

# The General Effect Caption

All General Effect sheet is broken up into two parts, Music Effect, which encompasses how effectively the designers and students bring the musical components to life, and Visual Effect, which encompasses how effectively the designers and students bring the visual components of the show to life. In covering the General Effect caption, we'll look at both independently. But first, let's consider, from the judges' viewpoint, Composition.

## 1. The Judge (and Process of Adjudication)

When considering the composition in light of the Visual Captions (Visual Performance, Visual Ensemble, and General Effect), the following statements as regards judging must be given weight by the design team:

- The judge must be aware of the Qualities/Dimensionality of the composition. Therefore, design with dimensionalities and artistic qualities.
- The judge must recognize and reward the Cumulative Aspects of design. Therefore, design with quality and variety throughout the entirety of the program.
- The judge must recognize, analyze, VALUE, and compare each composition. Therefore, design with artistic merit.
- The judge must recognize the triad of Equipment, Movement, and Staging. Therefore, consider the triad (Equipment = guard equipment, props, instruments; Movement = marching, dance, role-play; Staging = geography, relationship, variety of form and negative space) in design.
- In assessing compositional quality, the judge measures the "whole," then measures the writing process within the whole. The judge adjudicates through time to experience the complete show.
- The judge should make commentary on the What (the Composition) and the How (it's Excellence through performance). The two are inseparable, and should be linked in commentary.
- Effect judges "react" to the composition and the performance and respond to pacing, impact, and the effect triad (aesthetic, adrenal, intellectual).
- Analysis judges deconstruct the components of the show and assess the logic, artistry, and orchestration of the composition, as well as the excellence of the performer.

There is an explicit understanding that the commentary will contain positive and negative comments for both the What and the How. Let's examine the writing process and its adjudication:

## 2. The Philosophy of Effect

Effect judges are responsible for evaluating the show from a holistic perspective, assessing all elements of the program. Effect judges should allow themselves to react, letting the show come to them, and be a reflection of the program and the performers. The subjective reactions of the Effect judge should be filtered through the sub-caption criteria, and considered in terms of the Intellectual Effectiveness, Aesthetic Effectiveness, and/ or the Adrenal Effectiveness of the design choice or performance.

The show should be thought-provoking, beautiful, and exciting.

Judges should assess the effectiveness of a show by channeling reactions first through the Music Effect sub-caption. The Visual Effect sub-caption is no less important than the Music Effect sub-caption, but it is understood that music is the primary driving force behind effect. General Effect judges should judge through time, keeping all aspects of the program and performance in context. Micro reactions should be related to macro reactions, recognizing how each individual effect contributes to and

enhances the overall effect. In the Analysis Captions, we would consider these characteristics, details, and nuances to be design elements. On the General Effect sheet, we consider the communication of each, and their effectiveness within the performance.

Like the Analysis Captions, the General Effect captions are judged on a sub-caption basis. The General Effect sheets are designed to profile independently the strengths and weaknesses of a group's Music Effectiveness in one sub-caption and Visual Effectiveness in the other. It should be understood however that criteria in one sub-caption could influence the effectiveness of the other sub-caption. The Effect captions are not traditional captions delineated by separate 'What/How' sub-captions. Effect judges must consider and assess 'What' and 'How' simultaneously within each of the sub-captions, even without the traditional 'What/ How' scoring distinction. They are inextricably linked, and should be linked in commentary.

There is no priority on any one approach to creating effect. The program of each will determine the priority for effect. General Effect judges must be accountable for considering and comparing the effectiveness of each design choice. All design choices are given equal opportunity for success. Pure excellence can elevate the effectiveness of a design choice or be an effect in and of itself. In the General Effect caption, pure excellence is only one element, and its presence may or may not be critical to generating effect.

Creativity and originality are the cornerstones of the diversity that is encouraged in VBODA. In all classes, designers will take the risk of exploring new material. When recognizing and rewarding the creativity of a program, General Effect judges should encourage designers to take the risk of exploring new material and not disregard these efforts or diminish their value just because they may not fall within the scope of the judge's comfort zone of recognition. That said, originality in and of itself is not the sole basis for reward. It must also fulfill all other components of producing effect. Encouragement for creative and original efforts should be acknowledged through verbal recognition regardless of the level of perceived success.

The judge should:

- Credit all of the musical/visual elements in the ensemble's presentation that combine to display an effective and entertaining program.
- Credit the successful communication of the ensemble's identity and message through the quality blend of creativity and performance.
- Credit the performer's ability to connect with the audience. The music drives the visual in creating an effective presentation.

### **3. The Philosophy of Communication**

In the General Effect caption, the word Communication appears in both the Music Effect and Visual Effect sub-captions. This is designed to reward both the designers' ability to create interest, and the performers ability to clearly articulate that interest through the performance. To judge General Effect, the judge must have an understanding of the Effect Triad, the Visual Triad, and the Music Triad, and how each can communicate with an audience.

**Recognize and understand the Effect Triad** – (Adrenal Effect, Intellectual Effect, and Aesthetic Effect). They are equal partners in design. They may be represented singly or in combination. The fusion of all three offers the best opportunities to create the most complex and challenging design options. The triad can be composed at many levels of complexity, and can challenge students in every class. The triad is not a guarantee for high credit. Its value is important for variety and interest in composition, and heightened opportunities in achievement. It adds depth and value to design and

performance. The primary emphasis on the triad is to reinforce the development of skills in all three areas, and we reward designers for incorporating all three into their composition.

- **Adrenal Effect** considers the excitement of a program. Velocity, changes in dynamic effort, speed, and motion are considerations. Often, Adrenal Effects will produce a crowd response.
- **Intellectual Effect** considers the intrigue of a program. Thought-provoking moments, the element of surprise, creativity, and development of character are considerations.
- **Aesthetic Effect** considers the beauty of a program. Color, sonority, and impact are consideration.

**Recognize and understand the Visual Triad** - (Equipment, Movement, and Staging). They are equal partners in design. They may be presented singly or in combination. The fusion of all three offers the best opportunities to create the most complex and challenging design options. The triad can be composed at many levels of complexity, and can challenge students in every class. The triad is not a guarantee for high credit. Its value is important for variety and interest in composition, and heightened opportunities in achievement. It adds depth and value to design and performance. The primary emphasis on the triad is to reinforce the development of skills in all three areas, and we reward designers for incorporating all three into their composition.

- **Equipment** considers the use and manipulation of all physical objects: flags rifles, sabers, other guard equipment, props (if manipulated), instruments, and uniform parts.
- **Movement** considers the vocabulary and performance of body motion to include: dance, marching, role-play, and character development.
- **Staging** considers the physical space and the creative use of space utilized by the design team. Variety and imaginative use of design elements are credited.

**Recognize and understand the Music Triad** - (Brass, Woodwinds, and Percussion). They are equal partners in design. They may be presented singly or in combination. The fusion of all three offers the best opportunities to create the most complex and challenging design options. The triad can be composed at many levels of complexity, and can challenge students in every class. The triad is not a guarantee for high credit. Its value is important for variety and interest in composition, and heightened opportunities in achievement. It adds depth and value to design and performance. The primary emphasis on the triad is to reinforce the development of skills in all three areas, and we reward designers for incorporating all three into their composition.

- Brass considers the use of trumpets, horns (mellophones), trombone, baritone, and tubas, and the effectiveness of their composition and performance. The inclusion of concert instruments (piccolo trumpet, French horn, euphonium) as both soloists and ensemble participants can elevate the effectiveness of the program.
- Woodwinds considers the use of piccolo, flute, clarinet, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, and baritone saxophone. The inclusion of concert instruments (recorder, alto flute, oboe, bassoon) as both soloists and ensemble participant can elevate the effectiveness of the program.
- Percussion considers the use of Battery instruments such as snare drum, multi-tenor drums, bass drums, and cymbals. The inclusion of other instruments (flub drums, single tenor drums, rope drums) as both soloists and ensemble participants can elevate the effectiveness of the program. Percussion also considers the use of Front Ensemble instruments such as marimba, vibraphone, xylophone, glockenspiel, timpani, rack, concert bass drum, tam-tam, and any and all electronic instruments available, such as synthesizer, electric piano, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, and bass guitar. The inclusion of non-traditional concert instruments (conga, bongo, wind chimes, bell tree) as both soloists and ensemble participants can elevate the effectiveness of the program.

- Music Effectiveness also gives consideration to non-traditional performers such as strings, singers, and speakers. These will be given a lesser consideration within the value of a program, but can certainly elevate the interest and effect.

Consider how Adrenal Effect, Intellectual Effect, and Aesthetic Effect play a role in musical communication. The following are Music Effect criteria on the General Effect sheets:

**Communication:** The performance techniques that connect musically with the audience. Consider the Music Triad.

**Creativity:** The uniqueness and freshness of the musical program.

**Musicianship:** The interpretive art of the music.

**Expression:** The range of dynamics as a whole. The ability to convey a wide range of nuances through artistic control.

**Range of Effects:** The variety and depth of development within each planned effect.

**Idiomatic Interpretation:** The ability to create the appropriate style of the music.

**Excellence as It Relates to Effect:** The proficiency of technical skills or virtuosity that elicits a response from the listener.

Consider how Adrenal Effect, Intellectual Effect, and Aesthetic Effect play a role in musical communication. The following are Visual Effect criteria on the General Effect sheets:

**Communication:** The performance techniques that connect visually with the audience. Consider the Visual Triad.

**Audio/Visual Coordination:** The presentation and delivery of the music and the visual in such a way as to enhance each other throughout the program.

**Imagination/Creativity:** The ability to present the known idea with an effective utilization of an original music/visual concept.

**Expression:** The range of dynamics as a whole. The ability to convey a wide range of nuances through artistic control.

**Pacing/Continuity:** The planning of effects through time to manipulate response.

**Impact/Resolution:** The result of musical/visual phrases that punctuate the program ideas.

**Range of Effects:** The variety and depth of development within each planned effect.

**Appropriate Use of Movement/Form/Color:** The coordination of visual effect within musical textures in performance.

The following is a list of visual terms and their definitions:

#### 4. General Effect Vocabulary

1. *Program* – The plan that guides and motivates all design choice, presenting opportunities for inherent and manufactured effectiveness. The effective blend of musical, visual and programmatic choices, which provides a vehicle for emotional, intellectual, and aesthetic communication.
2. *Creativity* – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the overall program and presentation.
3. *Communication* – The performance techniques that effectively express ideas and connect with the audience.
4. *Engagement* – The ability to secure, captivate, and sustain the attention of the audience.
5. *Coordination* – The harmonious combination and interaction of musical and visual elements that together elevate the program.
6. *Range of Effects* - The varied displays of programmatic effectiveness, though time via pacing and continuity, and in isolation via planned events and punctuations.
7. *The Musical Journey* - The effective use of repertoire and orchestration techniques to establish and sustain the intellectual, emotional, and aesthetic relationships over time.
8. *Creativity* – The originality, uniqueness, and imagination infused into the musical program and presentation.
9. *Musicianship* – The understanding and artistic sensitivity of the written score through expression, blend, balance, and idiomatic interpretation.
10. *Artistry* – The subtlety, nuance, detail, craft, and proficiency that elevate the fit and finish of the presentation.
11. *Excellence as Effect* – The virtuosity or technical proficiency of the performer(s) that elicits positive responses from the listener.

## 5. A Planning Primer for Judges and Designers

As you plan your program, or judge the planning of a program, consider the following:

- Create *opportunities* for greater achievement through clarification and unification of postural, gestural and non-durational efforts. Exposure to these efforts should be orchestrated in an individual, segmental, and ensemble manner, and must be related to the soundtrack. It has become traditional to explore gestural efforts on the periphery of the kinesphere without thought to the level, orientation, gradation, or shape to each effort. Usually, these efforts are used to cover transitions, travel, or under-orchestration. They can be more, and should be more fully orchestrated.
- Consider how EMPHASIS, PRIORITY, PRIMACY and FOCUS are used to manipulate the audience's attention.
  - Emphasis through isolation (geographic distance).
  - Emphasis through stylistic differentiation.
  - Emphasis through differences in speed (quick to slow).
  - Emphasis through differences in orientation (facing).
  - Emphasis through differences in gradation of effort (appearing difficult/easy).
  - Emphasis through differences in weight (heavy to light).
  - Emphasis through differences in textural change (filled form to line, curve to straight, and outline to filled form...).
- Does your composition allow the students the opportunity to display the skills required of the program? A single high-achieving soloist will generate little credit on the judges' sheets. The degree to which all students display gradations in dynamic efforts through layered moments can impact both visual sub-captions. Consider exposing single effort/high achievement moments between layered triad events to develop clarity, excellence, and uniformity of training. Glorification of the "busy" or thickly-composed show is a trend today. Let's start rewarding clarity and artistry in writing, and involving larger groups to excellence, not "writing to hide."
- Compositional tools are typically utilized ineffectively as young staffs orchestrate to a weak soundtrack. Dynamic efforts viewed through the student's performance are not reflective of the audio. A soundtrack that has little or no textural change, dynamic range, or instrumental variety can put your program at risk through limited opportunities to relate visual orchestration to the soundtrack. Weight, space, time, flow, shape, and all levels of the triad (equipment, movement, and staging) should relate to the theme/soundtrack/concept in some way...or the designer is just writing in a vacuum. Composition, orchestration, and depth are relational to the audio.
- Appropriate segmentation usually isolates the guard (flags/rifles/sabers) in a presentational manner. However, consider the logic in path, speed, and orientation into vertical events that provide greater opportunities for *artistic* vocabulary, not just *logical* vocabulary, which is related to the soundtrack. Isolation provides emphasis; geographical segmentation provides textural change; consider adding depth and

dimensionality through level, layer, orientation, and nuance upon arrival and throughout the event. Gradations in shape, line, and texture should all lead to a logical end point of each event. Overlapping segmental events can also create depth if the audio can be constructed in a way to make it possible.

- Within the structure of each show is a chosen style. All styles have an equal opportunity for success, if applied with uniformity and conviction. Do not disregard styles with which you are unfamiliar or disparaging.