

# NNMTA Youth Piano Festival

## Ratings Criteria for Lower Division (Level 1-4)

### **SUPERIOR**

The Superior rating is the highest standard for the NNMTA Youth Piano Festival. For the Lower division, **an average student who plays cleanly should receive a Superior.**

### **LEVELS 1 & 2**

Students in Levels 1-2 are expected to be at an **early intermediate level**. A Superior rating should be given when the student's performance evidences solid, careful preparation demonstrated by:

- Correct notes and rhythms
- Acceptable tempo within wide parameters
- Fluent and poised performance
- Clean performance of both pieces
- Basic dynamic contrast (loud/soft)
- Basic clean pedaling
- Secure memory or quick recovery of slips

### **LEVEL 3**

Students in Level 3 are expected to be at an **intermediate level**. A Superior rating should be given when the student's performance evidences solid, careful preparation demonstrated by:

- Correct notes and rhythms
- Appropriate tempo
- Appropriate phrase shaping
- Fluent and poised performance
- Stylistic correctness within fairly wide parameters
- Clean performance of both pieces, showing signs of musical maturity in balance and phrasing
- Dynamic contrast
- Appropriate use of pedal
- Balance between hands
- Secure memory or quick recovery of slips

### **LEVEL 4**

Students in Level 4 are expected to be at a **late intermediate level**. A Superior rating should be given when the student's performance evidences solid, careful preparation demonstrated by:

- Correct notes and rhythms
- Appropriate and consistent tempo
- Clear rhythmic organization
- Character of the piece displayed
- Fluent and poised performance
- Stylistic correctness within fairly wide parameters
- Solid performance of both pieces, showing musical maturity in balance and phrasing.
- Dynamic contrast
- Balance between hands
- Phrase shaping
- Appropriate use of pedal
- Secure memory or quick recovery of slips

Adjudicators may suggest other options/opinions for interpretation or style without downgrading the rating.

## **SUPERIOR WITH DISTINCTION**

Superior is the highest rating for this Festival. 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:

- Exceptional musical maturity
- Exceptional projection of style and character
- Unusual fluency and ease of execution
- 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 Distinction.)

## **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 keep it from being a Superior performance may include the following:

- Lack of rhythmic organization, unsteadiness in tempo, or inappropriate tempo that impairs the character of the piece
- Musical but lacking in technical proficiency
- Lacking 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 is weak
- Pieces may not be polished but have strong potential

An adjudicator must clearly indicate on the judging sheet specifics regarding the issues that kept the performance from being Superior.

## **NEEDS ATTENTION**

The Needs Attention rating is appropriate when a student's pieces may need more preparation time for an adequate 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 problems with tempo, fingering, phrasing, etc. so that performance is impaired
- Serious memory breakdowns

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

# **NNMTA Youth Piano Festival**

## **Ratings Criteria for Upper Division (Levels 5-11) and Young Artist Medalist**

### **SUPERIOR**

The Superior rating is the highest standard for the NNMTA Youth Piano Festival. A Superior rating should be given when the student's performance evidences solid, careful preparation demonstrated by:

- Correct notes and rhythms
- Appropriate and consistent tempo
- Clear rhythmic organization
- Character of the piece displayed
- Fluent and poised performance
- Secure memory or quick recovery of slips
- Dynamic contrast
- Effective balance and voicing
- Effective phrase shaping
- Appropriate use of pedal
- Stylistic correctness within fairly wide parameters
- Strong, effective performance of both pieces, showing musical maturity

Adjudicators may suggest other options/opinions for interpretation or style without downgrading the rating.

### **SUPERIOR WITH DISTINCTION**

Superior is the highest rating for this Festival. 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:

- Exceptional musical maturity
- Exceptional projection of style and character
- Unusual fluency and ease of execution
- 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 Distinction.)

### **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 keep it from being a Superior performance may include the following:

- Lacking rhythmic organization, unsteadiness in tempo, or inappropriate tempo that impairs the character of the piece
- Lacking in technical proficiency
- Lacking fluency
- Lacking poise and confidence (by itself not a reason to downgrade from Superior to Excellent)
- Musically flat
- Character and stylistic issues lacking or inappropriate
- Memory insecurity (but lapses generally recover well)
- Pieces may not be polished but have strong potential
- One piece may be strong in preparation but the other weak

An adjudicator must clearly indicate on the judging sheet specifics regarding the issues that kept the performance from being Superior.

## **NEEDS ATTENTION**

The Needs Attention rating is appropriate when a student's pieces may need more preparation time for an adequate 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 so that performance is impaired
- "Messy" playing in terms of pedal, phrasing, balance, etc.
- Significant lack of awareness of stylistic and interpretation issues
- Lack of musical and technical fluency
- Lack of listening and awareness of pedal
- Serious memory breakdowns

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