Twenty Suggestions for Success at Solo & Ensemble Festival

1. Memorize your music well before the week of Festival. Know all the dynamics and what your foreign language piece means.

2. Get a good night sleep each night of the week of festival and especially the night before. Remember that when you don’t get enough sleep the first thing to go is your voice, and the second is your sense of humor!

3. Eat a healthy breakfast before festival. Don’t come to Festival with an empty stomach!

4. Dress up to show respect for your art. As a member of an ensemble discuss what you will wear with all other members. Create an attractive, professional, uniform appearance.

5. Arrive at least 45 minutes before your performance time so that you can check the location of both your warm up room and your performance room ahead of time.

6. Use the restroom before you go to the warm up room. Get a drink of water between warm up and performance if you need it.

7. When you enter the room where you will perform, walk to the judge, greet him or her, and introduce yourself. Give the scores (with the measures numbered and pages marked) to them. Do not make any excuses, like “I have a cold” or “I’ve been sick all week.” Do your best!

8. If you find yourself getting nervous, take three low, slow, deep breaths. This will slow down your heart rate and your oxygen use. You will feel calmer. Remember to think about the work you are about to do, not how you feel about the quality of your work.

9. Before you begin your performance, introduce yourself and your songs (complete with composers) to the audience (if there is one) and to the judge (again).

10. Do your best to communicate the meaning of each piece of music and give an artistic performance. Remember that you are an artist! Sing from your soul! Be the Song!

11. After each song, show good manners by bowing in thanks for the audience’s applause. Smile!

12. If you make a mistake, do not show it on your face or in your body. Go on. A baseball player is considered a great hitter if their batting average is .333 You are going to sing a much higher percentage of the notes and rhythms correctly!

13. Sing to your audience and your judge. Don’t look at your accompanist while you sing.
14. When you are finished with both songs, the judge will work with you for a few minutes. Listen carefully to the suggestions they make. Remember as much as you can! This is the reason we go.

15. When your clinic is over with the judge, thank him or her and shake their hand. Then be sure to get your music back from the judge before you leave.

16. Thank your accompanist!

17. Even though the reason we go to S&E Festival is to learn, you will most certainly be interested in receiving the judge’s comments and final rating. The only people who can go in the office and get the rating are the directors. Please wait about an hour before asking for your rating so that all the paperwork can be processed. Then you may purchase your medal, if you wish to do so. The price was $3.00 in 2008. You will also get a certificate. Both medals and certificates are blue for a “I” rating and red for a “II” rating.

18. If your rating is not what you thought it would be, do your best to accept it with grace. This is not always easy. Remember that your rating is one person’s opinion on one day. A different judge might have given you something completely different. Remember that the main reason we go is to learn and improve!

19. Invite your parents to come to hear you sing. They love you and have paid for all those lessons!

20. Support all your fellow singers from our school by going to their performances and giving them moral support. Clap, do not shout, whistle, or cheer at the end of their performances.

**Do Your Best! We Are Proud of You!**

Ideas from Ken Westerman, choir director and Ann Arbor Pioneer HS