



## Minnesota Music Educators Association

### How to Prepare for an All-State Instrumental Audition

The audition will include the following:

1. Prepared solo for string players, prepared etude for winds/brass and percussion
2. Playing prepared scales found on the scale sheet
3. Sight Reading
4. Orchestral excerpt for string players only.
5. Improvisation for jazz auditions only.

How to get ready for the audition

- For string auditions, solo selections should be guided by the recommended literature list. Students are encouraged to play at their current level of mastery, rather than selecting the most difficult work on the list. In the end it is more about how you play than what you play.
- For string auditions, bring two original copies of the solo to the audition. One is for the judge and one is for you. You may give the judge the piano accompaniment to look at if it has your solo part as part of the music. If you are playing from memory, you may bring only one copy for the judge. You must not use illegal photocopies of copyrighted music in your audition or you will be disqualified. (In some cases the use of photocopies is allowed, but you must show the judge the documentation — your director has more complete guidelines.)
- For wind, brass and percussion auditions, prepare the assigned etude at the tempo indicated. Also pay attention to dynamics and articulations. The judge will have a copy of the etude, so you do not need to bring an extra.
- No accompaniments are allowed.
- For jazz auditions, you will be asked to improvise. A compact disk background will be provided from Jamey Abersold's Volume 1 "How to Play Jazz and Improvise". Students can choose either "Bb Blues" or "F Blues." Drum set players will improvise without a CD background.

You should learn the scales so that you can play them at the tempo indicated. Typically, students accepted for All-State report practicing the scales between 10 and 40 hours in preparation for the audition.

Sight-reading will be included in all auditions. You should practice sight-reading over time to be comfortable for the audition. During the audition you will be shown the sight-reading music and you will have a reasonable amount of time to study the exercise before beginning. The judge will NOT set the tempo or assist you with rhythm, pitch, dynamics or style.

Tips for a successful audition

- Be well-rested.
- Do not perform the audition on an empty stomach, but do not overeat just prior to playing.
- Drink plenty of water and avoid caffeine.
- This is a formal audition. Dress appropriately.

- Perform your prepared solo for an audience prior to the audition. Practice in front of a mirror.
- NEVER APOLOGIZE for your health. No excuses — just do it. If you are not feeling 100% healthy, do the best you can for that day.
- Allow yourself some slow, relaxed breaths. This will help calm your nerves.
- Introduce your piece. A sample introduction would be: “Good afternoon/evening. I will be performing (name of selection) by (composer).”
- You may be asked a few additional questions by the judge during your audition, including your current grade and your ensemble preference, if you are auditioning for more than one group.
- Look at the audition as an opportunity for an experience, rather than a judgment.