tune clearly sounded for its full duration in the metric pattern?

Is the blowing of the last four bars of the tune steady and full?

Is the playing of the last four bars consistent with the expression of those before it or does it change in either tempo or degree of pointing?

## **B. TONE**

*Generally this is the quality and quantity of the musical sound produced? Words describing the tone may be descriptive of quality, of accuracy of tuning or of quantity of sound.*

### ***TUNING***

Are the chanters accurately set together on each note of the scale?

Is each note set where it is supposed to be in the bagpipe scale?

Are the drones tuned accurately together?

Are the drones pitched to match the chanters?

### ***TONAL BALANCE***

Are the chanters of a reasonably even volume from bottom to top?

Are the drones and chanters of balanced volume, or does one overpower the other?

Are the individual instruments of similar volume and quality around the band?

## ***TONE QUALITY***

Is the total sound full and robust or weak and thin?

Is the total sound sweet and melodic or harsh and grating?

Do the drones stand out as a hum or buzz on their own or are they integrated into the chanter sound producing an organ effect?

Is there a depth or bass dimension to the sound or is it light and tenor dominated? Are there any harsh or chattering drones?

## ***TONE CONTROL***

Does the sound vary in pitch, unison or quality while performing?

Do the drones remain steady and in tune with the chanters?

Are there spots in the band where the tone changes radically?

Is everyone playing all the time?

## **C. MUSICAL EXPRESSION**

*Generally this refers to the quality of the production of the melody of the tunes, and combines the following areas.*

### ***TEMPO***

Is the tune too fast for suitable phrasing of the melody to stand out?

Is the tune too slow for life or rhythm to be fully attained?

Is the tempo consistently maintained throughout?

Do the tempos balance with each other (e.g. Reel with Strathspey)?

## ***RHYTHM***

Is the rhythm forceful and consistent?

Does the piece feel rushed (i.e. falling ahead to the next beat)?

Does the piece feel laboured (i.e. continually late to the next beat)?

Is there a definition of the offbeat to give lightness, swing or bounce?

Is there use of heavy accents appropriate to the tune type & phrase structure?

## ***PHRASING***

Is each tune within the acceptable idiom of the highland bagpipe?

Is each tune clearly divided into recognizable and acceptable phrase patterns so that the melody has structure and form?

Are the longest notes within the phrases suitably held?

Are the phrase ends arrived at on time within the metric pattern and are they suitably marked?

## **D. QUALITY OF MUSICAL CONTENT**

Does the selection have both unity and variety in the following areas: tone, rhythm and melody?

Does the selection satisfy the hearer as being a musical whole?

Does the selection interest the listener through changes in key, tempo and rhythm?

Does the selection reach a musical climax or attain musical unity at the end?

Is the selection and its parts arranged in such a way as to be both comprehended and appreciated by the listener?

