

“Express Yourself” with General Effect

By Christine Clayton

Last week we learned a little bit about some of the terminology that General Effect judges use. No wonder it sometimes sounds like a foreign language when we listen to their tapes!

Usually half of what the G.E. judges are saying on their tapes is meant for your instructors. The other half of what they are saying has to do with you, the performer. WGI General Effect judge Michael Stone explains it this way:

The performers make up half of the GE caption and since there are two GE judges, the performers essentially carry 20% of their color guard's score in General Effect alone

No pressure, but he's saying that almost a fourth of your score comes from how well each of you understand and perform your show. He has some tips on how to maximize this in the General Effect Caption:

DON'T

- Mouth the counts
- Look around at others
- Look at the ground

DO

- Know your show and perform with confidence
- Know who you are in the show...are you a clown? Are you happy? Are you angry?
- Know how to communicate with the audience through your performance (make them laugh, cry, feel something!)
- Achieve all your responsibilities at a high level (catch those weapons!)
- Be expressive through the whole show.

Dianne Spoto wrote a great article on musical expression for this month's [InTune Monthly](#), and her words fit perfectly with what we think of as successful performer effect:

So what does it mean to 'express' anyway? The dictionary definition goes like this: 'to make thoughts or feelings known to others.' Based on that, we know we can express ourselves in many ways...we can cry, laugh, argue...But we can also express emotion through the medium of the arts. We can express fears and sorrow through the imagery of painting, or express joy and excitement by 'cutting a rug' with friends on the dance floor...the beauty of expressing emotion...is that we have the ability to share and connect with others on an emotional level in a very generous way."

If you aren't sure what you're supposed to be expressing every second of your show, be sure to ask your instructor. Have fun, spin well and express yourself!