

NYSSMA Solo Festival - June 9, 2016

FAQs

What is a NYSSMA festival?

A NYSSMA solo festival is a performance venue that provides students with an opportunity to be assessed by a NYSSMA trained adjudicator on solo music they have prepared with their private teacher. The purpose of this assessment is to provide the student with positive feedback and constructive criticism in an effort to help improve performance.

Who can participate in NYSSMA?

NYSSMA is available to students who are currently studying privately on an instrument or voice part, and are able to work with their private teacher to select and prepare a NYSSMA-graded solo.

What happens at a NYSSMA festival?

The soloist enters a specified room to perform for an individual adjudicator. In addition to the prepared literature, soloists performing for a grade will be asked to perform a specified number of major scales (see NYSSMA manual or speak to your private teacher) and a short (approximately 8 measures) sight-reading example.

How long does the adjudication take?

The entire process takes approximately ten (10) minutes for a level 1-4 adjudication and fifteen (15) minutes for a level 5-6 adjudication.

Can parents be present in the adjudication room during the performance?

Yes, parents are allowed in the adjudication room, but not during the sight-reading requirement part of the adjudication.

Can the adjudication be recorded?

No, NYSSMA does not allow any audio or video recording devices in the adjudication room.

How does a student prepare for an adjudication and who can help?

Advanced preparation is the key to a successful and rewarding experience. Preparing properly requires time and practice. Students should seek out their private music teacher for assistance.

What are the rewards/benefits of preparing a NYSSMA solo?

Preparing any piece of music has a variety of aesthetic rewards and technical benefits. Students who practice diligently and do well will experience a sense of satisfaction while becoming better overall musicians on his or her instrument. Adjudicators are trained to provide not only positive feedback, but also constructive criticism designed to help students become better musicians. Participants can also gain confidence not only musically, but also personally. This experience can help students to hone transferable skills and help them to excel academically.

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How are NYSSMA solos rated in difficulty?

The NYSSMA rating scale for all solos and ensembles starts at level 1 (easiest) up to level 6 (hardest). Most elementary-aged students will choose to play a level 1-5 solo, since they are not auditioning for an All-State ensemble.

How does the scoring system work for the assessment?

Performances are graded on a rubric with points given in major categories such as tone, intonation, technique, accuracy, interpretation, scales, and sight-reading. Level 1-4 music is rated on a scale out of 28 points, and Level 5-6 music is rated on a 100-point scale. Narrative comments are also written by the adjudicator to provide feedback, constructive criticism, and to explain any point deductions.

Does NYSSMA accommodate students with disabilities?

Yes, if a student has a disability that requires more time or has impaired vision and needs the sight-reading materials enlarged (or any other type of disability), your school music teacher can provide a "Student with Disabilities" form to be filled out and signed by the teacher, parent, and school principal. This form will be kept confidential and given to the adjudicator prior to the adjudication.

What is the financial commitment involved?

Each solo or ensemble time slot must be purchased by the student. The current fees are as follows:

Regular solo level 1-4	\$14.00
Regular solo level 5-6	\$21.00
Piano solo level 1-4	\$19.00
Piano solo level 5-6	\$26.00

What will the student receive after the adjudication is over?

Each participating student will receive the original adjudication form back, completed by the adjudicator. Medals for achievement are available for parent purchase.

What does it mean to go for "Comments Only?"

When a student, parent, or teacher requests a "Comments Only" rating, the performer will receive the same narrative comments from the adjudicator, without any numerical grades or score.

Is a piano accompanist required?

No. Pianos are available for accompanists in All-State rooms and vocal rooms only. Vocalists and All-State soloists may choose to provide a piano accompanist or recorded accompaniment. All-State soloists must provide accompaniment if the literature they are performing has an accompaniment part. When providing a recorded or computerized accompaniment, the student must also provide his/her own audio playback equipment.

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Can photocopies of music be used for the adjudication?

Absolutely not. Photocopied music is illegal. Students who arrive with photocopied music will be asked to leave the site.

Can music downloaded from a website be used for the adjudication?

Yes, providing the student also has a receipt from the website the music was purchased from.

Can students request a specific time for their adjudication?

Yes. While the registration form asks for time preferences, there is no guarantee a specific time request can be granted. Students should make the NYSSMA festival a priority by making themselves available for the duration of the festival until a time confirmation is received.

When should the student receive confirmation of the adjudication time?

Finalized schedules are confirmed and distributed to teachers approximately 7-10 school days before the festival.

All-State Information (*Level 6 solos only*):

What is All-State adjudication?

Students performing an All-State solo will be scored on a special All-State adjudication form, with the same criteria as a level 6 solo. The only difference is that the student is now competing against every other student in New York State on that particular instrument or voice part. Every student will be entered on a statewide proficiency list. This list will be used to select students for All-State performance ensemble honors.

When can a student elect to go “All-State?”

Students must be in 10th or 11th grade and have successfully performed an upper level solo. The school music teacher must complete an on line All-State application recommending the student to perform an All-State solo.

Further information:

<http://www.nyssma.org/parents-students/>