

What's New in PMEA Music Performance Assessment for 2025!

Tom Snyder, MPA Coordinator

The PMEA State Board approved numerous proposals involving the Music Performance Assessment program at their July meeting that will be implemented this school year.

- **Approved the *PMEA Selective Music List – Mixed Chorus* as a PMEA document.**

Last updated in 1991, the new SML for Mixed Chorus and its companion *Introduction* document are posted within the MPA area of the PMEA website. The over 5,000 pieces included represent a compilation of seven source lists from Iowa, Kansas, North Carolina, New York, the 'Teaching Music Through Performance' series, Texas, and Virginia along with pieces submitted by PMEA directors in previous years. A 'PMEA Rating' for each piece was derived from the ratings received on one or more of the source lists, taking into consideration that grade level assignments are not standardized among lists or by publishers. The *PMEA Selective Music List – String Orchestra* is planned to be completed and posted for use for the 2025 season as a 'Draft' document prior to formal approval next summer.

- **Approved updated Assessment Forms for Band, String Orchestra, Chorus, Solo (Winds/Percussion/Strings/Vocal), and Small Ensemble (Winds/Percussion/Strings/Vocal).**

Given that the most recent PMEA Assessment forms were implemented in 2008, the overall goal for developing these updates was to incorporate the experiences and feedback shared by adjudicators and directors since then to accomplish the following:

- To provide a separate Assessment form for String Orchestra to better reflect the essential aspects of playing string instruments. Since few Full Orchestras participate at this time, an assessment form for that ensemble will be developed in the future.
- To enhance clarity and definition within each Evaluation Area concerning the 'Specific Aspects' of what is being assessed
- To replace the Evaluation Area of 'Interpretation' with 'Expression' to better capture the essence of this critical aesthetic component as much more clearly defined within its Specific Aspects
- To restructure the Evaluation Areas for Chorus to better reflect how the core facets of vocal performance are considered and addressed in both pedagogy and assessment
- To provide updated 'Additional Descriptors' as an improved resource for directors, students, and adjudicators.

- **Approved an MPA for Marching Band as a pilot program.**

The goal is to provide a music performance assessment opportunity through PMEA for marching bands that perform in all styles, including bands that do not participate in competitions at all or do not wish to participate in the 'ranking' or 'placement' aspect of a typical competition. This Marching Band MPA is intended to function as a 'performance assessment component' embedded within an existing festival-type event. Participation would be optional for the directors involved within a financial structure similar to a large ensemble (BOC) MPA. This program is planned as a two-year pilot continuing through fall 2025. Festival hosts possibly interested in including an MPA component in 2025 should contact me for additional information.

- **Approved a Sight-reading component for Choral MPA's as a pilot program.**

This pilot would be optional both for Choral MPA hosts to include at their MPA and for ensembles to include as part of their MPA participation. For those hosts and choruses that do participate this year, the resulting rating from the sight-reading component would not be included in the Final Rating.

- **Confirming that the Jazz Ensemble MPA will be reinstated.**

Updated Guides, Assessment Forms, and other supporting documents will be posted when completed.

Please consider participating in an MPA in 2025 or hosting within one of the many available format options. Feel free to reach out to your PMEA District's MPA Rep or to me with questions about any aspect of the MPA program at mpa@pmea.net.