

# Oklahoma Music

## *Style Guide for Writers*

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### **Formatting:**

- MS Word using 12-point type, double-spaced.
- Do not spend a lot of time formatting your article because it often gets moved around to fit the magazine.
- All articles and information for the magazine will be submitted using Formstack.

### **Length:**

- Officers and Chairs: Limit your division announcements to about 1000 words. Shorter is usually better.
- Articles: Articles should not exceed 2000 words.
- Magazine style employs shorter and more frequent paragraphs than is the norm for academic writing.

### **Writing Suggestions:**

- Avoid compound sentences. Instead, separate the thought into two separate sentences.
- Avoid passive voice (Ex: The minutes were approved by the committee).
- If you begin a sentence with a prepositional phrase, use a comma after the phrase.
- Spell out numbers from one to nine; use numerals for numbers 10 and greater.
- Always place commas and periods inside closing quotation marks; place semicolons and colons outside closing quotation marks.
- When a conjunction (and, or) joins the last two elements in a series, use a comma before the conjunction.
- Place titles of individual songs within quotation marks (Ex: "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star").
- Italicize titles of complete works (Ex: *Messiah*).
- Keep your "thank you" section short. If you have several people to thank, consider sending them a personal letter to keep your article short and sweet.
- Try to avoid "I am excited about..."
- Check names carefully to avoid misspelling in the magazine.

### **Oklahoma Music House Style:**

- The full name of a person only appears at the beginning of the article. After the initial use, the LAST name only will appear (Ex: "Sherrie Port will present the first clinic of the day." Later, "Port is an accomplished musician.")
- Guests to state or division events may be identified by ONE use of Dr. at the beginning of the article. Otherwise, it is dropped. If you need to include the degree for the meaning of the article, use First Name Last Name, PhD or DMA (Ex: Jim Hansford, PhD). Do not use periods in the degree abbreviations.
- House Style is loosely based on:
  - The University of Chicago *Manual of Style*
  - Fowler's *Modern English Usage*
  - *Writing about Music* – Richard Wingell, Prentice-Hall, 1990
  - *The Desktop Style Guide* – James Felici, Bantam Books, 1992

*Write your article and let it sit for two or three days. Read it aloud and then revise. The best approach to keep your article sounding like you, instead of the Editor, is for you to write, wait, edit, wait, edit again, and then submit it.*