

Utilizing Information from Critique

By Shilo Stroman

Your first critique of the season can be confusing and possibly full of information that seems overwhelming. You might start questioning and freaking out:

“How will we make ALL of these changes?”

“Why did they hate my design?”

“Why don’t the judges don’t *get it*?”

Don’t make GIANT changes after the first show. Maybe it wasn’t a great run for the ensemble? Maybe your costumes and floor didn’t arrive, and the visual judges weren’t able to fully evaluate your show? Remain calm and prioritize adjustments based on which ones will make this largest impact for the next show/remainder of the season.

1. Did you read and understand the adjudication sheets? If not, this can clear up what the judges were saying in their commentary and critique. Obviously, the performance quality at the beginning of the season isn’t going to be strong. HOWEVER, if judges are saying things about the difficulty level of the design, think about making some changes to help the performers achieve excellence by the end of the season. You might really love the snare break you wrote but, it’s not achievable this season. Make a change early to continue to develop excellence.
2. If it takes more than two sentences to explain your design concept, it’s too challenging for a judge to understand it in 5 minutes on a first read. Make design changes early so the performers have time to achieve excellence. Bring in someone who doesn’t have much experience with this activity and see if they *get it*. If not, changes are needed to make it easier to understand.
3. Judges don’t hate it. They’re using the criteria on the sheets to evaluate it. Make sure you’re utilizing the adjudication sheets and critique to drive your season.

Pacing of Changes

Design changes are first and foremost. However, don’t put too many in at once and overwhelm your performers. Maybe one large scale change per rehearsal. I suggest addressing “the worst element” first. This is the part of your show several judges commented on, isn’t working (the judges don’t understand it) and/or isn’t going to be performed well by the end of the season.

Once you’ve made a change, make sure the performers feel comfortable with it well before the next competition. I don’t suggest rehearsing the entire show every rehearsal. This is a waste of time. Focus on the *issues* you learned from critique and commentary and then work your way out.

Be efficient in how to you make changes. Don't make a snare change during full ensemble. Make that change during a sectional and then apply it during ensemble so the rest of the ensemble also feels comfortable with it Don't make a visual change during full ensemble. This is a time waster for the front ensemble. Make it during visual rehearsal with just the battery or the section who has the change. TIME is precious and you're already running out of it!

Remain calm

Prioritize adjustments

Be efficient

Don't overwhelm the performers

Make the performers comfortable with the new part/visual element