

ASTA Certificate Advancement Program

A Non-Competitive Examination System

ASTACAP Online open November 1–30, 2020

The ASTA Certificate Advancement Program (ASTACAP) is a comprehensive, non-competitive, series of exams for violin, viola, cello, bass and harp students that covers scales, sight-reading, etudes and solos; with 11 levels, Foundation through 10. The non-competitive philosophy, skill-based goals, and flexible curriculum and repertoire are the center of the ASTACAP Program. Students can participate in an exam to be awarded a grade or for comments only. Entrance may be at any level and skipping levels forwards or backwards is allowed. Levels may be repeated. Students are judged on technical and musical preparedness by an ASTA examiner of musical and pedagogical stature. A certificate of achievement is awarded for each level successfully completed.

How do you and your students benefit from ASTACAP?

- Progressive, flexible curriculum of scales, etudes, and repertoire from Foundation – level 10
- Individualized selection of study materials
- Use in any teaching tradition
- Non-competitive performance experience
- Examination by highly experienced, respected instructional specialists
- Detailed, supportive feedback
- Exam results provided directly to teachers

ASTACAP Online is open twice a year—in June and November. It will be open again for performance submissions from November 1–30, 2020.

A Perfect Opportunity During Covid Year

Because ASTACAP is designed to be online, it does not need to be adapted during covid year! Just have your students make their videos and upload them to receive comments. Although most solo material includes piano accompaniment, ASTACAP does not require piano accompaniment in the videos until advanced intermediate levels (Violin Level 6 / Suzuki Book 6) and then only for “18th C. and later sonatas.” Last spring, MNSOTA asked if ASTACAP piano requirement, “was specifically for sonatas? or for all 18th C and later works with accompaniment such as concertos with piano reduction, character pieces, Theme and Variations, Sonatinas?” The answer from Colleen Tan, chair of the ASTACAP Committee was, “I believe this was originally intended to provide equity and ability for assessment for as many able students as possible. I agree that these are intrinsic to the piece, but as they only comprise a segment of the entire assessment, the ASTACAP creators chose to strongly encourage accompaniment/collaborative piano and not penalize the student without access to an accompanist.” So for almost all

common student repertoire, ASTACAP encourages but does not require piano accompaniment. Perfect when social distancing makes rehearsing with your accompanist difficult!

How to apply for the online ASTA Certificate Advancement Program:



Students will record 3 separate videos. One for scales, one for etudes, and one for the repertoire selection (if their ASTACAP level requires more than one piece, they will need to record one video for each piece). Videos must be recorded back-to-back, as if they

were being recorded in a live setting. No edits may be made to the videos. The program platform supports the following video formats: mpeg, mpg, mp4, ogg, mov, avi, wmv, m4v, vob. ASTACAP Online fees range from \$50–\$95 depending on the level and can be found on the ASTACAP page of astastrings.org. The link to apply is <https://app.getacceptd.com/asta>

When recording your student’s performance, please treat it like an audition tape. Be mindful of any background noise or distracting items in the room. If your student is performing from memory, your video should clearly show a room with no music stand or the music stand should be clearly facing away from the student with no music on it.

Teachers, as the ASTA member, should submit all student performances. Completed adjudication forms and ASTACAP certificates for successful completion of an ASTACAP level will be mailed to teachers for distribution to students.

What is ASTACAP?

Introduced in 1998 by the MD/DC ASTA chapter, ASTACAP became a national ASTA program in 2004. Having established robust pedagogy and student learning benefits over 15 years of live examinations, Online Examinations were introduced to be sure the examination process (adjudication) would be available to all ASTA members and their students.

Parents love this event because they see their student is progressing along a planned curriculum. Students love it because they get comments and an opportunity to play their pieces one more time. Teachers love the event because students usually practice more carefully than they might have otherwise, and they pay more attention to etudes and scales than ever before.

To get more information, including the ASTACAP Handbook and a helpful flyer to introduce ASTACAP to your private studio or school, sign in at www.astastrings.org, and then choose -> Teaching Resources -> ASTACAP. Contact Faith Farr MNSOTA ASTACAP liaison with local questions faith@farrpublications.com