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## **AMIS SOLO ENSEMBLE FESTIVAL HOSTING HANDBOOK**

### **Why host this Festival in your school?**

Any AMIS Festival is an enrichment for a school community. It highlights the music department in your school and inspires everyone. It is a great community builder and a good way to liaise with your school administration, the PTO and the other members of your arts department. A solo and ensemble festival is the most “INCLUSIVE” festival you can host. It is the opportunity for young beginners as well as older more accomplished student musicians to perform, be adjudicated by an expert music educator, and to hear others perform at all levels of expertise. This is the perfect festival to host in order to interact with schools and musicians in your region. If it is truly a regional event, the problems of housing and mass catering will largely disappear. At the writing of this handbook, there is only one such AMIS festival scheduled during the coming academic year. Within the next year or two it is hoped there will be a number of others: perhaps in the UK, in Germany, in Eastern Europe, in places in Asia.

The requirements for facilities for this festival are totally different from all other AMIS festivals. It may be that a school without a large formal performance space will be ideally suited for hosting this festival.

### **Which facilities and equipment are required?**

**Rehearsal:** For this festival you do not need a real concert facility. Instead you need a number of classrooms, both large and small, for performances on a wide variety of instruments and voice. You will need a piano or good electric keyboard in each of these rooms, some of which will probably have to be rented. The size of each solo and ensemble festival may be very different. Depending on your facilities, you may have to reduce the number of events you can accommodate or the number of participants that you can accommodate.

There will need to be a designated warmup area for participants, either by school or more usually by performance room, in which a participant can warm up the 15 minutes prior to their scheduled performance.

You will need a table or desk and chair in each performance room, for the use of the judge. There will need to be chairs for audience members. There will need to be a suitable number of music stands.

You will need to hire good judges who are educators and also expert on an instrument or instruments so they can adjudicate giving the most help and encouragement to each participant. A number of these can usually be AMIS teachers. The current honorarium for judges at this point in time is £100.

Signs are crucial on each door and marking the route to find all rooms. You will need a complete listing of the day's events for each room on the door of or near that room.

Student “runners” are invaluable in collecting rating sheets, bringing drinks for the judges, and general crowd control.

**Very Important Choice:** You will need someone to do the scheduling for the festival. In some cases this will be the host organizer, in others it may be someone else who is very good at doing this type of work and to whom you will want to pay an hourly wage. The online registration forms will come directly to this person.

Someone will need to man the registration desk and will need to organize the collection of rating sheets, the preparation of certificates and ribbons, and the distribution of rating materials to each participating teachers.

**AMIS :** AMIS will administrate this festival. The office will send out invoices and try to answer most questions participating teachers may have. If possible, an AMIS rep will be present to give onsite aid the day of the festival.

**Each School's Headquarters:** You will need to designate a classroom or part of a large room where each

participating school can leave coats, cases, music and instruments when they are not being used.

**Medical/health facilities:** If possible a nurse should be present throughout the Festival and be provided with an appropriate room and equipment. Usually the school nurse can be available through Friday, and is sometimes on duty on Saturday due to sporting events taking place at the school. If not, someone who has had first aid training and who has access to a first aid box should be available throughout the day .

**Dining Area:** Your school may wish to keep the cafeteria open throughout the day. Otherwise, instruct all participants to bring their own packed lunches and something to drink. You will need to provide a room where these can be eaten.

At the very least, water should be available to participants.

### **What housing requirements will the community need to provide?**

You should not need to provide any housing for this festival. You should be able to provide a list of hotels in the area where participants can stay if they live too far away to travel to and from the festival on the Saturday.

**Transport:** You are not responsible for providing any transportation, but you are responsible for giving full instructions for driving to your school and for taking public transportation from airports, train stations to your school

### **Which date?**

The final Saturday in January is the date when the AMIS Solo and Ensemble Festival in The Hague is held. You may wish to hold your regional festival on the same day, or you may wish to choose another Saturday during the academic year which is more convenient for your school community. Try to avoid weekends during other AMIS events and weekends when your school is hosting another major event.

### **What should be done before the festival?**

1. **Preparing for the Festival:** Talk to the school administration, faculty, facility maintenance people and PTO early on and explain to them the nature of the Festival and request their support. Hire the Festival in the school. Usually schools will absorb photocopying costs, paper for registration packets and certificates, custodial and cleaning costs, telephone and fax costs to schools requiring specific information.

Check (with the help of officials or secretaries within the school) to see what the **visa requirements** are for visitors from various countries. **This needs to be done early on in the planning** because in today's world it sometimes takes a long while to secure visas. Draft a letter of invitation which can be personalized for students requiring visas. It will generally need to be sent by fax to the consulate where the student is requesting the visa and to the music teacher bringing the students. It will then need to be sent as a hard copy to the music teacher so the student can also have it in hand when applying for the visa. AMIS can help with a draft visa letter. Note: if this is a truly regional festival this should be only a minor problem.

Contact the school community to generate support for the Festival.

Keep everyone informed of arrangements at all times and send out several reminders in the months/weeks preceding the Festival. Invite your music students and others wishing to do community service to help with the festival.

2 **Catering:** see the section above talking about dining facilities. You will also need to provide coffee, tea, and water for the judges throughout the day.

Water should be available. You may want to ask your arts support group or PTO to sell fruit, other snacks, and drinks during the day.

3. **Budget:** You will be asked to prepare cost estimates including the number of judges you need to employ, fees you expect to pay for piano rental and piano tuning. Estimate the costs of employing someone to schedule the events of the festival, and anything else you will need funding for.

4. **Judges' dinner:** It is a very nice idea to invite judges and any AMIS rep present at the festival to an informal dinner on Saturday after the close of the day's events. AMIS will generally cover the costs of such a dinner which could be a simple buffet at your home or that of another member of your school community, featuring either homecooked food or something you purchase and bring in.

5. **Schedules:** The draft schedules will be sent to schools ahead of time. A copy of the schedule should also be included in the information packs which are given to all participating schools when they check in. You will also need to post schedules in lots of places as outlined earlier in this handbook.

6. **Signs:** Signs indicating important locations such as bathrooms, schools' homerooms, warmup rooms, all performance rooms should be put up for your visitors. It is also good if you have a welcome sign of some sort at the

school entrance to greet the festival participants.

**7. Performance spaces:** Prepare the rehearsal spaces. Arrange the chairs, stands, amps and other equipment and the table and chair for the judge, Also arrange chairs for the audience. Provide pencils for the judge.

**8. Information packages:** You will need to prepare information packages for the participating schools with schedules, information about the school.

**9. Extras.**

**Cleanup Crew:** You will need a large crew of helpers to put all the classrooms back as they were before the festival. It will help if you have made a diagram of each classroom showing how the furniture was arrangement in it when you moved in to set up.

**Thank you's:** Make sure you have a complete list of all who need to be thanked. These should include your housers, administration & secretaries, Director, PTO people, custodians, sound & lights people, catering, parent & student volunteer workers. And remember, you can never write too many thank-you notes!