

Orchestra, band, and chorus students have the opportunity to participate in this year's Solo and Ensemble Festival to be held February 21, 2015 at Still Middle School. Learning a solo or an ensemble and performing for a judge is an important step on the road to musical independence. Many students have already expressed an interest in participating, and it is now time to sign up and make the commitment to this outstanding learning opportunity. Although this is not a required music department activity, **we would like to encourage students to participate** at an appropriate level of their musical development.

What is solo and ensemble festival?

On February 21st, students who choose to participate will perform the solo or ensemble for an adjudicator who will provide a written evaluation of the performance. This evaluation includes suggestions for musical improvement and is an excellent opportunity for each student to improve as a musician. The judge will also provide a rating. When the student is well prepared, this is always a positive learning experience. **This is not a competitive situation, but an opportunity for musical growth for students at any ability level.** Parents and friends are invited to attend the performance.

How does each student prepare?

The student does the majority of the work. We will be available before and after school to work with students on their music. Each student may sign up for several help sessions outside of school that best fit his/her schedule. Sign-up sheets will be posted beginning in December. Solos should be mastered by the end of January. Rehearsals with piano accompanists will begin in early February. Each soloist will practice with his/her accompanist twice.

Although not required, **private lessons** can provide the weekly individual instruction that helps to make the learning and preparation process truly meaningful for the student. If you are interested in private lessons, with either a professional or with a qualified high school student, please talk to your band or orchestra teacher to get a list of recommended teachers.

How does my student obtain music?

For students taking private lessons with a professional, their private lesson instructor can select the solo for them. For students taking guided practice lessons, or no lessons at all, their band/chorus/orchestra director will select a solo for them. Ensemble music will be chosen by the band/chorus/orchestra director.

Students will be responsible for the purchase of an original copy of the piece of music they perform for the festival.

Are there any costs involved in participation?

All students performing a solo must be accompanied by a pianist. **We are happy to contract qualified accompanists for our students.** There will be a \$30.00 fee for this service. The fee covers practices with the pianist as well as the performance on the day of the contest. An accompanist may charge more for additional rehearsals if needed for longer, very advanced solos. The fee is paid directly to the accompanist. **Please do not send a check to school for the accompanist fee until the rehearsals with the accompanist begin.** Any student wishing to find his/her own accompanist is welcome to do so, but **please be careful to choose a person who has experience accompanying students.**

You are also responsible for paying an entry fee. The entry fee pays for the judges, the cost of transporting and renting pianos, and other details that cost money when putting on a large event such as the Solo & Ensemble Festival. **The cost is \$8.50 per solo and \$4.50 per ensemble member. This fee must be paid at the time the student signs up. Please make checks payable to Gregory Middle School and make sure your student's name and phone number appears on the check.** We will pay the IGSM fee in one large check.

Will it take the whole day?

All solos and ensembles will be scheduled between 8:00 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. on February 21st. Some special scheduling needs can be met if we know early enough, for example, "morning only because we have a wedding that afternoon." Please do not request afternoon because you like to sleep in. The closer we get to the actual contest date, the more difficult it becomes to make changes in the scheduling. The students will be at the performance site about 1 1/2 hours total for the solo and/or ensemble experience: warm-up, performance, and waiting for the ratings.

What do you need to do as a student?

1. Meet with your private teacher or chorus/band/orchestra director to choose a solo and/or ensemble. Each solo or ensemble must have at least **28 measures**. If your private teacher is picking your solo, your band/orchestra teacher **MUST** have the information and a copy of the accompaniment by December 1st.
2. Work on your music (don't wait until January!) and do your best.
3. Make sure you get plenty of help from us or your private teacher.
4. Always come to the help sessions you sign up for.
5. Make sure that you have ordered an original copy as soon as you know your piece and that the measures are numbered before your performance.

What do you need to do as a parent?

1. Encourage your musician to participate and work hard.
2. Provide transportation to the contest site and to all help sessions/rehearsals
3. Be responsible for the accompanist and participation fees.
4. Make sure the original of the music is ordered for your musician as soon as possible.

Please turn in/complete the following by November 7, 2014:

- Turn in the attached sheet along with a check totaling the fees indicated.

Orchestra Solo and Ensemble Entry Form

Student Name _____ Instrument _____

Please select all below that apply and return by Friday, November 7th. A check for all fees should be made out to GREGORY MIDDLE SCHOOL and should contain student's name and phone number.

GUIDELINES FOR SOLO/ENSEMBLE PARTICIPATION

Grade 6	One Solo
Grade 7	One Solo or One Ensemble
Grade 8	One Solo and/or One Ensemble
All Wind/Jazz/Select Strings	All Members are expected to perform a solo.

*Students who receive private instruction in piano may perform a piano solo. This is solely the responsibility of student and his/her parents.

SOLOS:

_____ I want to play a solo and my private teacher has selected/will select one for me.

Name of Solo _____

Arranger/Composer _____

***Accompaniments are due to band/orchestra teachers NO LATER THAN DECEMBER 1ST ***

_____ I want to play a solo and need to have one selected for me by my band/orchestra teacher.

_____ I would like to do a piano solo (I have played piano ___ years).

Name of Solo _____

Arranger/Composer _____

ACCOMPANISTS: The majority of solos are written with piano accompaniment, therefore you will need to arrange to have one play for you. An accompanist is a piano player who is experienced in performing with soloists. **We do not suggest that students accompany our soloists in this event.**

_____ I need an accompanist and agree to pay the \$30 fee.

(Please do not send payment now.)

_____ I have my own accompanist who is qualified to play with me.

Accompanist's name _____

ENSEMBLES: Please note that there is not always appropriate music available for every instrument pairing. Please consult your teacher if you have a question about combining different instruments in one ensemble.

Title _____

Composer _____

Ensemble Members	Instrument

Fees

_____ solos @ \$8.50 each = \$_____

_____ ensembles @ \$4.50 each = \$_____

Total amount enclosed \$_____

(Please do not send the accompanist fee at this time)

I have read the guidelines outlined above and give my student permission to participate in **Solo & Ensemble Contest** to be held on Saturday, February 21, 2015. I have made the check for the participation fee payable to Gregory Middle School and have included my child's name and phone number.

Student Signature _____

Print Student Name _____

Parent Signature _____