

American Choral Directors' Association, New Jersey Chapter  
**High School Choral Festival**

Coordinator: Dr. Deborah Simpkin King

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR FESTIVAL PARTICIPATION**

	page
A. Submission of repertoire	1
B. What to Bring	1
C. At the Festival	2
Stage Performance Ratings	3
Sight Singing Procedures	4
Sight Reading Ratings	6
Sight Reading Materials - Parameters	7
Repertoire submission template	8

**A. Submission of repertoire**

At least two weeks prior to the Festival, (specific date to be set each year), send a list of repertoire to be performed by each chorus to the Festival Coordinator. Please use the template provided at the end of this document for your submission, so that pertinent information is not left out.

**B. What to Bring**

1. Please provide and number **three manila envelopes** (#1, #2, #3--one for each performance adjudicator) for each choir you are bringing, and label each envelope with the following information:
  - name of school
  - name of group
  - director's name
  - day and time of performance.
2. Fill out four **adjudication forms** (three for performance; one for sight singing--enclosed) for each ensemble you are bringing, and distribute the performance forms among the three folders. Please rubber-band the three folders together, leaving the sight singing form, and the final ratings form on the outside of folder, but secured within the rubber band.
3. Enclose a **complete set of music** in each envelope. (It is not required that music for the warm-up selection be included.) **MEASURES SHOULD BE NUMBERED.**

**\*\*Reminder: No illegally copied music is to be used in the Festival in any form. Use of such is grounds for disqualification.**

4. Enclose a **blank cassette tape** of sufficient length to record your performance and subsequent remarks **in each envelope**. Number each cassette appropriately for the envelope in which it is placed, and write the name of the school and group on the tape, as well.

C. At the Festival

Upon arrival, bring the three envelopes, the sight singing adjudication form, and the final ratings form (banded together) with you to the Festival check-in table on the day of your performance. After having thus checked, have your students enter the concert hall quietly, and at a time when no group is singing. **NO ONE WILL BE ALLOWED TO ENTER OR EXIT THE HALL DURING A PERFORMANCE.**

At approximately 30 minutes prior to your performance time, your group will be called out of the hall and escorted to the warm-up room, where you will have 20 minutes in which to prepare for performance. Following your performance on stage, you and your group will be escorted to a different room for the sight singing portion of the adjudication. You may collect your envelopes at the check-in table, containing all of the aforementioned items, complete with adjudicators' comments and ratings, approximately one hour after your group has finished singing. **If you do not pick up your envelopes they will not be mailed to you.**

Please instruct your students ahead of time in appropriate audience response, that all might have the best experience possible.

Deborah Simpkin King, Coordinator  
NJ-ACDA High School Choral Festival  
cantate@DSKsing.com  
Office: 201-918-3009  
Cell: 973-698-6927  
Fax: 973-414-0229

# NJ-ACDA HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL FESTIVAL

## STAGE PERFORMANCE RATINGS

**Rating I (Superior)**. The best conceivable performance for the event being adjudicated; worthy of the distinction of being recognized as the highest level of achievement. While the adjudicator might find some minor points to criticize and make some helpful suggestions for further improvement, the comment sheet reflects a preponderance of 1's for each of the subdivisions. A highly polished performance.

**Rating II (Outstanding)**. A commendable, above-average performance in many respects, but not worthy of the very highest rating. Participants usually show the results of sound, fundamental training, but the performance lacks the attention to details of polish and finesse that signify a superior performance. The subdivisions on the comment sheet reflect more 2's than 1's. It is relatively easy for an adjudicator to comment on this performance because the weaknesses stand out clearly and suggestions can usually be focused on something specific and helpful. A performance of distinctive quality.

**Rating III (Excellent)**. An average performance, but not outstanding; showing accomplishment and marked promise, but lacking in one or more essential qualities. This division indicates room for improvement in some fundamental items listed on the comment sheet. A few 1's and 2's might show on the comment sheet, but there will also be a number of 3's. The performance has some basically fine qualities but there are opportunities for the adjudicator to make suggestions for general improvement in those fundamental factors in which the performance revealed weakness.

**Rating IV (Good)**. This rating describes a performance which has some positive attributes, but which is lacking some fundamental qualities and shows some obvious weaknesses; ie., is generally weak and uncertain. There are numerous errors and the performance reveals basic weaknesses in most of the fundamental factors listed. The subdivisions on the adjudication sheet would show a good many 4's. Not much space is probably be devoted to pointing out specific errors, but comments should be encouraging and contain helpful suggestions for improvement. The comments could suggest such things as a more favorable schedule, more regular rehearsals, more individual practice or sectionals, or point basic areas that are in need of concentrated attention. Specific exercises thought to be helpful might be included.

**Rating V (Fair)**. A performance revealing almost a complete lack of preparedness and understanding. **This rating is rarely used.** In some cases this may be due to students attempting music which is too advanced for them. In others it may be due to careless attitudes or inattention to proper singing and performance habits. The comment sheet will be filled with 4's and 5's. The adjudicator must use a great deal of tact in making comments here and any commendable features must be singled out after deficiencies are noted. Remarks should be honest, even prodding, but never sarcastic.

(1997)

NJ-ACDA HIGH SCHOOL CHORAL FESTIVAL  
SIGHTREADING ADJUDICATION

**Philosophical Basis**

As an organization dedicated to excellence in both performance of and education in music, the Board of Directors of the New Jersey Chapter of the American Choral Directors' Association seeks to support music educators in their efforts to teach music literacy skills to their students, even as they lead them in stimulating and enriching performance opportunities. The sightreading adjudication which became part of the New Jersey High School Choral Festival in 1997, seeks to stimulate students in their pursuit of literacy skills, and to provide educators with tangible evidence of such skill-development within their students.

**Regulations**

*Participation Requirement:* All organizations which perform in Part I (Concert Performance) of the High School Choral Festival are required to participate in Part II (Sightreading Adjudication), and identical membership must participate in both Parts.

*Ratings:* Ratings received in sightreading will be published separately from those received in performance, and will in no way affect the ratings received in performance. There will be separate engraved rating attachments for Festival plaques for Parts I and II of the Festival.

*Music Requirement:* In an effort to address the issue of choice of difficulty of selected examples to be sightread, the Festival Committee decided to provide four difficulty levels for most voicings. You will find a listing of this disposition of material at the end of this procedure statement.

You must sightread in the voicing in which you perform. **You may select difficulty level 1, 2, 3, or 4**, as available within your voicing, for your choir to read. **This choice of difficulty, along with your sightsinging rating, will be reflected on your Festival plaque.** (The idea behind this is to avoid discouraging directors from attempting the more challenging examples. A lower rating on a Level 4 selection, for example, would actually represent a stronger showing than a top rating on a Level 1 selection.)

*Judging Criteria:* Sightreading will be judged on accuracy of reading (correct pitches, good intonation, correct rhythms) and musical effect (response to director's gestures and phrasing & work stress/release). These basic areas will be mathematically reflected on our new Sight Reading Adjudication Form.

*Prior Knowledge of the Music:* Prior knowledge of the music to be sight read is impossible, as it is newly commissioned for this Festival.

*Code of Honor and Confidentiality:* For obvious reasons, directors and singers must not speak to other directors and/or singers about the selections used for the

sightreading adjudication until the two-day event has reached completion. New material will be produced each year.

### **Procedure of the Adjudication**

*Six-minute instruction period:* Score study and instruction. During this period in which the director prepares his/her ensemble to sight-read, the following activities are permissible:

- tonic chord played in broken chord style;
- rhythmic rehearsal (tapping, speaking, clapping)
- student questions/comments, as allowed by director

There must, however, be **no tonal reproduction** in any form (humming, singing, playing on piano, etc.). Neither the students nor the director may mark in the music unless instructed to do so by the adjudicator.

*First reading (may be accompanied):* At the completion of the instruction period, the tonic chord will be played in broken-chord style, and the students may reproduce the tonic chord, if the director so instructs. The accompanist will then give the starting pitches, which each section may sing, after which no further warm-up or instruction is permitted. The selection may then be sung with piano accompaniment. **No accompanist will be provided.** You must make whatever accommodation for this you wish to have in place. The ensemble may use their own preferred method of sight singing (syllables, numbers, "la," words, etc.) for the first reading.

*One-minute instruction:* The director will have one minute for discussion between the first and second readings, utilizing the same guidelines as apply to the initial instruction period.

*Second reading (unaccompanied):* Starting pitches will be played in broken-chord style, and the sections may sing the pitches. The selection will read the composition this time without accompaniment. The text provided with the example must be used for the final reading.

Additional notes: Both readings will be adjudicated. The director is not allowed to sing, or to make any audible contribution to the sight-read performance.

### **Ratings**

Sightreading performances will be assessed using the same five-tier scale as is used in concert performances.

## Sight Reading Ratings

Rating:		V	IV	III	II	I	*	
Level 1: Scores (easiest)	5	4	3	2	1			
Level 2: Scores		5	4	3	2	1		
Level 3: Scores			5	4	3	2	1	
Level 4: Scores (most difficult)				5	4	3	2	1

Your choir's final sight reading score is reflected in a single rating, based on the convergence of level of difficulty selected for reading (director's choice), and level of proficiency. The STAR rating is for that rare perfect score on the most difficult selection! This ratings grid is designed to encourage groups to challenge their abilities, while not being penalized for taking a bit of a risk.

You will also find the musical parameters of each difficulty level outlined below, in order to assist your advance thought regarding the level you will select for your choir.

**NOTE:** Previous years' books are available for purchase. See order form on Festival Home Page.

NJ-ACDA High School Choral Festival  
**Sight Reading Materials**  
**Musical Parameters employed in 1999**  
 Constructed by Deborah Simpkin King, Festival Coordinator

Level	Intervals	Pitches	Mode	Note Types	Meter	Texture
Level 1	stepwise diatonic, except cadential bass V-I	no accidentals	major only	quarters and halves; no dotted rhythms	simple	chordal
Level 2	skips of 3rds added still mostly stepwise	few accidentals, always stepped into	major only	some eighth-notes & dotted half-notes added	simple	chordal
Level 3	occasional skips of 4th & 5th (always in chord)		major or minor	dotted quarters & eighths added	compound added	minimal imitation; ostinato
Level 4	6th & octave added	may skip into closely-related key accidentals		syncopation added	cut-time added	imitation

# Festival Repertoire Template

**It is required that Directors submit repertoire to be performed at the Festival a minimum of one week in advance to the Coordinator. Please copy/paste the following template into an e-mail note, complete it with your information, and e-mail it to Deborah King no later than April 14, 2008: [cantate@DSKsing.com](mailto:cantate@DSKsing.com)**

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(name of school and ensemble)

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(name of director)

**Category:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Student Body Size:** \_\_\_\_\_

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[title of warm-up selection]

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[composer of warm-up selection]

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[title of required selection]  
selection]

---

[composer of required

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[title of free choice #1]  
#1]

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[composer of free choice

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[title of free choice #2]  
#2]

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[composer of free choice