

## NJ-ACDA HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL FESTIVAL GENERAL INFORMATION

	page
<b>1. Overview of Festival Participation</b>	1
<b>2. Ways to Participate</b>	2
<b>3. Training Tomorrow’s Audience</b>	3

### Overview of Festival Participation

Eligibility: Choral ensembles of any size from any high school—public, private, and parochial—are eligible to participate. Non-member directors are welcome to bring their choirs to Festival. Member directors receive a reduced registration fee. Adjudicators have no awareness of which directors are ACDA members.

Purpose: Each participating ensemble is adjudicated in both performance and in sight reading. Directors may choose whether they wish to receive graded ratings, or verbal comments only. Directors are also given a choice of four levels of sight singing difficulty. (See explanation of sight singing procedures.)

Festival Day Procedure: Each participating ensemble is “in process” **for one full hour**. Directors are encouraged to have their students on site for as much of the Festival day as possible, in order to allow them to hear other ensembles. An ensemble is called from the theatre when it is time for their **20-minute warm-up**. Following that, the ensemble moves to the theatre stage, where it performs the four prepared selections (see Handbook), after which one of the three performance adjudicators joins the group on stage for a brief “feedback” session. The **performance process is given 20 minutes**. Then the group goes to a different room for a **20-minute sight reading session**. Final scores are usually available within an hour after a group has completed the process.

Number of Ensembles: Any high school may enter more than one ensemble in the Festival. If registration is particularly tight, there may be a limit of two per school.

Scoring and Competition: The NJ-ACDA High School Choral Festival focuses on each individual group’s achievement, rather than on competition between the participating choirs. The only time that ratings are announced publicly is when ALL FOUR adjudicators have awarded the highest possible rating to a group, and the sight singing example chosen is from the most difficult level.

Time Frame: A Festival day typically begins with check-in about 8:30 AM, with performances beginning around 9:00 AM. The last performance is usually completed by 3:30 PM. Directors are strongly encouraged to have their students partake of as much of the day as possible. (Public school directors have the potential to earn certification credits, on the basis of time spent at the Festival.)

## Many Ways to Participate in the Festival Don't miss out!

The NJ-ACDA High School Choral Festival—like its sponsoring organization—offers “goodies” on many levels. Somewhere between thirty and forty ensembles from around the state participate each year for **full adjudication**. That is not, however, the only option for those who wish to attend.

For a variety of reasons, you may prefer to have your group receive only **verbal adjudication, without an actual numerical rating**. Perhaps you feel this would be a good way to have first-time participants “feel” the environment without the sense of pressure which can arise from the prospect of ratings.

In addition, please be aware that you are welcome to bring students purely to **listen, without even singing**. Where else will they be able to hear so many good high school choral ensembles all in one day? Believe me, it is a treat!

The Festival is one way that ACDA affirms the importance of and excitement for choral music education throughout the state. In whatever way you choose to participate, please don't miss out!

## Training Tomorrow's Audience

In addition to the obvious training students must undergo in preparation for Festival performance, the High School Choral Festival offers the opportunity for students to practice being respectful and increasingly sophisticated members of an audience. In order to encourage this trend, participating directors are asked to draw their students' attention to the **respect and appreciation which is genuinely due every group** with the wherewithal to present itself in performance:

- quiet attentiveness during all performances;
- no entrances/exits to the theatre during a performance;
- enthusiastic applause for groups and/or their performances,  
(but not of such a nature as calls attention to any particular audience or choir member by calling of names, etc.);
- respectful quiet while the group on stage is being instructed by an adjudicator.

Please also consider demonstrating the importance you attach to hearing other high school singers: **Plan to make Festival attendance an all-day event**, even perhaps asking students to take special note of their favorite selection and favorite choir for a post-Festival discussion. We'll help by printing a "program" for each day.

Whatever your plan, we hope that you and your students have an enjoyable, challenging and thought-provoking time at the Festival!