



THE NATIONALS
MUSICFEST CANADA
FINALES NATIONALES

In partnership with  *en collaboration avec*
NATIONAL ARTS CENTRE CENTRE NATIONAL DES ARTS

ENSEMBLE LISTENING GUIDE for young musicians

Performances are judged to be excellent when the performers use and control the elements of music in a masterful and stylistic way to make the sounds and their relationships interesting, compelling and moving.

EXPLANATION

Listeners judge the quality of a performance based on how the ensemble makes them feel when they convey the intentions of the composer and the expressive qualities of the music. Some criteria for judgement include:

SOUND:

- Does the tone suit the styles being performed?
- Do the sections produce a blended sound? A good blend is achieved when the tone from each performer is combined with others so that none sticks out.
- Does the tone have a quality like that of excellent performers?
- Does the sound represent the emotions being portrayed?
- Is the music in tune within each section of the ensemble and between the sections?

BALANCE:

- Can the melody be heard clearly?
- When required, does the ensemble produce a rich, full sound by making all of the notes of the chord fit together?
- Can all voices be heard without any individual or section being too loud?
- Are the individual sounds of the right volume to produce a balanced harmony?

TECHNIQUE:

- Do all the musicians demonstrate control of the hard parts in the music?
- Do the musicians make you feel that they are comfortable producing the sounds?
- Does the group play rhythms with precision?
- Does the ensemble match articulations and control the beginning and end of the sounds?
- Does the conductor show the music clearly and does the ensemble respond?

MUSICALITY:

- Does the ensemble show an understanding of the style and expressive qualities of the music?
- Are the melodic lines shaped with enough change and variety in volume levels?
- Does the ensemble convey energy and emotion, and captivate the audience with its performance?
- Does the ensemble change the character and mood of the music?
- When solos are improvised do they fit with the chords and style of the music, and are they innovative, interesting and well constructed?

OVERALL IMPRESSION:

- Considering the difficulty of the music and the size and musical resources of the ensemble does the music fit the group?
- Are the pieces performed in an order that varies the mood and satisfies the listener?
- Do the musicians appear focused and confident to give an excellent performance?
- Does the appearance, attitude and discipline of the ensemble improve the performance?

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ENSEMBLE LISTENING GUIDE for high school musicians

Performances are judged to be excellent when the performers use and control the elements of music in a masterful and stylistic way to make the sounds and their relationships interesting, compelling and moving.

ELABORATION

Listeners judge the quality of a performance based on how the ensemble makes them feel when they convey the intentions of the composer and the expressive qualities of the music. Some criteria for judgement include:

SOUND:

- Is the tone appropriate to the styles being performed?
- Do the sections produce a blended sound? A good blend is achieved when the tone from each is indistinguishable from the section sound rather than being separate and distinct.
- Is the tone idiomatic? Idiomatic sounds are those with the quality like that of excellent performers and typically result from good technique.
- When required, can the ensemble produce a sound which is consistently beautiful and appealing without being forced and also modify the sound to fit the emotions being expressed?
- Is the music in tune within each section of the ensemble and between the sections?

BALANCE:

- Is the melody sufficiently audible?
- When required, does the ensemble produce a rich, full sound with control of all the chord tones?
- Can all voices be heard without any individual or section being overpowering?
- Are the individual sounds of an appropriate volume to result in harmonic balance?

TECHNIQUE:

- Do all the musicians demonstrate control of the technical challenges in the music?
- Do the musicians perform with facility?
- Is the group rhythmically precise, with appropriate articulation and unified control of the beginning and end of the sounds?
- Does the conductor show the music clearly and does the ensemble respond?

MUSICALITY:

- Does the ensemble show an understanding of the style and expressive qualities of the music?
- Are the melodic lines shaped appropriately and with sufficient range and variety in dynamic levels?
- Does the ensemble convey energy and emotion appropriately, and generate excitement to captivate the audience by creating artistic high points in the performance?
- Are aspects of unity and variety given attention and enhanced by changes in character and mood?
- When solos are improvised do they fit with the chords and style of the music, and are they innovative, interesting and well constructed?

OVERALL IMPRESSION:

- Is the music appropriate to the group with regard to difficulty and the musical resources of the ensemble?
- Are the pieces performed in an order that sufficiently varies the intensity of the music to keep the listener engaged in the performance?
- Do the musicians appear focused and confident to give an excellent performance?
- Is the performance enhanced by the appearance, attitude and discipline of the ensemble?