

RENO YOUTH MUSIC FESTIVAL RATINGS CRITERIA

SUPERIOR:

The Superior rating is the highest standard for the Reno Youth Music Festival. The Superior student performance should exhibit the following characteristics:

- "Clean" playing
 - Correct notes
 - Correct rhythms
 - Appropriate tempo
 - Appropriate phrasing
 - Dynamic contrast
 - Effective balance, voicing
 - Appropriate use of pedal
- Character of piece effectively displayed
- Stylistic correctness (within fairly wide parameters)
- Clear rhythmic organization - consistency of tempo
- Secure memory and quick recovery of slips
- Fluent and poised performance
- Age-appropriate maturity (students are pre-college)
- Solid, careful preparation
- Both (or all) pieces must be strong, effective performances. (It is OK for adjudicators to suggest other options/opinions without marking down.)

SUPERIOR WITH DISTINCTION:

The Superior is the highest standard for the RYMF. However, occasionally there may be exceptionally-talented students who play at an unusual level of quality for whom the rating, Superior with Distinction may be given. In addition to the guidelines for a Superior performance, all or most of the following qualities should be present in a Superior with Distinction performance:

- Musical maturity beyond age level
- Unusual fluency and ease of execution
- High level of poise
- Exceptional projection of style and character
- High level of communication, excitement, charisma, and/or drama - a "knock your socks off" quality to the performance. (A perky, extroverted personality is not enough to qualify for a Superior with Distinction.)

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EXCELLENT:

An Excellent rating reflects generally solid preparation but with more flaws and/or inconsistencies than a Superior performance. The aspects of the Excellent performance that kept it from being a Superior performance may include the following:

- Inappropriate tempo which impairs the "character" of the piece (too slow or fast for piece to "work")
- Editorial tempo markings may be adjusted by teachers at their discretion. Keep in mind, however, that a fast piece (such as a tarantella) is not correct if played too slow and a slow piece (such as a sarabande) may be incorrect played too fast.
- Lack of rhythmic organization or unsteadiness in tempo
- May be well-played technically but "musically flat"
- May be "musical" but technically lacking in proficiency
- Character and stylistic issues lacking or inappropriate
- Lacking somewhat in fluency
- Lacking somewhat in poise and confidence (by itself should not be a reason to downgrade from Superior to Excellent)
- Memory insecurity (but lapses generally recover well)
- One piece may be strong in preparation but the other weak
- Pieces may be not quite finished yet, but with strong potential

Adjudicator must clearly indicate on the judging sheet what issues kept the performance from being Superior. (The adjudicator should not just say to play more musically - specify what aspect of musicality is lacking and how it can be improved.) It is OK for adjudicator to suggest other options/opinions without marking down.

NEEDS ATTENTION

The Needs Attention rating indicates that one or more pieces are not finished yet. The performance may simply need more preparation time for a finished performance or there may be significant technical and/or musical issues which the student needs to address. These areas which need improvement may include the following:

- Significant errors in accuracy of notes, rhythm, etc.
- Significant technical problems (serious problems with tempo, fingering, phrasing, etc. so that performance is impaired)
- "Messy" playing in terms of pedal, phrasing, balance, etc.
- Significant lack of awareness of stylistic and musical issues
- Lack of musical and technical fluency
- Lack of listening and awareness of pedal
- Serious memory breakdowns
- Obvious incomplete preparation and/or lack of practice

When giving a Needs Attention rating, the adjudicator must clarify issues that need to be addressed by student and teacher to improve performance. Additional comments should be directed to the teacher on a separate sheet.