

ASTA Certificate Program for Strings

A Non-Competitive Examination System

The ASTA Certificate Program for Strings (CPS) provides non-competitive examinations for students of all levels. Students are judged on technical and musical preparedness at specific levels (Foundation Level–Level 10). A certificate of achievement is awarded for each level successfully completed. 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.

The ASTA CPS Handbook available online at <http://www.astaweb.com/cps.htm> includes: repertoire lists for every instrument and level; a parallel comprehensive list of etudes and scale books; complete scales for Levels 1 – 5; examination rules; instructions on how to organize examinations in step-by-step detail; sample letters, forms, and instruction sheets. CPS is a uniquely flexible exam system — teachers may use *any* etudes or solo repertoire (and *any* edition) for the examination of similar diffi-

culty to the works suggested for the level.

The Certificate Program for Strings was developed by the ASTA Maryland/DC chapter in 1998. The ASTA National Executive Board voted to adopt the CPS as an ASTA-sponsored program in 2004. MNSOTA is trying it out for the first time this year.

Benefits to CPS teachers and students include: uniformity of expectations between states; continual feedback through an examiner's comments on student progress; documentation of achievements that can be used when applying to youth orchestras, summer music camps and college admission; professionally designed and printed certificates for students; member access to CPS handbook online; access to a marketing brochure about the CPS program to use for recruitment; a listing in *AST* (summer issue) of all participating teachers; use of a specially designed CPS logo for teachers to use on materials and cards; listing of participating teachers and students on the

website.

MNSOTA encourages all teachers to consider this program for your school or studio. The CPS program would broaden a school solo contest or a studio recital to include scales and etudes in addition to solos, and would provide students with the additional incentive of achieving a particular level in the exam.

A small pilot MNSOTA CPS project will take place in the Twin Cities next spring under the direction of Annette Caruthers to use the materials and try out ASTA's record-keeping system. If the pilot project goes as we hope, we anticipate that CPS will be a statewide event in 2008-09.

During 2007-08, please access the CPS Handbook at <http://www.astaweb.com/cps.htm>. If you think you will use this program for your students in 2008-09, please contact Annette Caruthers, bratschel@earthlink.net, by March 30. We will be planning next spring what to put into the *Handbook* next August!