Category Guidelines

Music Composition

MUSIC COMPOSITION is the process of creating a new piece of music. The composer (student submitting entry) is a person who expresses their own thoughts and ideas through the use of sound. The student composer may submit an entry performed by an individual or group and/or make use of a sound library generated performance of a composed score. Student composers are not required to perform their composition, but a recording of the composition must be included.

Consider the following musical styles and instruments to portray your original composition: A Cappella, Blues, Choral, Country, Electronic, Hip hop, Jazz, Latin, Musical, Orchestral, Pop, R&B, Religious, Rock, Symphonic/Concert Band and Traditional.

An explanation of the origin of the music and/or the significance of the music style might be a useful addition to the artist statement when submitting a music composition that involves traditional, cultural or regional instruments. Whether an entry displays formal composition technique or a simple approach, it will be judged primarily on how well the student uses his or her artistic vision to portray the theme, originality and creativity.

All instruments, sounds, styles and combinations are accepted. Software may be used to produce an audio recording. Entries containing algorithmic composition techniques are not accepted. Digital technology and/or software can be used to develop, enhance and/or present an entry but may not provide the primary design and/or concept. Entrants must provide a brief description of the tools and method, including any generative elements.

Music Score/Notation (For Middle and High School grade divisions only):

- Middle and High School grade divisions must include music score/notation, either traditional or tablature, or a written reflective statement that provides a musically technical explanation of how the music was created (100 words or less).
- Notation software may be used to create a score. Whether the score is hand-written or software-generated, appropriate instrumentation and voicing are required for the performance.

Copyright: Use of copyrighted material is prohibited. Plagiarized entries will be disqualified.

Suggestions for Audio Quality:

- Do not place the recording device on top of an instrument(s) or speakers.
- Turn off all noise-making devices in the room (air conditioners, fans, telephones, etc.).
- Record a short test and listen to it. If needed, change the record volume or microphone location.
- Make sure the music is audible on the recording.
- Allow for two seconds of silence at the beginning and end of your recording.

Submission Requirements:

- Only new pieces of artwork inspired by the theme may be submitted.
- Each entry must be the original work of one student only.
- Notation is required for the middle and high school divisions. Accepted file types include PDF.
- Audio recording must not exceed 5 minutes in length and 1,000 MB (1,000 megabyte) in file size.
- Accepted audio file formats include: MP3 and WAV.
- Submit artwork and student entry form according to your PTA's instructions.
- If necessary, label CD/DVD/flash drive with title of artwork, arts category and division.

All participants must also follow Official Rules for Participation