

# Middle Level Orchestra Festival

Online for Tier 1 only this year

(No Tier 2 / Orchestra Hall this year)

Details and specifics to be worked out soon!

The latest info will be on [MNSOTA.org](http://MNSOTA.org), your weekly email reminders, and the fall issue of *String Notes*

## Purpose

The Middle Level Orchestra Festival offers orchestras constructive criticism and comments to improve the group's musical performance, improve the students' understanding of musical concepts, increase the students' understanding of music literature, motivate the students in their continuing study of music, set standards of excellence in musical performance and help students understand the relationship of their musical experiences to other life experiences. This is not intended to be a public concert. It is intended to be a learning experience, whether students are performing for judges' comments, listening as audience members, or participating in the clinic session.

*Please read all the rules carefully.*

## General Information — Tier 1

There are usually three sites planned for Tier 1 in the Metro and Greater Minnesota areas. This year the event will be virtual—and we hope the benefit of no busses / no travel time will offset the difficult teaching conditions we are all facing.

At Tier 1 in normal times, directors can choose from three levels of participation: Comments Only; Comments + Rating, or Comments + Rating + Tier 2 consideration. Due to Covid, there will be no Tier 2 experience this year, and differences in recording equipment makes assessing a rating difficult on a recording. This year orchestras are invited to participate for Comments Only.

## Information and Eligibility

Details and specifics will be worked out soon. With the many different ways that schools will be running in the fall, we are going to be very fluid and flexible with the makeups of groups that participate.

As of press time for the MNSOTA Handbook in mid-August, we are planning something along the lines of groups sending in a recording (of either large or small groups, depending on your teaching situation), getting comments and feedback from judges, and having a virtual clinic with you and your group with a clinician.

*Fees* — TBA

*MNSOTA Membership* — The conductor of the orchestra must be a member of ASTA/MNSOTA. If your membership has expired, contact [www.astastrings.org](http://www.astastrings.org) to renew and send verification of

membership to MNSOTA Member Coordinator Cindy Johnson [MNSOTAmembership@gmail.com](mailto:MNSOTAmembership@gmail.com). Your membership status will be verified before your application can be processed.

*Grade Level Eligibility* —

- In order to participate for Comments Only or Comments + Rating, orchestras must have at least some members in grades 6-9.
- Adults may not perform with any group at Tier 1, but may provide piano accompaniment.
- String or full orchestras may apply. If your literature deviates from standard instrumentation, please explain on the application.

*Festival Standards Guideline* — Please refer to the Judging Criteria, the Ratings information and the Rating Form to aid in the preparation of your ensemble. Contact Becky Plachy, [beckyplachy@gmail.com](mailto:beckyplachy@gmail.com), if you have any questions.

## Performance Requirements

- Each orchestra will prepare a minimum of three pieces. Performance time should be no more than 20 minutes. Selections are to be of contrasting styles. There may be two movements from the same work.
- Pop tunes and novelty pieces will not be considered appropriate literature. If you have concerns about a selection, contact Becky Plachy, [beckyplachy@gmail.com](mailto:beckyplachy@gmail.com), for a Board decision. A list of pieces performed at the Tier 2 concert for the past three years is included to help you gauge the repertoire other directors are selecting. This is intended as a guide only and is *not* a required repertoire list for the Festival.
- When our event is in-person, each orchestra must supply **four (4)** original scores for each piece. (Two are for the judges, one is for the clinician, and one is for the conductor.) *All scores must have each measure numbered.* We haven't yet worked out how participants will provide a score for their online judge and clinician in 2020-2021

## Compliance with the Copyright Law

- **All participants in the MNSOTA Middle Level Festival are required to perform from legally acquired copies of the music.**

**Covid Considerations:** Middle Level Festival Tier 1 will be held virtually this year. We are optimistic that our full festival with in-person Tier 1 and Tier 2 events will take place next year. MNSOTA is committed to following national, state and local guidelines for health and safety during the Covid pandemic. Because changes to events may need to be made on short notice, the latest information will be available on our [MNSOTA.org](http://MNSOTA.org) website and included in our weekly email reminders to members.

## Judging Criteria

*Musical Expression* — The performance should be expressive with distinguishable phrasing, evident and appropriate dynamics, emotional quality compatible to the mood, and stylistically correct.

*Tone* — The performance should have focus, warmth, consistency throughout the dynamic range, and various articulations appropriate to the literature choice.

*Rhythm* — The rhythm of the performance should be accurate with suitable and controlled tempos and tempo changes. Steady pulse, accurate rhythms and nuance of beat quality should reflect the meter of each piece.

*Intonation* — The performance should be in tune. There should be understanding of half and whole step relationships in each piece as well as the key signatures and their scales. Accuracy to printed pitches including accidentals is essential.

*Bowing* — The performance should exhibit control of bowings and articulations: accurate and consistent bowings, correct direction and placement of selected strokes, and variety of articulations.

*Ensemble* — The performance should exhibit quality ensemble playing: correct balance, blend, awareness of role(s), uniform execution, and eye contact with other members of the group as well as the conductor.

*Other Factors* — The performance should exhibit appropriate concert etiquette including good poise, proper posture, suitable appearance, stage presence, and attitude. Suitability of literature and other factors will be left to the discretion of the judges.

## Questions

Please contact Becky Plachy, at [beckyplachy@gmail.com](mailto:beckyplachy@gmail.com) with any questions or suggestions.

### Event Cancellation/Refund Policy

Since events cannot be rescheduled, during normal times MNSOTA is committed to holding all events as planned and will cancel an event only in cases of a safety emergency (e.g. road conditions/weather), based on state advisories. During Covid times, an event may need to be cancelled at short notice based on health and safety guidelines. If an event is cancelled, participant fees paid to an outside organization such as GetAcptd can not be refunded. However, at the discretion of the board, a partial refund of participant fees paid to MNSOTA may be considered after expenses have been paid.

## Pieces Performed at Tier 2, 2017—2019

*Tier 2 was cancelled in 2020 because of Covid-19. This list of pieces performed at the Tier 2 concert for the prior three years is included to help directors gauge the repertoire other directors are selecting. This is intended to serve as a guide only and it is not a required repertoire list for the Festival.*

Ted Allen, *Fire in the Forge*  
Shirl Jae Atwell, *Appalachian Sunrise*  
J.S. Bach / arr Merle Isaac, *Brandenburg Concerto #5*  
Brian Balmages, *Woodsplitter, Spartacus, Medieval Wars, Forever Joyful!, To Tame the Raging Rapids, Velocity*  
James Barnes, *Yorkshire Ballad*  
Bartok / arr. Cummings, *Echos of Bartok*  
Lauren Bernofsky, *Wired*  
Jeffrey Bishop, *Declarations*  
Larry Clark, *Measured Tones*  
Susan H. Day, *Midnight Rain, Flight*  
Elliot Del Borgo, *Dance Scenario, Danse Infernale*  
Dvorak / arr. Monday, *New World Symphony #9 — Mvt IV*  
Dvorak / arr. Gruselle, *Themes from the New World Symphony*  
Eric Ewazen, *Four Royal Dances — I. The Lord*  
Ralph Ford, *Hyperdrive*  
Doris Gazda, *Appalachian Sunrise*  
Kathryn Griesinger, *Legends of Glory, Epic Adventure, Echelon*  
William Hofeldt, *The Gift*  
Annie MacLeod arr. Gruselle, *Over the Sea to Skye*  
Richard Meyer, *Viola Country*  
Deborah Baker Monday, *Dies Irae: Fantasia, Conquistador!*  
Kirt Mosier, *The Dance of Iscariot, Blue Rhythmico*  
Soon Hee Newbold, *American Landscape, Mythos*  
Yukiko Nishimura, *Autumn Waltz*  
Todd Parrish, *Sparta*  
Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov / arr. Dackow, *Dance of the Tumblers*  
David Shafer, *Bavarian Rhapsody*  
Jean Sibelius, *Andante Festivo*  
Alan Lee Silva, *The Code*  
Doug Spata, *Agincourt*  
Tellemann arr. McCarrick, *Concerto for String Orchestra*  
Tchaikovsky arr. Gruselle, *Marche Slav*  
Traditional/arr. Marshall & Phillips, *MacPherson's Lament*  
Traditional/arr. Palmer, *Down by the Salley Garden*  
Jay Ungar/ arr. Custer, *Ashokan Farewell*  
Douglas Wager, *A Quiet Music*