

Charter School Solo and Ensemble Competition

Guidelines

Charter School Solo and Ensemble Competition, desires to have the highest quality music competition possible for all 5th -12th grade Michigan Charter School students. Such a competition is intended to demonstrate a student's instrumental and vocal music skills, while encouraging a student to reach their highest musical potential.

1. **All vocal and instrumental competition arrangements are to be notated in printed music form.**
2. **No rap music will be allowed**
3. **No offensive or inappropriate lyrics will be accepted in performed repertoire**
4. **In Vocal Music categories, contestants are not permitted to use the printed musical score. Narration and/or dramatic dialogue are not allowed.**

APPEARANCE

Boys: Dress pants and shirts should be worn for all music performances with the following exceptions:

1. School uniforms
2. A tuxedo with either a vest or cummerbund without a jacket

Girls: Dresses, skirts or dress pants and dress shirts should be worn for all music performances with the following exceptions:

1. School uniforms
2. Formal attire

When selecting a musical piece, please consider the following:

ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Melody—A good melody has a definite high place near its conclusion so that there is a sense of climax and resolution.

Harmony—Harmony should support the melody and play a subservient role.

Rhythm—The rhythm of a song has much to do with the overall integrity of the piece. A subtle rhythm or sense of pulsation with a balance of regular accent patterns and occasional syncopation for variety and interest is acceptable.

A musical composition should have a definite **beginning**, build to a **climax point**, and communicate a definite sense of **conclusion**.

GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

IMPORTANT!!!! All copies of music, tapes, judging forms, and photos must be CLEARLY LABELED with the contestant's name, school name, telephone number, complete school address, and category.

1. Two copies (can be photocopied) of the arrangement, **as performed**, must be given to the judges before a performance. Music must be performed exactly as it appears on the score. For example, if chords are changed, music should be rewritten to reflect the changes. **Submitted copies must include the musical score, numbered measures, and the lyrics.** The judges must receive copies of the corrected/changed scores. Copies must be CLEARLY LABELED with the contestant's name, school name, customer number, telephone number, complete school address, and the category.

2. Contestants may sing a cappella; be accompanied by an adult or student **playing a piano**; or use an accompaniment tape/CD (**piano only**). Record only one song per cassette/CD. Tapes/CDs should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with the contestant's name, school name, customer number, telephone number, complete school address, and the category. . Other sound tracks are not permissible. Note: Contestants are to make sure the recording is of the best possible sound quality. Poise and presentation are part of the judging criteria; thus contestants are not to provide their own accompaniment.
3. All vocal is to be memorized (exception – Large Vocal Ensembles).
4. There should be a pre-selected spokesperson for each group who will introduce the group, the school represented, and the title of the song to be performed. (This is not counted against performance time.)
5. Personal amplification equipment for competition is not allowed.
6. Musical competition time limit is 5 minutes. If competition piece exceeds the 5-minute time limit, the contestant will receive a **.5-point deduction** for any portion of thirty (30) second increments. (For example, a piece timed at 5:12 would receive a half-point deduction from the total score. A piece at 5:42 would receive a deduction of a full point from the total score.)

Checklist for Music:

1. Copies of music: **Three (3) copies** must be brought to the competition. **Submitted copies must include the musical score and the lyrics.** Each copy is to be in a clear plastic folder with the contestant's name, school name, customer number, telephone number, complete school address, and the category **CLEARLY VISIBLE** on the **FRONT** of each copy.
2. Judge's Forms: Submit three (2) copies, properly filled out. (These forms are available on the competition website.)
3. Cassette player or CD player (if applicable): If using a cassette or CD for accompaniment, each contestant must provide his or her own playback device.
4. **When selecting music for vocal music competition, careful attention should be given to level of difficulty. Songs with too much unison or lack of distinct, individual parts do not usually place well. All members (duet, trio, quartet, etc.) or sections (ensemble) should demonstrate an ability to "carry" their individual parts with proper pitch, tone, and blend.**

VOCAL

Solo (1 contestant) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are two different entries available in the solo category: male or female.

Duet (2 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the duet category: male, female, or mixed.

Trio (3 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the trio category: male, female, or mixed.

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Quartet (4 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the quartet category: male, female, or mixed.

Small Ensemble (5-15 contestants*) Time limit: 5 minutes

There may be only one school entry under the designation "Small Ensemble." Your ensemble may be male, female, or mixed, but it will be judged with all the other Small Ensembles. It may have an adult

directing. If a student plays accompaniment, he is not included in the 15 total allowable contestants. (*The adult director is not considered a contestant.)

Large Ensemble (16 + contestants*) Time limit: 5 minutes

There may be only one school entry under the designation "Large Ensemble." Your ensemble may be male, female, or mixed, but it will be judged with all other Large Ensembles. It may have an adult directing. (*The adult director is not considered a contestant.)

VOCAL MUSIC JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation

Appearance and Stage Deportment POSSIBLE POINTS

- A. Approach—confident, yet with grace and humility (1-3)
- B. Posture—upright look, not slumped (1-3)
- C. Eye contact—scanned the audience, not stared (1-3)
- D. Poise—in full control (1-3)
- E. Clothing—color coordinated, neat, sharp, beautiful (1-3)
- F. Departure—confident (1-3)

Interpretation

- A. Mood—enthusiastic, peaceful (1-3)
- B. Intensity—not too weak or too strong, enough power, etc. (1-3)
- C. Style—presentation matched the printed intention (1-4)
- D. Tempo—flowing, not too fast or too slow (1-5)
- E. Phrasing—feeling of motion or rest (1-4)
- F. Climax—handled well (1-5)
- G. Dynamics—volumes changed correctly (1-5)
- H. Word Emphasis—each word received right emphasis (1-3)

Musicianship

- A. Memory (1-5)
- B. Projection—each part of the music could be heard (1-5)
- C. Proper diction—correctly pronounced, articulated, enunciated (1-5)
- D. Tone quality—full, rich sound (1-5)
- E. Correct rhythm—performed like the printed page (1-5)
- F. Proper breathing—breathed at the right places, the right way (1-5)
- G. Intonation (correct pitch for solos or blends for groups) (1-5)
- H. Balance of voices and/or accompaniment—accompaniment added to the beauty, not overrode (1-5)

Appropriateness of Selection

- A. Degree of difficulty (1-5)

Proper Documentation Submitted (1-5)

TOTAL POINTS (100)

INSTRUMENTAL

Piano Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Woodwind Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Any woodwind instrument, such as flute, saxophone, clarinet, etc.

String Solo (Bowed)—Time limit: 5 minutes

Violin, viola, cello, string bass, etc..

String Solo (Plucked, hammered, strummed, etc.)—Time limit: 5 minutes

Harp, classical guitar, banjo, mandolin, etc.

Brass Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Miscellaneous Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Includes instruments such as accordion, marimba, xylophone, recorder, handbells, bagpipe, etc. Drums and amplified instruments are not permitted. **Percussion is only permitted in Large Instrumental Ensemble.** Accompaniment is limited to piano.

Piano Duet—Time limit: 5 minutes

Two people playing the same piano or two pianos. Pianos will be provided by the Convention.

Instrumental Duet Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of **any** two instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not be counted as one of the two instruments.

Instrumental Trio Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of any **three** instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not count as one of the three instruments.

Instrumental Quartet Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of any four instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not count as one of the four instruments.

Small Instrumental Ensemble Competition (5-10 contestants) —Time limit: 5 minutes

Five to ten (5-10) contestants with any variety of instruments. The time limit for the entire setup and performance will be twenty (20) minutes. There may be an adult directing. Piano accompaniment is permitted and may or may not count as one of the instruments.

Large Instrumental Ensemble Competition (11-40 contestants) —Time limit: 5 minutes

Eleven to forty (11-40) contestants with any variety of instruments. The time limit for the entire setup and performance will be twenty (20) minutes. There may be an adult directing. Piano accompaniment is permitted and may or may not count as one of the instruments.

GENERAL RULES

1. One piano will be provided.

2. All other instruments are to be provided by the school.
3. No electrical instruments or amplification may be used.

KEYBOARD JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation POSSIBLE POINTS

Appearance and deportment (1-5)

Difficulty (1-10)

Memory (1-15)

Musical features

A. Melody—clearly heard (1-10)

B. Phrasing (1-10)

C. Rhythm (1-10)

D. Pedaling (1-10)

E. Tempo (1-10)

F. Dynamics and performance indications (1-10)

G. Smoothness of execution (1-5)

Proper Documentation Submitted (1-5)

TOTAL POINTS (100)

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation POSSIBLE POINTS

Tone

A. Beauty/clarity (1-4)

B. Color (1-4)

C. Strength, control, and embouchure (1-4)

D. Intonation (1-4)

Technique and Musicianship

A. Meter (1-3)

B. Melody (1-3)

C. Fingering and hand positions (1-3)

D. Accents (1-3)

E. Precision (1-3)

F. Slurs (1-3)

G. Bowing (strings), tonguing (wind instruments) (1-3)

H. Attacks (1-3)

I. Cutoffs (1-3)

J. Accuracy (1-3)

K. Memory (1-15)

Interpretation

A. Tempo (1-5)

B. Style (1-5)

C. Phrasing (1-5)

D. Dynamics (1-5)

Presentation

A. Deportment (1-3)

B. Posture (1-3)

C. Balance and integration of accompaniment (1-4)

Selection

A. Degree of difficulty (1-4)

Proper Documentation Submitted (1-5)

TOTAL POINTS (100)

HINTS FROM THE MUSIC JUDGES

Most of the music judges' comments deal with intonation (the ability to sing and play in tune) and rhythmic accuracy. The printed music is to be performed exactly as it is written. Often, student performers have lost many points because they performed a piece according to the way they have heard it in the past instead of the way the music indicates.

Both vocalists and instrumentalists need to be aware of the fact that good intonation is often made easier by obtaining a qualified instructor who can teach the basics of breathing, posture, and other items that are the foundation of good musical performance.

Please be aware that the accompaniment is a vitally important part of a musical entry. If the accompanist does not have the ability to easily perform the accompaniment, it will undoubtedly cause the score to be lowered. Recognizing the fact that many published arrangements deliberately simplify piano accompaniments so more pianists can easily perform the music, the judges will allow improvisation in the piano accompaniment; however, this liberty does not extend to the actual contestant. Do not choose music that is overly difficult in an effort to impress the judges. It is impossible to hide the fact that you are performing music that is beyond your ability. Instead of raising your score by selecting impressive selections, your score will be lowered because you cannot perform the music well. It is better to choose simpler music that you can perform well.