

SECTION VIII

Music Division



OFFICIAL A.C.E. STATEMENT OF ACCEPTABLE MUSIC FOR STUDENT CONVENTION COMPETITION

A.C.E. desires to have the highest quality music competition possible. Such competition is intended to demonstrate a student's instrumental and vocal music skills, while encouraging a student to apply his musical talents to Christian values. A.C.E. encourages all students to aspire to reach their highest potential; maximizing the gifts God has given them.

Please note: A.C.E. fully supports the authority of the local church and does not ask churches or Christian schools to adopt these music guidelines as their ministry standard. Furthermore, such standards are not given to imply greater spirituality. It is our privilege to minister to a very diverse group from various denominations, each having a particular distinctive in musical standards. In an effort to show deference to those attending, A.C.E. has set specific standards for our competition. We respectfully ask that all sponsors and students maintain good Christian character and graciousness at all times, especially in adhering to and respecting the standards set forth for convention.

Competition arrangements are to be **Christian or patriotic** rather than secular. Classical instrumental music is allowed as long as it is nonoffensive to Christian values or good taste. Music sung or played with a jumpy, sensual, or worldly style is not acceptable. Contemporary Christian, jazz, gospel rock, or gospel country music are not acceptable. In our music guidelines, "contemporary" refers to a style of music, not the date on which a piece was written. Music must be appropriate for a typical **conservative** fundamental church service (musical arrangement, text, and presentation). In Vocal and Instrumental Music categories, contestants are not permitted to use the musical score (except small and large instrumental ensembles). **Narration and/or dramatic dialogue are not allowed.**

An analysis of music, text, and performance techniques are essential in determining whether a song/performance is suitable. Music is appropriate only when the lyrics, musical style, and presentation are consistent with Biblical principles.

A.C.E. requests that ALL VOCAL ENTRIES be presented in the ENGLISH LANGUAGE. We apologize that we are not able to grant any exceptions.

APPEARANCE

Gentlemen: Dress shirts, ties, and jackets should be worn for all music performances with the following exceptions:

1. School uniforms
2. A tuxedo with either a vest or cummerbund without a jacket

Ladies: Nice church outfits should be worn for all music performances with the following exceptions:

1. School uniforms
2. Formal attire that meets the modesty requirements for convention

When selecting a musical piece, please consider the following:

ELEMENTS OF MUSIC

Melody—A good melody has a definite high place near its conclusion so that there is a sense of climax and resolution.

Harmony—Harmony should support the melody and play a subservient role.

Rhythm—The rhythm of a song has much to do with the overall integrity of the piece. A subtle rhythm or sense of pulsation with a balance of regular accent patterns and occasional syncopation for variety and interest is acceptable. The rhythm must not overtake the melody, harmony, message, or overall flow of a song. Avoid musical compositions with excessive repetition of a melodic phrase, harmonic pattern, rhythmic pattern, or any combination of these three. Music with continuous syncopation, dominant beat, highly accented backbeat, and/or break beat is not acceptable.

Worldly Identification—The message carried by a musical style does not change by simply adding religious or Scriptural lyrics.

A musical composition should have a definite **beginning**, build to a **climax point**, and communicate a definite sense of **conclusion**. **The musical sound must not detract from the message of the words.**

TEXT

Accuracy—Good lyrics must be Biblically accurate in both definition and associative meaning. The key to a truthful presentation of text is balance and careful examination under the Holy Spirit's direction that the words are "pure."

Implications—Any implied ideas must be examined to make sure that nothing unacceptable is implied and that the intent of Scriptural teaching and principle is satisfied. A wise performer will always check the implied communication of a song's message to verify its total accuracy.

Crossover Songs—The lyrics must CLEARLY state at some point Whom the song is about. Avoid songs that have no direct reference to the Lord and others that are written to reference only "He" or "Him" whenever God's name is mentioned—"crossover songs." (Such songs are acceptable in both the secular and Christian communities, as the song could easily be sung in the content of a secular love song.) The attributes of God should be maintained in the highest regard any time He is addressed.

Message—Good lyrics say something of value. Not every song needs to be as profound as our richest hymns, but good lyrics never include trite phrases just for the sake of rhyme. Such phrases are designed for entertainment rather than edification. Good lyrics fulfill a definite purpose. If the text is sung as a hymn, it should express some Godly attribute that helps us worship the Lord. If the text is sung as a gospel song, it should be a message that encourages us. The message should also be simple enough that almost anyone can easily understand it, relate to it, and apply it.

PERFORMANCE TECHNIQUES

Presentation—Give careful attention that the musical presentation does not reflect secular styles (breathy, sensual, and so on). “Crooning,” “sliding,” “sagging,” or other such terms are vocal crutches and should be avoided. Use caution that the presentation is not done in an “**entertainment**” attitude or style.

Movement—No choreography, planned or unnecessary bodily movement (including hand clapping, foot stomping, deaf signing, finger snapping, etc.), will be permitted. Occasional movement of the hands/arms for dramatic effect (i.e., placing hand to heart, raising hand toward Heaven) is permitted but should be used sparingly. Competitors should stand erect; bend knees slightly to relax rigid leg muscles, with arms and shoulders relaxed and thumbs resting at the side-seam of clothing.

Questions to evaluate musical selections/performances:

1. Does the music glorify God, not the performer or composer?
2. Does the music reflect Biblical doctrine and Godly living?
3. Is the rhythm a subservient feature that does not dominate the music?
4. Does the background music play a subservient role to the lyrics and not distract the listener from the message?
5. Are the lyrics Biblically accurate?
6. Is the performance a straightforward presentation, focusing on vocal technique that employs proper breathing (avoiding breathy tones, sagging and sliding pitches, and/or choreographed movement)?
7. Is the music easily identifiable as a Christ-honoring piece as opposed to a “new sound” as in secular or entertainment styles?
8. Does the music invoke positive responses?
9. Does the selection draw the listener closer to God and uplift his/her spirit?
10. Does the music praise the Lord, focus on God, or deliver a clear spiritual message?

When evaluating musical selections, an appropriate piece will always yield a “**YES**” response to all of the questions given. If there is **ANY** doubt regarding the appropriateness of a piece and to avoid conflict, please submit the selection to A.C.E. for review/approval. Out of love and respect for the students competing, A.C.E. would never desire a student to invest time and energy preparing a selection, only to be marked down because the selection does not meet the guidelines.

For review/approval, selections must be submitted to A.C.E. no later than **February 1**. Please allow two to three weeks for the review process. Selections, musical score, and lyrics should be submitted to:

Shipping Address:
A.C.E. STUDENT CONVENTIONS
130 Maple Drive North
Hendersonville, TN 37075

Mailing Address:
A.C.E. STUDENT CONVENTIONS
P.O. Box 2707
Hendersonville, TN 37077-2707

Submitted selections will be returned with the A.C.E. seal of approval or an explanation as to why the piece is not appropriate for this competition.

NOTE: Any student performing a selection that violates the music standards presented in these guidelines (in musical content, text, or presentation) will not place in competition. Please give careful attention to the musical selection and ensure that it meets the standards set forth in these guidelines.

GENERAL PERFORMANCE GUIDELINES

IMPORTANT!!!! All copies of music, CDs, judging forms, and photos must be **CLEARLY LABELED** with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school telephone number, complete school address, and category.

1. Three copies of the arrangement, **as performed**, must be given to the judges before a performance. Music must be performed exactly as it appears on the score. For example, if chords are changed, music should be rewritten to reflect the changes. **Submitted copies must include the musical score, numbered measures, and the lyrics.** The judges must receive copies of the corrected/changed scores. Copies must be **CLEARLY LABELED** with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school telephone number, complete school address, and the category.
2. Contestants may sing a cappella; be accompanied by an adult or student (of convention age) **playing a piano**; or use an accompaniment CD (**piano only**). Record only one song per CD. CDs should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school telephone number, complete school address, and the category. Please indicate if a Dolby recording is used in order to avoid confusion if asked to perform at a rally. Other sound tracks are not permissible. Note: Contestants are to make sure the recording is of the best possible sound quality. Poise and presentation are part of the judging criteria; thus contestants are not to provide their own accompaniment.
3. Contestants must submit a color photo (snapshot or Polaroid) of themselves, with faces clearly visible. They must be in the **SAME OUTFIT** they will be wearing for that event. Photos should be **CLEARLY LABELED** with student's name, school name, school customer number, school telephone number, complete school address, and the category.

4. At International Student Convention, contestants must perform the same selection performed in Regional Student competition. A student may not use the same song two years consecutively in the same event if he/she (or a group) placed in the top six at International Student Convention the previous year with that song in the same event. In addition, **the same selection is not to be used by multiple groups from the same school in the same year.**
5. **VERY IMPORTANT**—See page IX-1 of Platform Competition Division for poise and appearance guidelines.
6. All vocal and instrumental music is to be memorized (exception: Small and Large Instrumental Ensembles).
7. There should be a preselected spokesperson for each group who will introduce the group, the school represented, and the title of the song to be performed. (This is not counted against performance time.)
8. Personal amplification equipment for competition is not allowed.
9. Musical competition time limit is 5 minutes. If competition piece exceeds the 5-minute time limit, the contestant will receive a **.5-point deduction** for any portion of thirty (30) second increments. (For example, a piece timed at 5:12 would receive a half-point deduction from the total score. A piece at 5:42 would receive a deduction of a full point from the total score.)

Checklist for Music:

1. Copies of music: **Three (3) copies** must be brought to convention. **Submitted copies must include the musical score and the lyrics.** Each copy is to be inserted in a separate, clear, gallon-sized, zippered plastic bag with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school address, and school telephone number clearly visible on the front of EACH copy.
2. Photo: Submit a color photo (snapshot or Polaroid) simulating the performance wearing the outfit in which the student will perform. **VERY IMPORTANT: CLEARLY LABEL the BACK of the photo with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school telephone number, school address, and the category.**
3. Judge's Forms: Submit three (3) copies, properly filled out. (These forms are available on the School Registration program.)
4. CD player (if applicable): If using a CD for accompaniment, each contestant must provide his or her own playback device.
5. **When selecting music for vocal music competition, careful attention should be given to level of difficulty. Songs with too much unison or lack of distinct, individual parts do not usually place well. All members (duet, trio, quartet, etc.) or sections (ensemble) should demonstrate an ability to "carry" their individual parts with proper pitch, tone, and blend.**

VOCAL

Solo (1 contestant) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are two different entries available in the solo category: male or female.

Duet (2 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the duet category: male, female, or mixed.

Trio (3 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the trio category: male, female, or mixed.

Quartet (4 contestants) Time limit: 5 minutes

There are three different entries available in the quartet category: male, female, or mixed.

Small Ensemble (5-15 contestants*) Time limit: 5 minutes

There may be only one school entry under the designation “Small Ensemble.” Your ensemble may be male, female, or mixed, but it will be judged with all the other Small Ensembles. It may have an adult directing. If a student plays accompaniment, he is not included in the 15 total allowable contestants. (*The adult director is not considered a contestant.)

Large Ensemble (16 + contestants*) Time limit: 5 minutes

There may be only one school entry under the designation “Large Ensemble.” Your ensemble may be male, female, or mixed, but it will be judged with all other Large Ensembles. It may have an adult directing. (*The adult director is not considered a contestant.)

Note: Contestants may not use sound equipment during competition. Winners selected to perform before a rally audience will be provided with appropriate microphones.

VOCAL MUSIC JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation

Appearance and stage deportment	POSSIBLE POINTS
A. Approach—confident, yet with grace and humility	(1-3)
B. Posture—upright look, not slumped	(1-3)
C. Eye contact—scanned the audience, not stared	(1-3)
D. Poise—in full control	(1-3)
E. Clothing—color coordinated, neat, sharp, beautiful	(1-3)
F. Departure—confident	(1-3)
Interpretation	
A. Mood—prayerful, enthusiastic, peaceful	(1-3)
B. Intensity—not too weak or too strong, enough power, etc.	(1-3)
C. Style—presentation matched the printed intention	(1-3)
D. Tempo—flowing, not too fast or too slow	(1-3)
E. Phrasing—feeling of motion or rest	(1-4)
F. Climax—handled well	(1-4)
G. Dynamics—volumes changed correctly	(1-4)
H. Word Emphasis—each word received right emphasis	(1-3)
Musicianship	
A. Memory	(1-5)
B. Projection—each part of the music could be heard	(1-5)
C. Proper diction—correctly pronounced, articulated, enunciated	(1-5)

D. Tone quality—full, rich sound	(1-5)
E. Correct rhythm—performed like the printed page	(1-5)
F. Proper breathing—breathed at the right places, the right way	(1-5)
G. Intonation—correct pitch for solos or blends for groups	(1-5)
H. Balance of voices and/or accompaniment— accompaniment added to the beauty, not overrode	(1-5)
Appropriateness of selection	
A. Message/ministry—it ministered to the listener	(1-5)
B. Degree of difficulty	(1-5)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
TOTAL POINTS	(100)

INSTRUMENTAL

Piano Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Separate competition for male and female contestants. Piano will be provided by the convention. See Piano Judging Criteria, page VIII-9.

Woodwind Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Any woodwind instrument, such as flute, saxophone, clarinet, etc. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10. (Note: A recorder is not considered a woodwind instrument and should be entered into the miscellaneous category.)

String Solo (Bowed)—Time limit: 5 minutes

Violin, viola, cello, string bass, etc. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

String Solo (Plucked, hammered, strummed, etc.)—Time limit: 5 minutes

Harp, classical guitar, banjo, mandolin, etc. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

Brass Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10. (Note: Although many saxophones are made of brass, they are not in the brass family of instruments. Saxophones are woodwind instruments.)

Miscellaneous Solo—Time limit: 5 minutes

Includes instruments such as accordion, marimba, xylophone, recorder, handbells/hand chimes, bagpipe, etc. Drums and amplified instruments are not permitted. **Percussion is only permitted in Large Instrumental Ensemble.** Accompaniment is limited to piano. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

Piano Duet—Time limit: 5 minutes

Two people playing the same piano or two pianos. Pianos will be provided by the Convention. See Piano Judging Criteria, page VIII-9.



Instrumental Duet Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of **any** two instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not be counted as one of the two instruments. If piano is accompaniment only, please note such on the Judge's Form (e.g., two guitars playing the melody with piano accompaniment, one guitar and piano sharing the melody). See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

Instrumental Trio Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of any **three** instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not count as one of the three instruments. If piano is accompaniment only, please note such on the Judge's Form. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

Instrumental Quartet Competition—Time limit: 5 minutes

A combination of any four instruments (woodwind, string, brass, etc.) played together with or without accompaniment. Piano accompaniment is permissible and may or may not count as one of the four instruments. If piano is accompaniment only, please note such on the Judge's Form. See Instrumental Music Judging Criteria, pages VIII-9, 10.

Small Instrumental Ensemble Competition (5–10 contestants) —Time limit: 5 minutes

Five to ten (5–10) contestants with any variety of instruments. The time limit for the entire setup and performance will be twenty (20) minutes. There may be an adult directing. Piano accompaniment is permitted and may or may not count as one of the instruments. If piano is accompaniment only, please note such on the Judge's Form. Musical scores are allowed.

Percussion is only permitted in Large Instrumental Ensemble. See Small and Large Instrumental Ensemble Judging Criteria, pages VIII-10, 11.

Large Instrumental Ensemble Competition (11–40 contestants) —Time limit: 5 minutes

Eleven to forty (11–40) contestants with any variety of instruments. The time limit for the entire setup and performance will be twenty (20) minutes. There may be an adult directing. Piano accompaniment is permitted and may or may not count as one of the instruments. If piano is accompaniment only, please note such on the Judge's Form. Musical scores are allowed.

Percussion is permitted in Large Instrumental Ensemble. See Small and Large Instrumental Ensemble Judging Criteria, pages VIII-10, 11.

Handbell/Hand Chime Choir (5–18 contestants) —Time limit: 5 minutes

There may be an adult directing. Piano accompaniment is permitted. Musical scores are not allowed. See Handbell/Hand Chime Choir Judging Criteria, page VIII-10.

GENERAL RULES

1. One piano will be provided.
2. All other instruments are to be provided by the school.
3. No electrical instruments or amplification may be used.
4. For musical selection, follow the official statement of acceptable music given on page VIII-1.

PIANO JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Appearance and deportment	(1-5)
Difficulty	(1-10)
Memory	(1-15)
Musical features	
A. Melody—clearly heard	(1-5)
B. Phrasing	(1-10)
C. Rhythm	(1-10)
D. Pedaling	(1-10)
E. Tempo	(1-10)
F. Dynamics and performance indications	(1-10)
G. Smoothness of execution	(1-5)
H. Conveys the spirit of the music	(1-5)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
TOTAL POINTS	(100)

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC JUDGING CRITERIA

(Excludes Small and Large Ensemble)

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Tone	
A. Beauty/clarity	(1-4)
B. Color	(1-4)
C. Strength, control, and embouchure	(1-4)
D. Intonation	(1-4)
Technique and Musicianship	
A. Meter	(1-4)
B. Melody	(1-4)
C. Fingering and hand positions	(1-4)
D. Accents	(1-4)
E. Precision	(1-4)
F. Slurs	(1-4)
G. Bowing (strings), tonguing (wind instruments)	(1-4)
H. Attacks	(1-4)
I. Cutoffs	(1-4)
J. Accuracy	(1-4)
K. Memory	(1-5)
Interpretation	
A. Tempo	(1-4)
B. Style	(1-4)
C. Phrasing	(1-4)
D. Dynamics	(1-4)

Presentation	
A. Deportment	(1-3)
B. Posture	(1-3)
C. Balance and integration of accompaniment	(1-4)
Selection	
A. Message/ministry—Does it minister to the listener as performed?	(1-4)
B. Degree of difficulty	(1-4)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
	TOTAL POINTS (100)

HANDBELL/HAND CHIME CHOIR JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Memory	(1-10)
Approach/departure	(1-5)
Musicianship	(1-5)
Appearance/poise	(1-5)
Interpretation	(1-10)
Blend—how bells/chimes are struck together	(1-10)
Appropriateness of selection	(1-10)
Rhythmic accuracy	(1-15)
Tone—consistency of strike, form	(1-10)
Technique—damp, trills, vibrato, etc.	(1-15)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
	TOTAL POINTS (100)

SMALL AND LARGE INSTRUMENTAL ENSEMBLE JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Tone	
A. Beauty/clarity	(1-4)
B. Color	(1-4)
C. Strength, control, embouchure	(1-4)
D. Intonation	(1-4)
Technique and musicianship	
A. Meter	(1-4)
B. Melody	(1-4)
C. Fingering and hand positions	(1-4)
D. Accents	(1-4)
E. Precision	(1-4)
F. Slurs	(1-4)
G. Bowing (strings), tonguing (wind instruments)	(1-4)
H. Attacks	(1-4)
I. Cutoffs	(1-4)
J. Accuracy	(1-4)

Interpretation

- A. Tempo (1-4)
- B. Style (1-4)
- C. Phrasing (1-4)
- D. Dynamics (1-4)

Presentation

- A. Deportment (1-3)
- B. Posture (1-3)
- C. Balance and integration of accompaniment (1-3)

Selection

- A. Message/ministry—Does it minister to the listener as performed? (1-4)
- B. Degree of difficulty (1-10)

Proper documentation submitted

(1-5)

TOTAL POINTS (100)**MUSIC COMPOSITION**

The contestant writes and submits an original song. The composition must include a **melody line and a simple accompaniment plus words**. (The student may add harmony parts, if he so chooses. A more complex piece will receive a higher score in the “Harmony” section on the Judge’s Form.) Music Composition is an individual student event, not a collaboration between two or more students. Compositions will be judged according to the generally accepted principles of traditional musical composition, and manuscripts (whether written by hand or produced with the assistance of a computer) will be judged according to the norms of standard musical notation. Students should be aware that compositions simply played on a keyboard and produced without musical review often violate many principles of musical notation. Students are permitted to submit compositions that have been typeset on a computer program (e.g., Finale). However, no points will be deducted for handwritten manuscripts.

1. The words must be Christian or patriotic. They must follow the rules of poetry, including theme, poetic language, rhythm, and rhyme (as applicable). The words and music should enhance one another.
2. Scripture may be used.
3. The music must be accurately written by the student in acceptable standard music notation.
4. Three (3) copies of a CD of the music composition entry are required. (The quality of the tape performance will not influence the judge’s evaluation of the composition.)
5. The selection WILL NOT be performed live by the contestant.
6. The music composition must have been written after the termination of the previous International Student Convention and must be the original work of the contestant.

MUSIC COMPOSITION JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Lyrics	
A. Originality—fresh approach; not trite, no clichés (overused phrases)	(1-5)
B. Message—clearly defined and enlarged upon	(1-5)
C. Theme—Christian or patriotic values expressed	(1-5)
D. Form—poetically correct in rhyme and rhythm	(1-5)
E. Compatibility—lyrics suit the music composed	(1-5)
Music	
A. Originality—clear attempt to produce a unique composition without borrowing from other works	(1-5)
B. Unity—continuous flow	(1-5)
C. Mood—emotional influence created	(1-5)
D. Melody—original and creative	(1-5)
E. Harmony—variety and enhancing to melody	(1-5)
F. Rhythm—supportive of but not detracting from melody/harmony	(1-5)
G. Accompaniment/chord progressions—original yet pleasing and melodic	(1-5)
H. Dissonance—use and resolution	(1-5)
I. Dynamics—effective use (variation in volume and pace)	(1-5)
J. Cleanliness of sound—polished composition	(1-5)
Accuracy	
A. Correct use of the musical notation system	(1-5)
B. Readability	(1-5)
Selection	
A. Degree of difficulty	(1-5)
B. Ministers—Does it minister to the listener as performed?	(1-5)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
TOTAL POINTS	(100)

Checklist for Music Composition:

1. Three (3) copies of the music composition and CD must be submitted with entry. Each copy is to be inserted in a separate, clear, gallon-sized, zippered plastic bag with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school address, and school telephone number clearly visible on the front of EACH copy. DO NOT SUBMIT your original copy.
2. Include three (3) copies of the Creative Composition Affidavit (CF28), properly signed.
Attach one copy to each copy of the music composition.
3. Three (3) copies of the JUDGE'S FORMS (CF75) are required for Regional and International Student Conventions.
4. One entry per contestant.

MUSIC ARRANGING

Music Arranging is an individual student event designed to allow an original melody to be set to new harmonies or a new format. A song could be put in any vocal, piano, or instrumental arrangement (e.g., choir, ensemble, piano solo, or band arrangement). Entry must be the original work of the student. The entry must be ORIGINAL in its entirety except for the actual melody.

1. Three (3) copies of the music arrangement must be submitted. Each copy is to be inserted in a separate, clear, gallon-sized, zippered plastic bag with the student's name, school name, school customer number, school address, and school telephone number clearly visible on the front of EACH copy. DO NOT SUBMIT your original copy.
2. Include three (3) copies of the Creative Composition Affidavit (CF28), properly signed.
Attach one copy to each copy of the music composition.
3. Three (3) copies of the JUDGE'S FORMS (CF76) are required for Regional and International Student Conventions.
4. One entry per contestant.
5. Three (3) copies of a CD of the music arrangement is required.
6. The entry must be the original work of the contestant and must have been written after the termination of the previous International Student Convention.
7. The copyright owner of the song should be contacted for permission to write an arrangement of his/her song.

MUSIC ARRANGING JUDGING CRITERIA

Areas of Evaluation	POSSIBLE POINTS
Balance	
A. Unique melody—altered slightly/significantly by notation, meter, or a distinct melodic variation	(1-5)
B. Instrumentation or voicing (unity of style yet an interest created through variety)	(1-5)
Creativity	
A. Consistency of style/proper transitions between styles	(1-5)
B. Counter-melody action (instrumental) or vocal variety (distinct, individual parts)	(1-5)
C. Structural foundation (sustained instrumentation or underlying oohs and ahs)	(1-5)
D. Melodic treatment	(1-5)
E. Harmonic variety	(1-5)
F. Rhythmic interest	(1-5)
G. Accompaniment/chord progressions (melodic)	(1-5)
H. Effective use of dynamics (variation in volume and pace)	(1-5)
I. Use/resolution of dissonance	(1-5)
J. Economy (only included notes that serve a specific purpose)	(1-5)
K. Overall emotion/mood created effectively	(1-5)
L. Focus (melody as the point of attention; interludes or postludes, if any, serve as enhancement points for variation)	(1-5)

Accuracy	
A. Correct use of the musical notation system	(1-5)
B. Readability	(1-5)
Selection	
A. Degree of difficulty	(1-5)
B. Originality (completed work shows a clear attempt to “rearrange” an existing song into a unique composition)	(1-5)
C. Message/ministry (ministers to the listener)	(1-5)
Proper documentation submitted	(1-5)
	TOTAL POINTS (100)

HINTS FROM THE MUSIC JUDGES

Most of the music judges’ comments deal with intonation (the ability to sing and play in tune) and rhythmic accuracy. In many musical traditions, and especially in gospel music, it is important for the performer to be able to improvise and make various changes to the composition as it is performed. In this competition, however, the judges are requiring the music to be performed exactly as it is written. Often, student performers have lost many points because they performed a piece according to the way they have heard it in the past instead of the way the music indicates.

Both vocalists and instrumentalists need to be aware of the fact that good intonation is often made easier by obtaining a qualified instructor who can teach the basics of breathing, posture, and other items that are the foundation of good musical performance.

Please be aware that the accompaniment is a vitally important part of a musical entry. If the accompanist does not have the ability to easily perform the accompaniment, it will undoubtedly cause the score to be lowered. Recognizing the fact that many published arrangements deliberately simplify piano accompaniments so more pianists can easily perform the music, the judges will allow improvisation in the piano accompaniment; however, this liberty does not extend to the actual contestant.

Do not choose music that is overly difficult in an effort to impress the judges. It is impossible to hide the fact that you are performing music that is beyond your ability. Instead of raising your score by selecting impressive selections, your score will be lowered because you cannot perform the music well. It is better to choose simpler music that you can perform well.

PLEASE carefully review the official A.C.E. Statement of Acceptable Music in these guidelines before selecting your competition piece. If you have questions about the suitability of a certain piece, please submit it to A.C.E. for review and approval. (See VIII-4.)

PREPARING FOR CONVENTION

-tone quality

General

Beauty of tonal color

Each instrument or ensemble group possesses a unique characteristic tone quality (color). Performers are expected to achieve this tonal color in performance. Listen to quality recordings of professionals, and strive to match their tonal color as you play. Do not emulate the tonal production of jazz performers, stage bands, or the projection of performers in marching bands. Listen to classical soloists or chamber groups to develop a refined sound. Poor tone quality is usually an indication of improper air concepts on winds instruments, poor bow control on strings, or improper stroking on percussion instruments.

Control and stability

These terms refer to evenness of tone and ease of tonal production. Control and stability are best achieved by daily, thoughtful practice of long tones and scales throughout the instrument's range over a long period of time. Be prepared to spend many years of consistent practice developing control and stability of a beautiful tonal color.

Solo

Range development

Choose a solo that demonstrates your full note range. Solos that require tones that are too high or too low and solos that do not demonstrate the performer's full range should be avoided or modified.

Embouchure (Winds)

The embouchure (lip and jaw function) should work freely to allow the air stream to cause a proper vibration. Obtain the services of a professional private instructor to develop proper embouchure habits.

Ensemble

Balance of parts

Keep in mind that the melody line must predominate and that accompanying parts must present a unified foundation for the melody whenever it is present.

Group blend

Blend the voices of the ensemble so that they present a unified tonal color, one that is characteristic for the type of group that you are presenting. Strive to develop a classical chamber sound.

INTERPRETATION AND MUSICIANSHIP

Phrasing

This element, more than any other, separates maturity levels in performance. Only a small percentage of the dynamic and tempo variations are actually indicated in the score. Identify each phrase, and then identify the highest point of intensity within each phrase. Finally, use the tools of expression, tempo, dynamics, and spirit to enhance that point of intensity within each phrase.

Expression, tempo, dynamics, and spirit

Strive to present the emotional intent of the composer/arranger and the spiritual qualities of the song's message (when applicable).

Tradition

Some pieces, especially sacred classics, require some understanding of the performance practices of the musical period during which they were written. If you select, for example, a piece from the Baroque period, you would do well to research performance practices (including ornamentation styles) of the period. Please keep in mind that recordings can sometimes be quite misleading since not all recording artists emphasize historically accurate performances.

TECHNIQUE

General (All Instruments)

Demonstrate Fluency and overall technical ability

Choose a piece that emphasizes your strengths. Fluency refers to technical freedom on the instrument. Many years of faithful practice under the direction of a good teacher are required to develop fluency and a wide-range technical ability.

Articulations/fingerings/hand positions/posture

Specific (Instrument Categories)

Bells and Chimes

Efficiency of stroke technique

For individual stroke consistency or group stroke consistency, choose the stroke patterns that produce the styles and expressions which the piece requires. Then practice those patterns carefully under the watchful eye of an instructor to develop consistency.

Remember—**PRACTICE MAKES PERMANENT.**

Mallets

Hand positions/wrist technique/stroke placement on bars or strings

A private instructor will be necessary to develop proper hand positions and wrist technique. The goal is to be able to play easily and efficiently. Each bar or string possesses a live spot or a heart that produces the optimum sound for that instrument. Bars also possess a secondary spot which may be utilized for efficiency of movement during fast passages. Learn these spots and practice slowly until you can strike the string or bar on its live spot every time.

Strings

Bowing choice and execution

While some bowings are marked, most require a decision on the part of the player. Obtain the services of a private instructor or a professional teacher to assist with bowing decisions. Bowing decisions will affect many other areas of your performance.

Winds

Breath control and tonguing

Proper breath control is evidenced by pure tone quality and freedom in performing many styles of articulation (slurs, staccatos, and a wide variety of accents) at every conceivable dynamic level. The tongue can produce proper articulations only within the context of a well-controlled stream of air.

RHYTHM

Precision

Rhythmic precision refers to the accurate execution of each written rhythmic figure. Any variation to the written rhythms should be noted on each judge's copy of the music.

Meter

Each time signature receives its own characteristic pulsation within every measure. This pulsation seldom varies throughout the piece unless it is interrupted by special articulations. The performer must learn the metrical pattern of each time signature so that the pulsation and variations in that pulsation can achieve the intended effects.

Rhythmic figure interpretation

Not only is rhythmic precision important, but it is also important to achieve the interpreted style of unique rhythmic figures. For instance, in a march the dotted eighth and sixteenth figure must be treated differently than that same figure when found in a fanfare. Likewise, a triplet across two beats is likely to be performed in two different ways in a classical minuet and in a lullaby. It is also likely to be treated differently at the height of a phrase than from that at the end of a musical section. It may be helpful to secure the assistance of a professional instructor to guide in this area.

Accents

Give special attention to every accent (both written accents and accents that are implied by the meter). There are several types of accents, and each style of piece requires its own special treatment of accents. Also, accents are performed at different intensities, depending on the dynamic level at the time.

INTONATION

Winds and strings

Individual (Solo) and Group (Ensemble)

Winds must be aware that many notes on even the most carefully manufactured instruments are out of tune. These tones must be found (a portable tuner is a great help) and humored into tune. String players must learn accurate pitch placement and must adjust out-of-tune pitches quickly. Groups must practice slowly and carefully to achieve unity of pitch. Practice unison or octave scales in pairs, carefully tuning every tone before moving on, to develop good group intonation skills.

Pretuned instruments in lieu of intonation (Bells, Chimes, and Mallets)

Execution/consistency/stability of stylistic and dynamic contrasts

Every consecutive percussive stroke at a dynamic level must achieve a consistent volume level. Also, consecutive strokes in a crescendo or decrescendo must produce smooth dynamic variation.

Correct choice of mallets for each style/dynamic

Mallets come in many different materials and tensions to produce different tone qualities and dynamics. Most performances benefit when the mallets are selected according to the musical needs.

PRESENTATION

Suitability to ability

Choose a piece that clearly shows your ability, keeping in mind that a piece does not need to be difficult to be musically excellent and to minister to fellow believers.

Suitability of musical style

Follow the suggested guidelines carefully. Keep in mind that the music itself will develop an atmosphere. That atmosphere should be consistent with the spirit of the song and the spirit of the service in which the piece is being played.

Stage presence (Soloist) and stage appearance (Ensemble)

Soloists should try to present a spirit of quiet confidence. Do not look at the judges or audience while playing. You may look at each other if doing so enhances musical communication and performance. Simply concentrate on the music. Ensembles should try to sit or stand in an attractive formation. Give each instrument plenty of room. Make sure your performance area is attractive and orderly. Develop a simple, silent, hidden (if possible) starting signal.

Entrance and exit

Take some time to develop an orderly entrance and exit. Look positive from the time that you enter the performing area to the time that you leave.

Clothing

Follow A.C.E. *Student Convention Guidelines*. A special uniform for large groups lends much to the overall effect of the presentation. Contestants who do not meet A.C.E. dress guidelines will be asked to return for their performance when they are properly dressed.

Time limit

Time your piece when you are selecting it. Choose a piece that fits easily into the time limit. Cuts and tempo variations to make the time limit are often quite distracting. NOTE: Musical competition time limit is **five (5) minutes**. If competition piece exceeds the five (5) minute time limit, the contestant will receive a **.5-point deduction** for any portion of thirty (30) second increments. (For example, a piece timed at 5:12 would receive a half-point deduction from the total score. A piece at 5:42 would receive a deduction of a full point from the total score.)