

Drum Corps International Rules Proposal Form

This form is to be completed thoroughly and succinctly. All critical information should be included to maximize the understanding of the rule and its consequences by all involved in the rule adoption process. This form should stand on its own as a summary of your proposal. Incomplete forms will be returned. You may attach supporting materials as you wish.

TITLE OF PROPOSED CHANGE: AMPLIFICATION --- WE HAVE WAITED SO LONG

DESCRIPTION: – Beginning with the summer of 2004, the instruments known as “front percussion”, or “the pit”, will be able to be amplified with the use of microphones, speakers, mixer boards and all other necessary electronic equipment. The amplification of the human voice would also be allowed.

A marching member of the corps must do the mixing of the different inputs within the confines of the current field and. Coaching is acceptable.

Battery Percussion, and wind instruments may not be amplified. Intentional amplification of battery or wind instruments will be awarded a 5-point penalty at the discretion of the content coordinator. If none is available, the chief judge may grant the penalty.

EDUCATIONAL IMPACT : Keyboard players can use the instruments as intended – as we have discussed on many occasions. Latin and specialty instruments can be played appropriately and – they can be heard. How excellent will that be !!!!!

CREATIVE IMPACT: There is a school of thought that says true genius arrives when we confine the creator, forcing rules and limitations upon the product. Only in this way, say some, can we see who indeed is truly a master.

Although a fine philosophy, one might point to the world of drum corps and say, “alas, I can see we have very few geniuses devoting their skills to the world of marching music”.

I say this as a quasi-creator, who has been a part of a few marching music presentations. I have tried to tell stories without words, I have worked to balance acoustic sounds that are not meant to be balanced, and yes I have lived a life without the inclusion of percussion accessories. I have pretended to hear the Latin Percussion on the front sideline, I have watched in admiration as keyboard players perfect the art of overhead slams, I have prayed in vain for the sound of a saxophone in a grand jazz ballad, and I have wished to be able to direct the audience to the intention of a magnificent idea.

What am I hoping to achieve with this change?

I would like to make it possible within the activity, for some new developments. Here listed are a few, granted my thoughts alone. Indeed giving credit to the minds of the drum corps designers, albeit not geniuses ☺ , there is much, much more that is possible.

I would like to someday see and/or hear:

- Keyboard players who attack the instrument at all times with the grace and sophistication anticipated my instrument and mallet designers.
- The sound of a triangle, wind chimes, or woodblock, at times other than those where the winds are forced to play at pppppp.
- A show about America, where the words and quotes of great men and women are included within the production. Combined with the great sounds of brass and percussion, the overriding effect is magnificent.
- I would like to hear a show about water, and be able to hear the crash of the waves interspersed with music.
- I would love to hear the tremendous contribution available from a conga drum.
- Perhaps someday we might enjoy the sound of steel drums, and all ethnic percussion, instruments that today are lost in the volume of the acoustical performance, and the big open arena.
- and on and on and on. Feel free to add – many creators within the activity are looking for the opportunity to do more than I can ever describe or envision.

FISCAL IMPACT: The expenditures a corps will make for amplification and electronic percussion will vary. One should plan \$5000 -- \$10,000 to get into the game, and as the comfort level increases, add on equipment would be a possibility.

The cost is related to the acquisition of capital items and should be considered as an expense over 3-5 years based on depreciation schedules. Does this make the initial outlay any easier? Well, that depends on whether one was to use cash or finance the price tag.

Either way, there is a cost, but it is not extreme. The Cadets for example, spend, \$35,000 every three to four years to replace uniforms (In the old days, every 10-15 years)..

Remember now, the use of these technologies is not mandatory. Good is good and bad is bad. All one has to do is witness a few band shows to see this truth in action.

There is also the clear opportunity to share the cost with area bands. Joint purchasing, rental, bartering, etc ... It is all possible; far more possible than some of the expenditures we make today--- like filling 4 buses full of fuel.

AUDIENCE IMPACT: When looking at this question, we have to determine the audience of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Yesterday --- The Classic Audience of 1975 that continues to dominate some of today's conversation will not like this. These people want drum corps the way they remember it and I am very appreciative of this thought process. I too like drum corps as it was and is, but I am also aware that something needs to change.

This addition would change that product. The problem in catering to these people --- they are a diminishing group in terms of numbers. Personally, I love them, I want to make them leap from their seats, but for the sake of tomorrow, and we cannot use this class of people only as the opinion makers for our performing groups.

RAMD will not care for this idea.
Some Alumni will not care for this idea.
Some fans will threaten their support and curse any action.

We need to move on in the face of vocal disagreement. It is our responsibility to create a tomorrow for the kids who want to be a part of this activity. We need to do what we believe to be right, we need to hold to the values of creativity that made drum corps what it is today. Equal shares of tradition and innovation, this is the key.

Today --- When we go to Texas we see the possibility. The 11,000 people in the stands are predominantly students. They watch MTV, they listen to Rock and Rap, they do not attend the opera, they read Seventeen, and they look at drum corps, when we are at our best, as “Rock Stars for Bands”. We give credence to what THEY DO. We are indeed, a personification of what is possible.

They love the excellence of drum corps. These kids love to see the THROW DOWN; they want us to go fast and play loud, and to let them have FUN.
None of this will change. The introverted pondering production will be the same, and the jovial, fun; fast paced, crowd-pleasing extravaganza will be that again ---- just more so.

In my opinion, we need to recognize that kids are in the stands. They grow up plugged in. We can show them it is not a bad thing. Not a bad thing at all.

Tomorrow – Our audience is declining. We have the facts.

This in mind, a reasonable evaluation would be that the young people are not coming into the stands to replace those who depart for reasons of their doing, and simply because they are called from this world.

There are 20,000 marching bands; there are 2 million young people in marching bands; DCI needs to go after these young people as our primary audience.
There is no question. Marching music is not going to be a mainstream activity indeed we are moving more towards being a relic of a bygone age.

As we reposition ourselves we need to be COOL. The more we can show that MUSIC IS COOL, the better are our chances of being around, the better is the opportunity to affect the ages, the greater is the possibility for a revitalization of what we all hold as good within the current activity --- excellence and excitement (sometimes)

SHOW PROMOTER IMPACT: Electric will need to be provided at the front sideline, something that is done at most all band shows these days.

LOGISTICS IMPACT: Nothing a band does not do – yeah ya have to pack the

JUDGING IMPACT NONE

And in the end

I would like to think that over time, those with the power to bring DCI and the participating corps to greater heights, will consider that the inclusion of instruments, electronics, and the amplification of such is but a step in our evolution.

Many corps are the best, the absolute best in the world of marching music. As such, we have the opportunity to affect tens and thousands of young people per year. We are the models of greatness.

As I see it, that model should not be afraid of trying to do new things. Instead, as the leaders we should be “reaching for the sky”. We should show all that the trait of a true winner includes learning to adapt to the world, not being afraid of change, and indeed, making decisions within the context of change that are good for the individual.

The following paradox is worth examining:

What I am asking is that we all be allowed, some day, to do whatever we think is best for our groups. If the purpose of the activity is youth development, and the intention of the product is excellence and entertainment, all I am asking for, is the chance for all to do this in whatever form or fashion they find acceptable.

The other side of this argument is that we need to be “all-acoustic”. We cannot use this, and we cannot use this, and indeed, we must all be the same, live with the same restrictions, and grow only in prescribed ways.

Which position is the more radical?

Which the most confining?

Which celebrates the greatness of people, instructors, judges and adults, and which looks to control us from our own bad ideas.

For many years the proposals I have presented have asked those with power to allow for a greater degree of freedom. It has been a tough road to say the least. We are buried in our traditions and movement comes ever so slowly. In the end, time and time again, we move on because the values of what we offer are timeless. The instrument is not the defining feature of the activity; it is but a tool.

These proposals will not return DCI to the glory days, if such a time ever existed.

But, together with a new look at marketing, a commitment to growth and service to all youth, efficient operations, and more and better leaders and teaching staff indeed we can make a significant contribution to the world.

Please take a look at allowing those who would like an opportunity to try a few things, the rights and freedom that seem reasonable. All this is ... is amplification and the use of electronic instruments. Simple, easy, and very possible.

Submitted by:___ George Hopkins_____

Representing:_____The Cadets_____

Corps Director Signature:
George Hopkins

Judge Caption Head Signature:

At least ONE signature required