

Music Assessment Scores in a Competitive Environment *The Technique of Profiling*

John Bell, Ed.D.

Modified and expanded for NABBA use from external sources

What is meant by the term “profiling” and why is understanding and using this concept important for NABBA judges? Profiling is an essential tool for the judge as it numerically describes not only the box where the judge’s impression/analysis/comparison places the band for their overall score, but also describes the *relative relationship* between the band and another band’s performance *in their final score*.

The Details

In the NABBA Judging Paradigm, numbers have meaning. We know from the document “Value of a Point,” that bands who’s final score places them 1-3 points apart are essentially equal in achievement with very minor “felt” differences. On another day Band B could score higher than Band A. A spread of 4-6 points signifies that there is **one or two** minor but identifiable difference between Band A and Band B, Bands C and Band D and so on. Profiling is the process of the judge **numerically** describing the difference between bands in each sub-caption and the overall final score. **This concept is not to be used in subcaptions.** Over time and through education in the system (“Value of a Point”), bands will understand their relative technical and artistic relationships to one another. It is the judge’s responsibility to make sure that each sub-caption number is reflective of their impression relative to the **achievement** of other bands using the process of:

Impression - Analysis - Comparison

There are no separate content/performance (What/How) scores on our sheets as there are no content/demand/challenges “sub-captions.” **As such Artistic and Technical challenges are inherent and must be recognized.** Thus, the importance of the judge *verbally identifying* the challenges being presented to the performers in technique and artistry in *real time* during performance and then *verbally describing* the achievement level of the challenges. Judge accountability is established through this process; the band knows exactly what is being assessed and what the judge’s perception is of their level of achievement on specific technical and musical challenges. This holds the judge accountable, and also lets the band know that the judge is evaluating what they purport to be evaluating. Having written comments only does not provide this level of accountability. The task of the judge is to translate their verbal commentary to a numeric description of the band’s performance.

Example:

	Band A	Band B	Band C	Band D
Technique	94	92	89	95
Artistry	96	92	93	95
Total	189	184	182	190

Each of these scores describes a band's performance. Band A's artistry was perceived to be at a higher level than their technical achievement but both subsections are in the middle of Box 5....an exemplary performance. Band B's achievement was deemed to be the same in both artistry and technique: the upper end of the 1st 1/3rd of Box 5....also a fine performance. Bands C's scores are interesting and a bit of a mixed bag. Their achievement in technique was judged lowest of the four bands (high box 4) but their artistry achievement placed them in the low middle of Box 5....quite an honor. These scores tell Band C that they need to improve the technical aspects of their performance, but their attention to artistry was outstanding. Band D's scores placed them in a winning position. The judge determined that their artistry was not quite as high (very minor differences...the judge might say, "I was emotionally moved slightly less than Band A.") as Band A but that their technical score was highest of any competing band. Band D placed 1st. Profiling gives the judge the tools to numerically describe with accuracy an individual band's performance and the relationship of that band to each competing band.

Technique and Artistry Interrelationship

Technique and Artistry *do not exist in isolation*. The performance clarity of a band's technical realization will impact the judge's artistic impression of the band.

Neighborhoods: Number Management and Consistency of Scoring

Placing bands who perform "essentially the same" in close proximity to one another in scoring is defined as being in a "neighborhood" with one another. For NABBA use, a neighborhood is approximately a third of a box (see the score sheet). This means sub-caption ranking within a neighborhood truly compares the bands and is the basis for guiding the thought process for profiling. Bands achieving at the same level will be in the same 3rd of the box.

For example, in Box 5, an 11- point box (90-100), neighborhoods then would be 90-93.5 94-97.5 and 98-100. Bands with similar achievement will be scored in the same neighborhood or 3rd of the scoring range. In rare cases there may be more bands than numbers available in a neighborhood's range. **Judges are required to have no ties in either sub-caption or bottom line (final) overall numbers.** As such, judges must apply the techniques of number management to control the spread of numbers between bands. Fortunately, with the use of Competition Suite, the judge may refine their number all the way until the end of the event so that they "Get it right."

The bands will perform in a random draw for performance slots. As such, there is no seeding. **The first band in any event MAY BE THE CHAMPIONSHIP BAND.** The judge must leave themselves open to this possibility.

A Perfect Score

A perfect score of 100 in each sub-caption is reserved for the finest performance that the adjudicator has ever heard or imagined hearing. This performance sets new standards.

There is no checklist of technical or artistic challenges. The NABBA Judging Scale is absolute, meaning that there is no sliding scale for adult sections, but **sections are not evaluated against one another.** (“I can’t award this band - in 3rd section - a 92 because a band in the 1st section will also score a 92.”) The importance of scoring is that it is consistent *within the section being judged*. It is completely possible for a 3rd section band to receive a score in Box 5. Also, it is possible for a 2nd section band to score higher than a 1st section band. Separate expectations are used for the Youth Section.