



Middle Level Orchestra Festival — Policy

“Pop tunes and Novelty pieces will not be considered appropriate literature.”

Novelty Piece Definition — prepared by the MNSOTA board fall 2014

A “novelty piece” is one that relies *primarily* on some *goofy, playful, unexpected, humorous* component. For instance, Leroy Anderson’s “Typewriter Song” and Richard Meyer’s “Rosin Eating Zombies from Outer Space” would count as novelty pieces. The typewriter dings and the vocal screams are the goofy, humorous components that put these pieces into the novelty category. P.D.Q. Bach’s compositions that use peculiar instruments or unexpected juxtaposition would count as novelty pieces.

Not all “crowd pleasers” are novelty pieces. For instance Anderson’s “Fiddle Faddle” is perhaps borderline, but has enough pedagogically beneficial finger twisters for the violins that it would count it as NOT novelty.

A piece could have unusual technical demands, and not be a novelty piece. Britten’s “Playful Pizzicato” is NOT novelty. Sean O’Loughlin’s “Firewalk” make similar use of pizzicato — NOT novelty.

A piece could have intentional dissonance, harsh accents, and special effects such as ponticello, tremolo and still not be a novelty piece. Shostakovich “Quartet #8” is NOT a novelty piece. Erik Morales “Ghost Carnival” uses special effects including pizzicato, tremolo, glissando, trills, flautando, ponticello and artificial harmonics in a programmatic piece — not a humorous/goofy piece — NOT novelty.

“Creatures” by Brian Balmages is borderline. Its use of dissonance and aleatoric accents is acceptable — not novelty. The use of actual footsteps at the end to represent the creatures retreating from the dawn approaches the line of “novelty piece.” However, since the footsteps are not a primary characteristic of the piece, the composition as a whole is acceptable — NOT novelty.