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AMIS International Honor Orchestras Audition Information & Instructions

String players in grades 6 through 8 are invited to audition for the Junior Honor Orchestra.

For the 2011-2012 school year, there will be two Junior Honor Orchestras, rather than one.

- Schools in Asia are invited to audition for the Asian Junior Honor Orchestra.
- Schools in Europe are invited to audition for the European Junior Honor Orchestra.
- Schools in Africa and the Middle East must choose which of the two orchestras they wish to audition for.

String players in grades 9 through 13 are invited to audition for the Senior Honor Orchestra.

Students who play both the violin and viola may only send in one audition.

Auditioning students should be fully enrolled members of their school orchestra if there is one and in good standing with the music department at their schools.

GUIDELINES FOR PREPARING THE AUDITION

Be sure to use the correct set of audition materials. There are four sets of materials which are used in rotation as follows:

Set A – for festivals held in spring 2012

Set B – for festivals held in spring 2013

Set C – for festivals held in spring 2014

Set D – for festivals held in spring 2011 and spring 2015

Most excerpts in the audition material are from standard repertoire, identified by name and composer.

Students are encouraged to listen to recordings of the works to aid audition preparation.

PREPARATION

- **ONE AUDITION:** Students may only submit 1 audition. Students who play both violin and viola may audition only for violin or only for viola, not for both.
- **SCALES:** If the scales are not up to a high standard, the audition will not be successful.
- **VIBRATO:** Do NOT use vibrato on scale 1: use vibrato on scale 2 and the excerpt.
- **BOWINGS & FINGERINGS:** All marked bowings and fingerings are required.
- **SPICCATO:** Selection 3 involves a “bouncing bow” off the string. Discuss this bowing with your teacher.
- **METRONOME:** All marked tempos are required. All scales must be recorded with the metronome *sounding throughout*. For the excerpt, the metronome must be recorded at least 1 bar before starting to play and must be turned off 2 bars after you have started playing.

RECORDING

- **SPEAKING:** The auditionees must announce their player number before scale 1 only. For example: “I am violin number 1.” Do not say your name or the name of your school on the recording.
- **ORDER:** Auditionees must record selections 1-4 in that order.
- **SEPARATE TRACKS:** Each selection must be recorded on a separate track.

BEFORE SENDING

- **LISTEN!** Listen to the *quality* of the finished recording for audio level and the balance with the metronome. Make sure that the selections are all recorded successfully. Make sure the selections are recorded in numerical order.
- **PREPARING THE DISC:** Label the CD with 1) your school’s number (on the AMIS website), 2) EJHO or AJHO or SHO and your instrument. For each orchestra (SHO, EJHO or AJHO) all auditions for the same instrument should be on one CD. For example all JHO cellos on one disc; all SHO cellos on another disc.

EVALUATION

- Each audition will be judged on: intonation, tone, bow control, rhythmic steadiness, rhythmic accuracy, vibrato (where appropriate), shifting, dynamics, articulation, and phrasing.

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING RECORDINGS

The Room

Choose a room far from street noise that is not too live. An echo camouflages articulation and nuance. Record auditions in a room with dry acoustics. Above all, do not add reverberation. Please ensure that there are no background noises from fans, air conditioners, computers, etc. that may detract from the sound.

Recording Equipment

Set the level during a trial recording. **DO NOT CHANGE THE VOLUME LEVEL DURING THE RECORDING.** If your recorder adjusts volume automatically while the student is playing, **DO NOT USE IT.** We need to judge dynamics played by the performer. All auditions are to be submitted on CD’s using audio format.

Microphone Placement

The performer and metronome should be approximately 3 feet (1 meter) away from the microphone. The microphone should be directed toward the performer. Experiment with a few different placements. This takes only a short time with each pupil. Listen and trust your ears. If the result is too soft, move closer to the microphone; if distorted, move away.

Metronome

Lower pitched metronomes are easier to record. The metronome tone should be the same throughout the audition. Please turn off the multi pitch function (bell, click) so that each click sounds the same. Listen to make sure that the metronome is clearly audible. Follow the instructions on the audition music concerning starting and stopping the metronome. Metronome markings must be followed.

Making the Recording

It takes two people to make a recording; one to run the equipment/metronome and one to play the audition.

Organization of the CD

For each orchestra (JHO or SHO) all auditions for each instrument should be on one CD. Please record each item for each student on a separate track: one track per scale, one track for the excerpt. Please do not speak your name or school on the recording.

SUBMITTING THE RECORDINGS

- **PLEASE LISTEN TO ALL RECORDINGS BEFORE SENDING THEM.** Then listen again on a different machine to make sure that it plays. Each year, auditions are rejected because there was no sound on the recording.
- Screen your auditions. If the standard of the audition is obviously not sufficient for an advanced orchestra, do not send the recording.
- Register your entries on the AMIS website where you found these instructions. Follow fully all instructions for the online registration. When you register your students online and create a track list for the audition CD for that instrument, print out a hard copy and include it with your audition CDs. **IT IS A REQUIREMENT THAT A HARD COPY OF THE ONLINE REGISTRATION TRACK LIST MUST BE SENT WITH YOUR AUDITIONS.**
- Be extremely careful about labeling the recordings. Follow AMIS guidelines found on your audition music. It is especially important to label CDs with your school's number found on the AMIS website. For example, if your school number is 99, the CDs would be labeled: JHO Violas 99 or SHO Basses 99.
- **PACK THE RECORDINGS CAREFULLY.** CD's in a compact package, surrounded by cardboard and then placed in a bubble wrap bag arrive in better shape than those spread out in a padded envelope.
- Auditions from outside the EU should be clearly marked: "Educational Material –NO COMMERCIAL VALUE" to avoid customs duties. (This usually means that you cannot insure the package because to insure it you must assign a value.) The individual school must cover the cost of postage and duties.
- **MAKE SURE THAT THE RECORDINGS ARRIVE ON TIME.** PLEASE allow extra mailing time so that the recordings arrive before the due date listed on the AMIS web site under "Latest Festival Information". For 2012 festivals, the due date is October 25, 2011.

Send submissions to:

Georgia Bassett, Executive Consultant
AMIS
Church farm House
North Lopham, Diss
Norfolk IP22 2LP, England

BE SURE TO KEEP A BACKUP COPY OF YOUR AUDITIONS. IF THE WORST HAPPENS TO WHAT YOU SEND, AND IT IS LOST IN THE POST OF THE CD IS BROKEN, WE CAN USUALLY FIND A WAY TO RECEIVE YOUR AUDITION ELECTRONICALLY AS A LAST RESORT.

Here is a brief description of what happens after you have recorded your audition.

LISTENING PROCESS

- The recordings are heard anonymously, one section at a time. Recordings from the various schools are heard randomly.
- At the end of each scale and excerpt the performance is rated by each judge. This grade is the average of grades that are awarded for tone quality, intonation, bow control, steadiness, shifting, vibrato, rhythm, phrasing and dynamics. Finally the grades for all scales and excerpts are added together to give the performer a numerical rating. The scores of all judges are added together and averaged.
- The committee strives to be accurate and fair in their decisions.
- The total process takes three long days. It is very intense, but rewarding and interesting. It is also very stressful. Poorly recorded auditions cause the greatest stress! Points cannot be awarded if the audition cannot be clearly heard.

Honor Orchestra is an exciting process beginning with the preparation and recording of auditions and concluding with a terrific concert at the festival. Then what has been learned and experienced can be brought back to you school, to your performing groups. Your students deserve the best possible chance from the beginning! Please follow the guidelines! Best of luck with the recordings!