

# ASTA

## Certificate Advancement Program

### A Non-Competitive Examination System

The ASTA Certificate Advancement Program (ASTACAP) is a comprehensive, non-competitive, series of exams for string students that covers scales, sight-reading, etudes and solos; with 11 levels, Foundation through 10, for which students are given a certificate on passing each level. This is a new offering from ASTA in the last three years. 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.

Teachers in any location can offer their own sites, judges, etc. This will streamline the process for each teacher involved, and will minimize transportation costs. Faith Farr [faith@farrpublications.com](mailto:faith@farrpublications.com) will act as a resource for those running individual sites.

Parents love this event!! They often need reassurance that their child's teacher actually knows what they are doing, and that 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. The Certificate event is excellent preparation for a recital; most students feel it really helps to have several performances of the same piece. The approval and encouragement from the judge means a lot to most of them. 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. Working on sight-reading often adds a new dimension to lessons.

To find information on how to set up and run your own Certificate Program, go to the ASTA website [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) and click on Member Resources, then Certificate Advancement Program. From that page you can find all the information you need, and can download the complete handbook which includes the syllabus, forms and organizing information. You will also see that questions can be answered by [libby@astaweb.com](mailto:libby@astaweb.com) or 703- 279-2113 extension 28.

Use the Application Form and Evaluation Form included here for your own use. Be sure the Evaluation Form has a blank back side for comments; there is not enough room for them on the front and if students are playing for "comments only" the judge will need that back side! The amounts on the Application are amounts that have been tested. In the pilot project, judges receive \$50.00 per hour for their time (The fee was set by the MNSOTA Board so it will be consistent, but can be changed for local conditions with Board approval) and \$100 was paid to the church that hosted the event. The fee includes the \$5.00 per student charged for certificates that need to be ordered from ASTA, and you may have minimal costs for snacks and coffee on the day of the exams.

MNSOTA recommends setting your application deadline 6 weeks before the exams, as you will need to send a check to MNSOTA and have the treasurer write a check to ASTA for certificates and checks for your site host and judge(s) and it takes time for each step. The State Enrollment Form on page 40 includes the order for certificates and needs to be signed by a Board member so the event has official approval and insurance. After your exams have finished, you will be asked to write up a brief report for the MNSOTA Board.

MNSOTA recommends having a monitor in the exam room, sitting at the back out of sight; ready to escort students in and out, help with questions, or get the coordinator if needed. Another person needs to be near the entrance of the building to guide arrivals to warm-up rooms, and someone needs to help with tuning for each student. You may find it convenient to use one accompanist for the students, but this is not absolutely necessary. Do remember you will have to pay accompanists, and/or charge your students for this — the Application Fee does not include an amount for the accompanist.

Questions? Contact Faith Farr: [faith@farrpublications.com](mailto:faith@farrpublications.com) 651-484-0522, or ASTA [libby@astaweb.com](mailto:libby@astaweb.com) or 703- 279-2113 extension 28.

## Instructions to Teachers

- Download the ASTACAP Booklet from [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) -> Member Resources -> ASTA Certificate Advancement Program to become familiar with the requirements for each level and the exam procedures.
- Check the [www.MNSOTA.org](http://www.MNSOTA.org) website to see if there is already an Exam Coordinator in your area. Contact that Exam Coordinator, or decide to set up your own site and be your own Exam Coordinator.
- Notice that there are 11 levels for violin, viola, cello and bass. At each level, the complete exam consists of scales, etudes, pieces, and sight-reading.
- Notice that the etudes and pieces for each level are suggestions only; you may substitute any repertoire of equivalent difficulty for your students.
- Students can take all or part of the exam at one time — perhaps the pieces at one time and the scales and etudes at another. Students can retake any part of the exam at any time (repeating all or part of a level). Students can progress forwards or backwards, or skip levels — according to what their teacher recommends as most appropriate.
- Students receive an official ASTA Certificate of Achievement when they successfully pass all elements of an exam level.

## Instructions to Exam Coordinators

- Download the ASTACAP Booklet from [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com) -> Member Resources -> ASTA Certificate Advancement Program to become familiar with the requirements for each level and the exam procedures.
- As soon as possible, set the date, time and place for your exam.
- At least 10 weeks before the exam, contact the MNSOTA website [info@MNSOTA.org](mailto:info@MNSOTA.org) so that the information about your site can be posted for other teachers to join your site.
- At least 10 weeks before the exam, contact MNSOTA treasurer Shane Schmeichel (612-201-7493, [Shanedion1@mac.com](mailto:Shanedion1@mac.com)) with a preliminary budget for your site. The fees for the

levels on the MNSOTA application form assume that the exams will follow the ASTACAP guidelines for length (6 min for Foundation, 8 min for Levels 1 and 2, etc.) and that judges will be paid \$50 per hour.

- Application deadline is 6 weeks before the exam. Make sure applications are complete (two pages).
- 5 weeks before the exam, send to MNSOTA Treasurer, Shane Schmeichel, 904 Emerson Ave N., Minneapolis MN 55411:
  - ❑ one check from each teacher participating in your site — the check should be made out to MNSOTA, for the total of all exam fees collected from that teacher; and
  - ❑ the State Enrollment Form from page 40 with the top part filled out
- (4 weeks before the exam, the MNSOTA Treasurer will send the State Enrollment Form to ASTA to register your site, and request certificates and sight reading.)
- One to two weeks before the exam, contact MNSOTA treasurer Shane Schmeichel (612-201-7493, Shanedion1@mac.com), to go over details for your site, and to request checks for judges and other expenses.
- Follow the ASTACAP guidelines for sending Teacher Packets and Examiner Packets before the exam.
- Follow the ASTACAP guidelines for scheduling and running the exam.
- Follow the ASTACAP guidelines for sending certificates and copies of the Evaluation Forms to the teachers after the exam. Usually, it is most convenient if teachers assisting at the exams take the evaluation forms and certificates for their students immediately after exams. Others will receive forms and certificates as soon as possible by mail or personal pickup.
- (Teachers will fill in the certificates with name and level for each student. Students playing for Comments Only receive their Evaluation Form, but do not get a certificate.)
- Within two weeks after your exam, submit a budget report and any receipts for reimbursement to MNSOTA Treasurer Shane Schmeichel, 904 Emerson Ave N., Minneapolis MN 55411.
- Within two weeks after your exams, write a brief report and submit it to MNSOTA *String Notes* editor Faith Farr, faith@farrpublications.com.

# ASTA Certificate Advancement Program Performance Examination Minnesota 2009-10



## Page One — Application Form

**Exam Coordinator fills in below and gives to teachers or students 10 weeks before exam:** Student # \_\_\_\_\_

Exam date & time: \_\_\_\_\_ Exam place: \_\_\_\_\_

Deadline postmark (6 weeks before exam): \_\_\_\_\_

Exam Coordinator's name \_\_\_\_\_

Exam Coordinator's address \_\_\_\_\_

### **Student fills in below and returns this Application Form and Evaluation Form with correct fee to Teacher before postmark deadline above:**

Students submit payment and two-page form to their Teacher. Teachers send to the Exam Coordinator: the group of forms and one check for all their students, made out to MNSOTA. Exam Coordinator must receive all fees and forms by postmark deadline above.

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

Check if level is:  complete exam  partial exam  first time at this level  retaking all/part of this level  
 Comments Only  Honors (See the on-line ASTACAP Handbook for an explanation of Honors)

Check fee. Make your check out to your teacher and include it with this application:

Levels Foundation-3 \$25  Levels 4-6 \$30  Levels 7-8 \$35  Levels 9-10 \$40

Student address \_\_\_\_\_

Student phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

Accompanist name \_\_\_\_\_ Accompanist phone \_\_\_\_\_

(Accompanist fee is not included in the exam fee above; students should make their own arrangements to pay their accompanist.)

Teacher name \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher address \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher phone \_\_\_\_\_ Email \_\_\_\_\_

### **Teacher fills in below:**

Times teacher can assist at exams \_\_\_\_\_

Teacher must be member of ASTA/MNSOTA. The signature below indicates that I understand the rules regulating this event and agree to abide by them.

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

Teacher's signature: \_\_\_\_\_ ASTA ID # \_\_\_\_\_

By 5 weeks before the examination, the Exam Coordinator collects all fees payable to MNSOTA, and mails one check from each teacher and the State Enrollment Form to: Shane Schmeichel, MNSOTA Treasurer, 904 Emerson Ave N., Minneapolis, MN 55411.



# ASTA Certificate Advancement Program Performance Examination Minnesota 2009-10

## Page Two — Evaluation Form

**Student fills in the top part and returns to their Teacher with their Application Form and fee.**

Student name \_\_\_\_\_ Instrument \_\_\_\_\_ Level \_\_\_\_\_

Check if level is:  complete exam  partial exam  
 Comments Only  Honors (See the on-line ASTACAP Handbook for an explanation of Honors)

Scales \_\_\_\_\_

Etude \_\_\_\_\_ Composer \_\_\_\_\_ Collection/Ed \_\_\_\_\_

1st Piece \_\_\_\_\_ Composer \_\_\_\_\_ Collection/Ed \_\_\_\_\_

2nd Piece \_\_\_\_\_ Composer \_\_\_\_\_

3rd Piece \_\_\_\_\_ Composer \_\_\_\_\_

**BELOW FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY:**

Grading Code: V= very good S= Satisfactory N=needs improvement. Use plus or minus signs.

Five Ns in either scales, etudes, or each solo piece indicates need to re-take that part of the program at a future date.

Circle below if applicable:

Student # \_\_\_\_\_ Comments Only                      Honors                      Overall Impression (V, S, N)

	SCALES	ETUDE	PIECE 1	PIECE 2	PIECE 3	SIGHT-READING
<b>STONE</b> (Clarity, Volume)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>INTONATION</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>POSTURE/STANCE</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>LEFT HAND</b> (Position, Articulation, Shifting, Vibrato)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>RIGHT HAND</b> (Bow hand, Contact point, Bow use)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>RHYTHM</b> (Steadiness, Precision)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>MUSICALITY</b> (Phrasing, Style, Vitality, Tempo, Dynamic contrast)	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>MEMORIZATION</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
<b>STAGE PRESENCE</b>	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

Comments and suggestions on the other side.

Examiner's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

# ASTA Certificate Advancement Program Minnesota 2009-10 State Enrollment Form



5 weeks before the exam, the Exam Coordinator fills out the top of this form and sends with check(s) for the total fees to:  
MNSOTA Treasurer Shane Schmeichel, 904 Emerson Ave N., Minneapolis, MN 55411.

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

For MNSOTA use: Checks enclosed made out to MNSOTA: Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_;  
Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Teacher \_\_\_\_\_ \$ \_\_\_\_\_; Total ASTACAP fees enclosed \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Exam Information (please print or type)

Date(s) and Time(s)	
Event Address	
City, State Zip Code	
Contact Name	
Contact Phone Number	
Contact Email Address	

### ASTACAP Coordinator Information

Certificates and Sight Reading Materials will be mailed to this address.

Coordinator must be a current ASTA/MNSOTA member.

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

Name	
Address	
City, State Zip Code	
Email Address	
Phone Number	

***ASTA should send \_\_\_\_\_ (number) certificates and sight-reading materials for  violin,  viola,  cello,  bass to the ASTACAP Coordinator above, to arrive at least one week before the exam date above***

### Participant Information and Payment

Total Number of Participants	
------------------------------	--

By 4 weeks before the exam, the MNSOTA Treasure will fill out below and send to ASTA, 4153 Chain Bridge Road, Fairfax, VA 22030

Total Amount Enclosed (\$5 per participant) (check made out to ASTA)	\$	
Check Number		
Credit Card Type	Credit Card #	Exp Date

### State Board Approval (Required)\*

Signature(s)
Date
*By signing this form, the state chapter agrees that the events will be covered by appropriate liability insurance.