



Execution of Musical Concepts

SOUND QUALITY

Tone – The quality of a sound that makes it distinctive to a particular source, for example, a voice or musical instrument.

Appropriateness – The tone is suitable for the genre of the piece.

Balance – The necessary elements of tone work together to form a satisfying and harmonious whole and nothing is out of proportion or unduly emphasized at the expense of the rest.

Beauty – The tone has a combination of qualities that make it pleasing and impressive to listen to.

Blend – The combination of parts and/or sections that creates a pleasing tone without obvious transitions and boundaries.

Consistency – The tone maintains a particular standard with minimal variation.

Control – The tone is held steady or manipulated appropriately for the style of the music.

Focus – The tone is concentrated and has a unified quality.

Free of Tension – The tone does not sound pinched, stressed or tight.

Naturalness – The tone does not sound artificial.

Projection – The sound fills the room at all dynamic levels.

Purity – The tone is a pure sound without excessive sounds heard from the instrument or voice that are unintentionally produced by the student.

Quality – The tone produced is of the highest or finest standard.

Resonance – The tone is deep and rich in sound.

Vibrant – The tone has a full rich sound that tends to continue for some time and is energetic.

Warmth – The tone conveys the feeling, quality, or state of being warm, welcoming, affectionate, and/or of strong emotion.

Intonation – The accuracy of pitch in performing music.

Chords – Individual notes fall in tune with the chords being built.

Harmonic Parts – The pitches of the supporting parts are in tune.

Individuals – Individual notes are in tune.

Melodic Line – There is accurate intonation from note to note in a melodic line (accurate distance in intervals).

Out-of-Tune – There is need for adjustment of strings, reeds, slides, fingers, embouchure, or voice so that a note is at the required pitch.

Sections – Sections of instruments/voices are in tune.

Tuning – The adjustment of strings, reeds, slides, fingers, embouchure, or voice so that a note is at the required pitch.

Tutti – When all musicians are playing/singing, the group as a whole is in tune.

With Accompaniment – The performer is in tune with the accompaniment.

ACCURACY – The exactness in which music is performed and the ability to avoid errors in pitch/rhythm reading and execution.

Accuracy to printed pitches – The printed notes are played/sung correctly both rhythmically and melodically.

Meter – The pattern in which a steady succession of rhythmic pulses is organized.

Missed Notes – Notes and/or rhythms were either left out or played incorrectly.

Missed Rests – Rests were either left out or counted incorrectly.

Rhythm – The regular or particular pattern of beats and emphasis in a piece of music.

Rhythmic Figure Interpretation – Groupings of Rhythms that require extended knowledge such as mordents and turns are deciphered correctly.

Steady Beat/Pulse – The fixed succession of beats in music achieved through internalization of the pulse.

Tempo – The execution of the appropriate speed usually indicated by the composer at which a musical composition or passage is performed including *ritardando*, *accelerando*, etc. Also refers to changes to the *Tempi* within a single composition.

TECHNIQUE – The procedure, skill, or art used in the proper execution during performance on a particular instrument or voice.

Accuracy – The ability to be precise and avoid technical errors.

Articulation – The characteristics of attack and decay of single tones or groups of tones and the means by which these characteristics are produced (ex. staccato and legato).

Attack – The manner in which the performer(s) begin a note.

Bowing – The best bowings and bowing techniques are chosen and properly executed to allow for the correct interpretation.

Breathing – The performer has control of breath, and is able to sustain phrases.

Consonants, Clarity and Uniformity of – The singer(s) observe(s) the traditional standards of correctness in pronunciation of consonants in a clear, pure way so as to easily be heard and understood both individually and/or as a group.

Dexterity – The ease and skill with which physical movements are executed usually related to fingerings.

Diction – The correct pronunciation for the language of the piece, as well as the clarity with which each syllable is sung.

Embouchure – The adjustment of the lips and tongue in playing a wind instrument.

Ensemble – The understanding of the ensemble to play together and balance parts.

Enunciation – The singer(s) distinct and accurate pronunciation of the lyrics.

Facility – The ability to execute technical aspects of the instrument/voice easily.

Fingering – The execution of suitable fingerings that allow for the greatest accuracy, intonation, and fluency.

Mechanical Skill – The ability to easily execute the necessary technical aspects of an instrument or voice.

Pedal – In piano performance, the use of the three piano pedals.

Pick – In guitar performance, the execution of a pick in the right hand for strumming and plucking the strings



NMEA Solo and Ensemble Practice Guide and Adjudicator Reference

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- PIMA** – In guitar performance, the execution of the right hand in plucking the strings. **Pulgar** = thumb, **Indice** = index finger, **Medio** = middle finger, **Anular** = ring finger
- Position** – The relationship of the instrument to the performer's body, hands, arms, and fingers, i.e. proper instrument hold.
- Posture** – The stance or seated position that is appropriate for a particular instrument or voice.
- Range, Control of** – The management of notes, from the highest to the lowest, that somebody's voice or a musical instrument is capable of producing.
- Vowels, Purity and Uniformity of** – The singer(s) observe(s) the character of vowel sounds by manipulating such factors as the shape of the mouth and position of the tongue when singing so as to easily be heard and understood both individually and/or as a group.
- Sticking** – The execution of mallets/sticks that allows for greatest accuracy and interpretation.
- Tonguing** – The execution and placement of the tongue in the student's mouth while playing that allows for greatest accuracy, intonation, and interpretation.
- Vibrato** – An oscillation of sound made by rapidly varying the pitch slightly above and below the note through hand movement (string/percussion) or breath control (wind/vocal).

INTERPRETATION – The way in which a piece of music is performed so as to convey a particular understanding of the work.

- Artistry** – The great and creative ability and skill of the musician(s)
- Accents** – The execution of the stresses placed on particular notes by the composer, editor.
- Balance** – The necessary elements of tone work together to form a satisfying and harmonious whole and nothing is out of proportion or unduly emphasized at the expense of the rest.
- Communication with a sense of purpose** –
- Contrast** – Sections of music are performed in a way that highlights their differences.
- Dynamics** – The levels of loudness and softness in a piece of music, and the way in which a performer reproduces them in performance.
- Ensemble, Sense of** – All musicians perform collaboratively, with no performer given or taking prominence.
- Expression** – With respect to works of music, the representation or conveying of something, usually something beyond the work itself such as a nonmusical idea or emotion.
- Facial Expression** – The look on the performer's (especially a singer's) face, conveying the thoughts and feelings of a piece.
- Finesse** – The elegant, delicate, and skillful approach in dealing with a difficult passage of music.
- Mood** – The interpretation of the prevailing emotional tone or attitude of the performed piece.
- Nuances** – The performer is aware of very slight difference in meaning, feeling, tone, and or color of a piece and uses artistic expression to convey those differences.
- Ornamentation** – The execution of the addition of a note or set of notes that embellishes a melody or harmony, i.e. Grace note, fermata, cadenza, Appoggiatura, trill, turn, Mordent, tremolo.
- Phrasing** – The execution of sequences of notes that are grouped together to form units of melody in a piece of music.
- Style** – The execution of the distinctive and identifiable characteristics of a piece from a particular period, region, genre, and/or composer.
- Vitality** – There is abundant physical and mental energy combined with a wholehearted and joyous approach to the music.

OTHER FACTORS

- Performance Etiquette** – The rules, traditions, and/or conventions governing correct and/or polite concert performance behavior.
- Appearance** – The student is dressed as a performer. They are clean, especially fingernails, and their hair is combed. Students should not be wearing, jeans, t-shirts, tennis shoes or flip-flops.
- Attitude** – The student is aware that physical posture, either conscious or unconscious, impacts the performance.
- Confidence** – The student believes or has self-assurance in his/her ability to succeed in performance.
- Discipline/Behavior** – The student acts like a professional, using appropriate language, gestures, and movement.
- Mannerisms** – The student's particular gestures and habits complement the performance.
- Poise** – The student has a graceful controlled way of standing, sitting, or moving while on stage as well as during entry and exit.
- Posture** – The student uses the appropriate stance or seated position or his/her own instrument/voice that is lengthened, tall, and balanced.
- Stage Efficiency** – The student is prepared to enter the room, tune quickly, perform, and take appropriate bow with accompanist or ensemble.
- Stage Presence** – The student has a dignified appearance and bearing appropriate to a musical performance.
- Tuning** – The student tuned appropriately to the piano, other members of the ensemble. In the case of strings, this would also include tuning the open 5th (4th for bass).

Repertoire – The choice of music performed.

- Appropriateness** – This piece is appropriate for the event, and can be considered quality literature. The piece should not be from popular music, Broadway, or movie music.
- Musical Value** – This piece is a high quality composition that encourages the student to advance in both technical and musical aspects.
- Genre** – This piece is from the canon of concert hall music & composers that is considered serious or intellectual and is usually written in a traditional or formal style, as opposed to such genres as pop, rock, folk, Broadway, etc.

THIS SECTION TO BE USED AT REGIONAL SOLO & ENSEMBLE ONLY (circle one)

- Memorized** – At Regionals, in order to be eligible for Command Performance, all solo entries must be performed from memory. This does not apply to ensemble entries.
- Demand of Literature appropriate for Command Performance** – At Regionals, in order to be considered for Command Performance, all solo and ensemble entries must perform music that is of a high level both technically and musically.