

Emceeing: How to introduce a lot of people quickly...

Sometimes, as an MC, you are called upon to introduce a lot of people, most of whom simply must be acknowledged or their name must be mentioned. They may be sitting on the stage behind you, scattered in the audience (best if they sit at or near the front), or both.

The **dilemma** is the time involved. (The order of introduction will usually have been decided and you may have been given a list with what the program *jefe* wants said. Just be sure they are seated in that order. Verify their name before the program begins as they sit down. Maybe shake their hand. Make it as inconspicuous as possible.)

Here's a **technique** that I like best in that situation. Imagine you have a list with 10-15 names on it. You might say something like this:

"I hear that you folks are hungry and that if I talk too long a committee of brutes has already been named to toss me into the wings.

"But here's **my problem**. You can see behind me (turn and spread your arm across the stage) a row of dignitaries every one of whom merits a hail-be-hardy introduction of at least 15 minutes—or longer. But even giving each person a long, deserved clap and shouts of acclamation are going to take too long.

"So let me introduce our honored dignitaries one by one and after their name give them one hearty clap—then at the end we will rise in salutation for all.

"Ladies and gentlemen, (turn and move toward the first person, audience left to right), Mr. _____, (then a short

sentence of why he/she is on the stage.” The audience gives one robust clap, and you introduce each of those on the stage and/or in the audience as they stand.

After the last person has been introduced, “Let’s give a giant applause for them all!” You might signal all of the dignitaries to stand again as the applause continues.

Let the audience settle. Say nothing until it is quiet. (That’s the fastest way to shoo the noise away. They are curious about what comes next. Then launch into an opener. A question might work well, or a short and very funny joke..

The only other thing that must be done right. **You must pronounce every name correctly.** Assume nothing. Have a person help you with each name. Then as you meet each of the people just ask, is your name pronounced _____? And what title do you prefer: Mr., Mrs., Ms., Colonel, etc.

That’s it. Start the program right and the rest will fall into place. Or those brutes *will* be heading for you en masse!

Best wishes,

Gordon Burgett