

Middle Level Orchestra Festival

Grades 6–9 February 2010

Hopkins — Woodbury — Monticello — Cloquet

Purpose

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

It is the hope of MNSOTA that every director will use the Middle Level Orchestra Festival in the way that best meets the needs of their students. Some might prefer to perform for comments only. Some might want to receive a rating, but choose not to share the rating with their students. Some might not tell students about Tier 2. Depending on how you present it, your students can experience a competitive atmosphere or a non-competitive festival.

Please read all the rules carefully; there are several important changes this year, including: Monticello High School is the only site designated for orchestras with 9th grade students to perform for Tier 2 consideration; there is an additional fee for groups who advance to Tier 2; there will be a ticket charge for the Tier 2 Concert.

General Information — Tier 1

There are four sites for Tier 1: **February 16** in **Hopkins** at Hopkins Center for the Arts; **February 19** in **Woodbury** at East Ridge High School; **February 24** in **Monticello** at Monticello High School; **February 26** in **Cloquet** at Cloquet High School. *New this year:*

- **Monticello High School is the only site designated for orchestras with 9th grade students to perform for Tier 2 consideration.**
- Orchestras that include 9th grade players can perform at any site if the orchestra is participating for Comments Only or Comments + Rating.

- Orchestras without 9th graders are welcome to apply to the Monticello site, but will participate only if there is still room in the schedule after all the 9th grade orchestras have been accommodated; we recommend you include a second choice of site on your form in case Monticello is full.

Each festival site includes a warm-up room, performance and clinic facilities, a formal performance with a student audience, a written and oral critique, a 25-minute clinic, and the opportunity to be considered for Tier 2. Distinguished clinicians and adjudicators offer positive remarks and constructive criticism. A list of performance standards follows for your guidance in preparation. Directors are highly encouraged to have their students hear other orchestras performing at the same site and use the topics on the judging form to help focus their listening. Each orchestra will receive an official MNSOTA certificate of participation.

At Tier 1, directors can choose from three levels of participation: Comments Only; Comments + Rating; Comments + Rating + Consideration for Tier 2. The grade requirements are slightly different for

Tier 2 consideration. Please read the Grade Level Eligibility rules carefully when you select your level of participation.

Tier 2 — March 22, 2010

All orchestras that qualify will be invited to participate in Tier 2. In order to qualify for Tier 2, orchestras must: apply for Tier 2 consideration; satisfy the grade requirements; and receive an overall Superior with Distinction rating from both judges at Tier 1. There is an additional fee of \$75 for groups that advance to Tier 2; ticket prices for the Tier 2 concert will be \$10/adult, \$5/student, with 4 complimentary tickets per participating school.

The orchestras selected for the Tier 2 honor will: spend March 22 at Orchestra Hall; work with members of the Minnesota Orchestra; perform selections from Tier 1 in a concert; receive an ensemble trophy; make memories that will inspire their musical growth for years to come; be able to purchase CDs through their director.

MNSOTA is looking forward to working again with Jim Bartsch, Director of Educational Outreach with the Minnesota Orchestra, in organizing the Tier 2 experience.

Festival Changes

- Four sites, instead of only three; Cloquet is a new out-state site
- Monticello High School is the only site designated for orchestras with 9th grade students to perform for Tier 2 consideration; this enhances the experience for all, making it likely that all will hear groups similar to their own. (Orchestras that include 9th grade players can perform at any site if the orchestra is participating for Comments Only or Comments + Rating.)
- Additional \$75 participation fee for groups who advance to Tier 2 because the Minnesota Orchestra has had to reduce its generous support of our event.
- Ticket charge of \$10 for adult and \$5 for students for the Tier 2 concert, with 4 complimentary tickets per participating school.
- Rating sheets will be held at the end of the day at each site and will be mailed to directors at the conclusion of *all* Tier 1 performances.
- Directors of groups who advance to Tier 2 will be contacted via e-mail or phone at the conclusion of *all* Tier 1 performances.

Information and Eligibility

Fees — The festival fee is \$125.00 for each performing group and should be included with your application. Please have the check made payable to MNSOTA. Mail both the registration form and the check to Festival Scheduler Susan Scott. Applications will not be processed unless accompanied by the registration fee. ***New this year: there will be an additional \$75.00 fee for all groups that advance to Tier 2. In addition, the Tier 2 Orchestra Hall performance will be a ticketed event : \$10/adult; \$5/student.***

Acceptance — Orchestras will be registered for the festival on a first come, first served basis, by date of postmark of complete application. *Incomplete applications will be ignored.* **THE POST-MARK DEADLINE for applications for all sites is December 4!** Some sites fill up, so you are encouraged to send the application form and payment prior to the deadline. You will be contacted when your application and registration fee have been received and assigned a time for warm-up, performance and a post-performance clinic. A complete information packet with directions, restaurant locations, schedule and other details will follow when the schedule is complete.

MNSOTA Membership — The conductor of the orchestra must be a member of MNSOTA. If your membership has expired, include your membership form from page 70 and dues payment with your application.

Grade Level Eligibility —

- In order to participate for Comments Only or Comments + Rating, orchestras must have at least some members in grades 6-9.
- To be considered for Tier 2, all of the students in the performing group should be in grades 6-9. Combinations of Grades 5 & 6 or Grades 9 & 10 should participate for Comments Only or Comments + Rating. (If your orchestra has special circumstances that you think might warrant an exception for Tier 2 consideration, contact MNSOTA President Sarah Chelgren sarah.chelgren@mac.com before November 1 so the MNSOTA board can consider your circumstances at their winter meeting.)
- To be considered for Tier 2, orchestras with 9th grade players must participate at the Monticello site. (Orchestras that include 9th grade players can perform at any site if the orchestra is participating for Comments Only or Comments + Ratings.)
- 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.
- At Tier 1, students may participate in only one ensemble being considered for Tier 2. They may participate in additional ensembles participating for Comments Only or Comments + Ratings
- To be considered for Tier 2, all performers must be registered student members of their ensemble.
- All students who perform at Tier 2 must have performed at Tier 1. (Exceptions will be made for students who were absent from Tier 1 due to illness.) Any other exceptions to your Tier 2 roster must be cleared with the Festival Coordinator, Susan Scott, susan.scott@isd623.org.

Schedule — The schedule for the day will be set on a 30-minute rotation. Listening to other orchestras perform is considered to be an important part of the day's activities; please allow time in your schedule to listen to at least two other ensembles. Please help your

students understand appropriate behavior in the festival setting. Students should not enter or exit at any time during a performance. Students should be respectful of the group performing. Please note that this event is meant to provide a meaningful experience for students in all aspects whether performing, clinicing or listening.

Food — Directors should make arrangements to take students to a nearby fast-food restaurant for lunch. A list of available restaurants will be included with your confirmation information.

Recording — A tape or CD recording of your performance may be available if the site has the appropriate equipment.

Festival Standards Guideline — Please refer to the Judging Criteria, the Ratings information and the sample Rating Form to aid in the preparation of your ensemble. Contact Susan Scott, susan.scott@isd623.org, 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 Susan Scott, susan.scott@isd623.org, for a board decision.
- 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. Duplicated scores will be accepted only if accompanied by written permission of the copyright owner. **Letters representing placed orders are not acceptable. In the event that scores do not arrive, ensembles will perform for Comments Only.** We recommend that you order scores in November to ensure delivery. Sharing scores with colleagues is helpful. If you are willing to loan scores to colleagues, contact Sarah Chelgren, sarah.chelgren@mac.com, to have information included in MNSOTA e-mail reminders.
- All four scores must have each measure numbered.
- Original parts must be used by all participants during the performance. In the event that photocopies are used, ensembles will perform for Comments Only.

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.

Ratings

5 Superior with Distinction — This rating represents an outstanding performance in all major categories for all selections performed. Any deficiencies in the performances are considered minimal. There shall be no significant weaknesses. The conductor and students shall have demonstrated outstanding musicianship. An extraordinary level of performance.

4 Superior — This rating reflects a quality performance as a result of sound fundamental training. The performance will be rated as superior in the majority of major categories for all selections performed. There shall be few significant weaknesses. The conductor and students shall have demonstrated superior musicianship.

3 Excellent — This rating describes a sound performance with proficiency in many aspects with a need for improvement in some categories. The conductor and students shall have demonstrated excellent musicianship.

2 Good — This rating indicates good preparation, but a performance that is uncertain and holds numerous errors.

1 Fair — This rating indicates a performance that is lacking in the fundamental aspects of performance, understanding or preparation.

Overall Ratings

The overall rating will be calculated as the sum of the ratings in each category: 32–35 = Superior with Distinction; 25–31 = Superior; 18–24 = Excellent; 11–17 = Good; 10 or less = Fair

To qualify for Tier 2, orchestras must receive an overall *Superior with Distinction* rating (32–35 points) from both judges. All qualified orchestras will participate in Tier 2.

Notification of Ratings

Rating sheets will be held at the end of the day at each site and will be mailed to directors at the conclusion of *all* Tier I performances. Directors of groups who advance to Tier 2 will be contacted via e-mail or phone at the conclusion of *all* Tier I performances. Since some directors choose a non-competitive experience for their students, *any* discussion of ratings at the event is inappropriate. We appreciate everyone respecting the confidentiality of the results until the official announcements. Judges, clinicians and site hosts are not in a position to discuss results at any time. Please contact Susan Scott, susan.scott@isd623.org, with any questions or suggestions.

Event Cancellation Policy

Since events cannot be rescheduled, MNSOTA is committed to holding all events as planned. MNSOTA will cancel an event only in cases of a safety emergency (e.g. road conditions/weather), based on state advisories. If an event is cancelled, at the discretion of the board, a partial refund to participants may be considered after expenses have been paid.

Middle Level Orchestra Festival

Grades 6–9

February 2010

Hopkins — Woodbury — Monticello — Cloquet



Application Form

Festival Fee \$125.00. Check payable to MNSOTA must accompany application.

Check your preferred date, and your level of participation. If you are available for more than one date, number your preferences. If your first choice site is full when your application is received, you will be assigned to your second (or third) choice.

February 16 — Hopkins
Hopkins Center for the Arts

February 24 — Monticello
Monticello High School

February 26 — Cloquet
Cloquet High School

February 19 — Woodbury
East Ridge High School

** New this year: to be considered for
Tier 2, orchestras with 9th grade players
must participate at the Monticello site.

Check your level of participation (see Grade Level Eligibility Rules). This orchestra will perform for:

Comments Only

Comments + Rating

Comments + Rating + Tier 2 consideration

☛ There is an additional \$75 fee if selected for Tier 2

Mail application form and entry fee to: Susan Scott, 2865 Valle Vista St., New Hope, MN 55427, 763-544-8246, susan.scott@isd623.org

Registration POSTMARK Deadline is *December 4* for all sites.

Performing Group (at least some students must be in grades 6–9) _____

Full Name of School _____

School Address _____ City _____ Zip _____

Director _____ MNSOTA Membership # _____

(If your MNSOTA membership has expired, include your membership application from page 70 and dues payment with this form.)

E-mail _____ School Phone _____ Home Phone _____

Check number _____ Amount \$ _____

A \$15 NSF fee will be charged for any returned check.

Principal's signature (*required*) _____

WORKS TO BE PERFORMED: Each orchestra should prepare a minimum of three pieces. Total performance time is limited to 20 minutes.

You must bring 4 original scores (no copies) of each piece to be performed. All scores must have each measure numbered.

All performers must use original parts (no copies) during the Festival. Ensembles without 4 scores or without original parts will play for comments only.

In January, the site coordinator will request via e-mail the titles of your works to be performed .

Complete the Seating Chart and Group Profile on the next page.

Complete application for Tier 1 includes check, application form and seating chart.

Incomplete applications will not be considered.

Group Profile information is *required* to be eligible for Tier 2 consideration, and will be used for the Tier 2 program if your orchestra is selected. Groups who apply for Tier 2 but do not submit a Group Profile will play at Tier 1 for Comments + Rating.

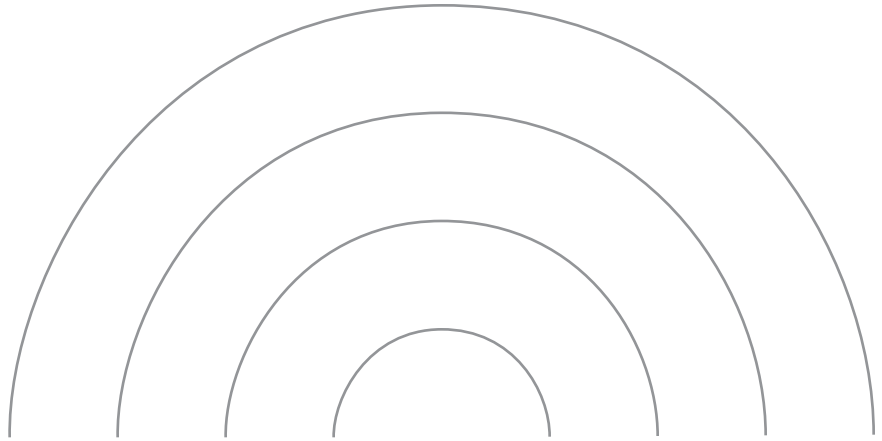
If a group needs to withdraw from the Festival, refund requests must be submitted to the board prior to the event and will be considered at the next board meeting.

Middle Level Orchestra Festival

Seating Chart — Required for Tier 1 and Tier 2

- Draw a detailed layout of the set-up of this orchestra. Use one X for each chair and a line — where each stand should be placed.
- Draw lines to show the separation between the sections.
- Indicate the location of the bass section.
- Write the number of chairs and stands needed in each row.

Do you need a piano? yes no
(Please indicate the piano placement.)



of chairs in each row _____

of stands in each row _____

Group Profile — Required for Tier 2 consideration

Information will be used for the program for Tier 2 if your orchestra is selected.

Groups who apply for Tier 2 but do not submit a Group Profile will play at Tier 1 for Comments + Rating.

Describe the *orchestra*:

Formal name (all students should be in grades 6–9) _____

Number of students _____ Grade levels* _____ Starting grade of string program _____

(*To be considered for Tier 2, orchestras with 9th grade players must participate at Monticello.)

What music instruction do these students receive during the school day? List small groups, sectionals, lessons, general music, etc.

How often does this orchestra regularly meet during and outside of the school day? _____

Director's name (please print the way you want it spelled in the program) _____

Noteworthy events for the ensemble or director (recent performances or awards) _____

Names of other orchestra teachers in your school orchestra program who have worked with these students _____

Describe the *school*:

Number of students _____ Grade levels _____ Name of building principal _____

Describe the *district*:

Number of string players in the district _____ Number of students in the district _____

Names of all string teachers in the district _____

Other information for the program (to be used space permitting):

Middle Level Orchestra Festival Rating Form



School _____ Orchestra _____

Performance Time _____ Director _____

Selections to be Performed _____

5 Superior with Distinction

Outstanding performance in *all* major categories for *all* selections. Any deficiencies are minimal. *No* significant weaknesses.

4 Superior

Sound fundamental training. Superior in the *majority* of major categories for *all* selections. *Few* significant weaknesses.

3 Excellent

A sound performance with proficiency in *many* aspects with a need for improvement in *some* categories.

2 Good

Good preparation, but a performance that is *uncertain* and holds *numerous* errors.

1 Fair

A performance that is *lacking in the fundamental aspects* of performance, understanding or preparation.

Musical Expression

style, phrasing, dynamics, emotion

Tone

quality, focus, warmth, consistency

Rhythm

tempo, meter, pulse, accuracy, nuance

Intonation

pitch, accuracy, mechanical skill

Bowing

articulation, uniformity, control

Ensemble

balance, blend, awareness

Other Factors

difficulty, poise, posture, appearance

Total Score

32-35 Superior with Distinction
25-31 Superior
18-24 Excellent
11-17 Good
10 or less Fair

Judge's Signature _____