

Visual & Effect-Visual Captions Breakout

2026 Emphasis Plan Expansion





2026 VISUAL SUMMIT REPORT

bit.ly/4qBmHuz

The 2026 emphasis plan **does not** introduce new evaluative criteria.

AS ADJUDICATORS, WE'RE BEING ASKED TO...

- Recognize what makes **indoor percussion unique**
- Be **intentional** about where attention is placed and how we verbalize our assessments
- Maintain **caption integrity**
- Evaluate moments and performer contributions **proportionally**

Both the Visual and Effect-Visual sheets already support this when applied with discipline.



THREE-POINT *EMPHASIS PLAN* FOR 2026

1. Embrace the Uniqueness of Indoor Percussion
2. Strive for 50/50 Commentary Balance
3. Elevate the Evaluation of Primary Moments

DISCUSSION

Looking at these three focus areas, which one feels like the most natural extension of your current style, and which one will require the most conscious effort to address in your commentary?

EMBRACING WHAT MAKES WGI INDOOR PERCUSSION UNIQUE

Emphasis Point #1



Goal: Evaluate the unique demands and artistic opportunities of the indoor percussion activity.

Emphasis: *Judges will be encouraged to philosophically explore: 1) What makes this activity unique compared to drum corps or marching band outlets? 2) Are the elements that make the indoor activity "special"—including limitations such as the manipulation of voices and bodies on the floor, and inherent limitations born out of navigating equipment and set pieces—being fully recognized and valued during evaluation? 3) While many aspects can contribute to a dynamic visual performance, are the efforts and responsibilities of the percussionists proportionally considered during the decision-making process?*

We discussed what makes indoor percussion **unique**
and **special** last night in our whole group session

Let's now filter that through our specific captions.



UNIQUENESS AS A TOUCHSTONE

- Intimacy/ proximity/ venue
- The percussionists are the stars / centers of attention
- Diversity of styles/ approaches/ formats
- Physicality involved in being a visual performer while wearing and playing an instrument
- Communication/expression opportunities
- Multimedia evolution
- Limitations involved in being the soundtrack creators *and* visual performers

INTENTIONALLY VALUE...

Visual

- Proximity and intimacy of the indoor space
- Achievement while navigating equipment, props, etc.
- Clarity under restriction/responsibilities
- Physical responsibility layered with musical responsibility

Effect-Visual

- Proximity and intimacy of the indoor space
- Performer-driven communication
- Physical virtuosity as a generator of effect
- Effect achieved because of constraint, not in spite of it

DISCUSSION

How is evaluating indoor percussion different from winter guard? From drum corps? From marching band?

How is the visual caption different from *ensemble visual* or *field visual*? How is the effect-visual caption different from *general effect*?

DISCUSSION

How do we manage the empowerment/cynicism of “be careful what you wish for” when judges are tasked with/challenged to maximize the value of the proximity to performers?

ACHIEVING A 50/50 BALANCE IN VISUAL COMMENTARY (COMPOSITION VS. PERFORMANCE QUALITY)

Emphasis Point #2

Goal: Ensure a balanced split in feedback and focus between the composition (the "what") and the performance quality (the "how") in the Visual commentary.

Emphasis: *The objective for the Visual caption is to achieve a 50/50 balance in the commentary between the Composition and Performance Quality subcaptions, providing robust, deep, and equitable feedback across both sides of the sheet. This will help ensure that the full breadth and depth of the performers' skills are consistently evaluated and recognized at all points throughout the season.*

50/50 COMMENTARY BALANCE

- Composition → assessing the quality of the written work
- Performance → assessing the quality of the performers' skill and application

In this system, judges must intentionally balance commentary between both the what and the how.

*An imbalance is a **commentary choice**, not a sheet limitation.*

DISCUSSION

Why is it traditionally easier to spend 60+% of a recording talking about the composition? What specific vocabulary from the performance side can we bring front of mind to ensure the performers show up in equal measure in our commentary this season? What intentional steps can we take?

*Note: (This is a function of **verbalization** more than anything)*

ELEVATING THE EVALUATION OF PRIMARY MOMENTS

Emphasis Point #3

Goal: Implement a proportional prioritization for real-time evaluation, ensuring key artistic and technical moments receive the highest weight and emphasis in commentary.

Emphasis: *Adjudicators in both Effect-Visual and Visual captions are reminded to weigh moments and transitions proportionally. The primary evaluative focus should be on the 'moments' themselves, dedicating the commentary priority to the design, impact, and achievement of those peaks. Commentary on transitional mechanics ('getting into' and 'getting out of') should take a secondary priority to the event itself.*

RESPOND TO THE **MOMENTS**

Peak events deserve **peak evaluative focus and commentary time**. Primary moments are where:

- Responsibility is most layered
- Intent is most concentrated
- Achievement and effect are most observable
- Significant design and rehearsal time has been spent

RESPONDING IN CONTEXT

- Focus on assessing and responding to the moments themselves, making sure those key events don't end up absent from our commentary.
- Yes, transitions still matter—but they **serve the moment**, not replace it. They are a means to an end.
- The "Interrupt Rule": It is appropriate to stop a transition comment to react to a primary event that is now taking place and then circle back to finish your thought afterward.

DISCUSSION

How do we stop ourselves from potentially talking through or missing big vertical visual moments? How do we make sure they show up as part of our verbalized assessment?

DISCUSSION

How do we best balance the commentary weight vis-a-vis moments and transitions, and scoring weight vis-a-vis moments and transitions?