

CHHS IMD SENIOR SOLO AUDITION GUIDELINES

Performing a Senior Solo is among the highest honors awarded to IMD musicians. Playing from memory with band or orchestra accompaniment in concert requires both a high degree of mental and musical preparation and an understanding of how the Senior Solo audition process works.

Senior Solo auditions are competitive because **ONLY THE STRONGEST PERFORMANCES GIVEN ON THAT AUDITION NIGHT ARE SELECTED.**

Auditions are scored on a point system very similar to the one used in scoring tapes turned in for class. Those with the highest scores are selected to play a senior solo.

THE CUTOFF SCORE DETERMINES WHO IS AWARDED A SENIOR SOLO. Historically, scores tend to cluster. That is, students selected to play senior solos all score within a few points of one another, or cluster. Typically there is a break between top scoring auditions and scores in the next or 2nd "tier". Once again, scores in the 2nd tier tend to cluster and there is often a 3rd, or possibly a 4th tier of clustered scores.

THOSE AUDITIONS IN THE TOP CLUSTER OF SCORES ARE AWARDED SENIOR SOLOS. The number of senior solos may vary from year to year. Recently the range has been 2-7 solos per year.

Everyone who studies privately and wants to play a senior solo should audition. Be both positive and realistic. "Nothing ventured, nothing gained." Go for it! **THE GLORY!?!**

Senior Soloists work very hard in preparing their solo in rehearsal with the ensemble. Extra rehearsals are usually necessary for peak performances.

Well wishers must refrain from coming onstage in the middle of the concert. Senior solos given before intermission or at the end of the concert may have well wishers on stage. Those solos occurring during the middle of the concert will have a reception line after the concert.

To celebrate the senior soloists' accomplishments, some families sponsor a party or reception at home following the performance. These intergenerational IMD social events are always fun and the food and camaraderie are unsurpassed.

Senior solo performances are reasons for celebration. Friends and families from near and far make a special effort to attend senior solo performances. These performances celebrate the excellence of our school and community. The high level of support and visibility that go with being a senior soloist is yet another indicator of

its value. Finally, senior solos are among the longest standing and revered tradition at Cleveland Heights High School. It renews our hope and pride in the young musicians in our community.

PICKING THE RIGHT SOLO FOR AUDITION

Select a solo that is within your technical ability and that you enjoy working on for a long time. Some students try to audition with a piece that is too difficult and their auditions don't sound convincing. Occasionally students audition with pieces that are too easy and don't display enough technical or musical challenge.

Select your senior solo sooner rather than later. Sophomores, start thinking about senior solo pieces. Waiting until the summer before your senior year may be too late to start learning a senior solo piece.

Discuss senior solo accompaniments with directors. Many accompaniments are within abilities of IMD musicians, but some are just too difficult. When selecting a solo, discuss it with IMD directors. Bring in a CD or score so that it can be determined if the level of difficulty is appropriate for the accompanying ensemble.

PREPARATION

Practice, practice, practice. Your private teacher knows how to guide and instruct you on learning the technical and musical challenges of your solo. But you must do the work.

Play mock auditions by performing for people informally before the October audition date. This will reveal any weak areas to improve before the actual audition occurs.

THE AUDITION

Senior soloists are selected on one principal criterion: **HOW WELL THE PIECE IS PERFORMED THE NIGHT OF THE AUDITION.** It all comes down to what happens in the audition. Give yourself every opportunity to prepare both mentally and musically for the audition by avoiding distractions that could distract from you giving the best possible performance that night.

AN ACCOMPANIST IS REQUIRED. Students simply audition better with an accompanist. That means if you play a piano solo, your piano teacher should play the orchestra accompaniment on piano.

MEMORIZE 25% OR THE FIRST PAGE, WHICHEVER IS GREATER. Everyone must demonstrate their ability to memorize since the performances on stage are from memory.

In the audition room, perform your piece as if you were playing for a full concert hall. Give it your all both technically and musically. Senior solo auditions will be **OCTOBER 4 at 6PM** this year. Will you be ready?