

Nevada County Concert Band Policy Manual

This manual has the goal of assisting the members of the band in understanding the band's day-to-day operation. It has been approved by the Band Executive Committee (EC) to address some of the issues that occur as the result of normal interaction and intercourse between band members and between the Public and the band members.

Rehearsal Etiquette

The Nevada County Concert Band is an open band and accepts musicians with all different levels of musical capabilities. No auditions are necessary for membership. Some members play at a professional level while others are just beginning, and many rank somewhere between these levels. Learning to play an instrument is a life long task and usually through practicing one becomes more and more proficient at playing music. All musicians are encouraged to be cooperative, patient, and non-critical during the processes of learning the music at the rehearsals. The old adage that "if you can't say something good, don't say anything" applies.

It is important that the members understand that the music conductor has the role of assuring that the music produced by the band is of a high quality. During rehearsals, the conductor is the sole judge of "how the music sounds." Each musician is responsible for attempting to play their part to the best of their ability and to maintain a level of musicianship acceptable by the music conductor.

If mistakes are made during rehearsals, it is the role of the conductor to point out the mistakes and to seek resolutions to problems; this is not the duty of individual players. Sometimes musicians point out mistakes made by other band members. This is not good etiquette and should be avoided, as it can cause friction and arguments between players and may cause good musicians to withdraw from the band. If a fellow musician needs your critical comments he/she will ask for it. The band has no section leaders who are charged with monitoring sectional musicianship and it is not the job of anyone, other than the conductor, to point out mistakes. If you find yourself trying to assume the role of a music instructor, don't do it. The conductor is paid to do that job. On the other hand, if you have positive suggestions, talk to the conductor outside of rehearsal practice time.

Talking between players during rehearsals is discouraged. If there is a question about the music, it should be brought to the attention of the conductor. And, if the problem can wait until the break for resolution, it will be less disruptive to the rehearsal to work on the problem at that time. Non-music subjects should be discussed outside of rehearsal time.

Player Positions

Usually the sectional music parts that are played are determined by consensus of the section members. However, in the interest of helping everyone grow musically, the members are encouraged to switch parts during rehearsals, so that others get a chance to be challenged and given the opportunity to learn the solos, first, and second parts while playing with the group. It serves the band well to have more than one person learn the principle parts in case there is an emergency. Any questions in this area are settled by the conductor. The conductor has the final word on who plays the various parts and solos. In the absence of an agreement and/or in the event of extenuating circumstances, the Conductor will decide who plays the part. The physical location of a member's seat or time in the band doesn't determine who will play a particular part. The deciding factor in most cases should be who plays the part best. If necessary, the conductor can request the members audition for the part during the break and pick the person who plays the part the best.

Concert Dress

The band expects to present itself well and make a good impression when performing for the community. To meet this goal, band management determines the appropriate attire to be worn at each concert. This is usually formal attire for indoor concerts and the less formal uniform consisting of an approved polo shirt and black lower clothing for outdoor venues. However, at certain venues other clothing may be specified.

Each member is expected to wear the specified attire, unless there are special circumstances to preclude this. In that case, the member should explain the deviation from the normal to the Band Executive Committee.

Attendance

When a member joins the band, the member assumes the responsibility of trying to attend all rehearsals and concerts. If you cannot attend a planned activity of the band, you are to let the conductor know well ahead of the missed activity. The conductor must know who will attend the rehearsals and concerts in order to plan the rehearsal and/or concert and find a substitute for your chair if necessary. The band plans its concerts and rehearsals at the first of each year so that each member can review the calendar and plan their time with the band.

Concerts

Because the band doesn't have a staging crew, all members are encouraged to assist in staging and destaging at rehearsals and performances. If you are physically able and you see others working on staging the band, just pitch in and help. During concerts all instrument cases and un-needed items should be removed from the stage. Members are encouraged to be in place ready to perform at least a half hour before the downbeat. Some venues will require that you arrive early to find a parking place. These include the Pioneer Park concerts and the parades in Grass Valley and Nevada City. Some concerts require (in addition to your instrument) that you also bring your own chair and music stand to the concert, all the more reason to arrive early. During the outdoor summer concerts, you should make sure that you bring plenty of water to drink; the concerts are usually in excess of two to three hours long. Bottled water is permitted on stage and drinking water is encouraged.

Music

Members may take the music home for practice with the understanding that the music will be returned and in place for the next rehearsal or concert. The music must be in place for other musician's to use without exception; if for some reason you cannot make it to the next rehearsal or the concert, you are required to make arrangements for the music to be delivered to the library carts before the event begins.

Solos and Player Chair Positions

Paid Performers

Members of the band and substitute musicians will not be paid for their performances with the band except in the case of an emergency. Arrangements may be made to pay outstanding guest professional soloists with approval of the Band Executive Committee.