

## **WHAT IS THE NYSSMA SOLO FESTIVAL?**

All across New York State, the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA) sponsors an annual Solo Festival for music students in grades 4 through 11. This Festival is an enrichment activity designed for highly motivated music students, and is meant to provide young musicians with an opportunity to be assessed on a brass, woodwind, percussion, or stringed instrument, piano and voice.

These professional adjudicators are not critics. They are specially trained music educators who aspire to provide feedback that is based on the individual student's performance in an honest and forthright manner, and can result in the child's improved musicianship.

## **WHO SHOULD PARTICIPATE IN NYSSMA SOLO FESTIVAL?**

The NYSSMA Solo Festival is designed for serious music students. There is a great deal of preparation that must be accomplished in advance of the adjudication date, and success is a direct outcome of how much time a student studies and practices. The more a student practices, the more successful the evaluation process will be.

In most cases, student musicians should prepare for NYSSMA with a private music teacher who can work one-on-one with him/her on their solo selection. Because many public school music students do not attend the NYSSMA Solo Festival, it is not possible for public school teachers to provide all the help any one student will require.

## **WHO SHOULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN NYSSMA SOLO FESTIVAL?**

Participation in the NYSSMA Solo Festival is not for every student. Some students enjoy playing an instrument or singing at school, but do not enjoy practicing at home or do not have the time to devote to music study beyond the school day. This music student will be frustrated by the NYSSMA Solo Festival experience. S/He may not receive a high score and will be discouraged about his/her ability to perform. Yet many young musicians can grow into competent musicians who simply enjoy performing without having to be polished. These are the students who should not participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival.

## **WHAT SUPPORT CAN WE EXPECT FROM MY PUBLIC SCHOOL MUSIC TEACHER?**

- The school music teacher will frequently announce in music classes and over the school's announcement system when the NYSSMA Solo Festival is happening (usually sometime in February through April), and will provide forms to students who request them. In addition, an announcement along with registration forms is available on the District's website.
- The school music teacher will recommend highly motivated music students to audition.
- The school music teacher will recommend a NYSSMA solo piece to students who do not study privately

- The school music teacher will announce a schedule of before and after school help sessions where students can study with a small group on like instruments and selections. These are not private lessons, and are provided on the teacher's own time; therefore the meeting times cannot be negotiated.

## **HOW CAN PARENTS SUPPORT THEIR YOUNG MUSICIANS IN THE SOLO FESTIVAL?**

Participation requires a commitment of personal and financial resources:

- Parents must arrange and pay for accompanists for vocal performances
- Parents must procure and supply original sheet music as directed
- All required forms and fees must be paid by posted deadlines. No late applications or fees are accepted. Once a check and application form are received, no fees can be returned.
- Students must attend at scheduled time(s). We cannot guarantee special scheduling requests.
- The decision to participate in the NYSSMA Solo Festival is an important one that must be made with an understanding of the commitment required. Be sure to include your child and his/her teacher in the decision about whether s/he has a strong interest and is ready to do the work to prepare.

A sample of the NYSSMA Evaluation Form:

Solo Evaluation

Adjudicator's Comments

Tone 0-20

- Quality
- Control
- Breath support
- Projection
- Vibrato (where appropriate)
- Embouchure
- Posture

Intonation 0-10

- Tuning
- Tonality

Technique 0-20

- Tonguing
- Facility
- Flexibility

Accuracy 0-15

- Articulation
- Accuracy of notes
- Accuracy of rhythms
- Steadiness of rhythms
- Pulse

Interpretation 0-20

- Dynamics
- Style
- Tempo
- Phrasing
- Expression
- Artistry

Basic Proficiency Evaluation

3 Scales 0-5

Sight Reading 0-10

- Accuracy of notes
- Accuracy of rhythm
- Accuracy of Articulation
- Accuracy of Dynamics