



AUDITIONS AND EVALUATIONS

An Overview

Auditions and Evaluations is an educational program for harp students sponsored by the American Harp Society, Inc. Participants come specifically to be heard and to hear one another. Because this is a unique two-part program, there is special focus on the improvement that can be made by participating on both days.

The word “audition” comes from the Latin [audio] which means “to hear.” We must not confuse our Harp Society “Auditions” with the more common usage of the word audition; for this is not a competition. On the first day, participants play pieces of their own choosing for an advisor and for one another. The advisor gives each student feedback on their performance. A performer’s worksheet or traditional theory test is given. On the second day of the program, about a month later, participants show their improvement by playing the same pieces again. Because this is not a competition, no prizes are given, however everyone who participates both days receives a Certificate of Participation from the Music Education Committee of the American Harp Society.

Participants

Students of any level or age may participate in A&E. Music of any genre is encouraged including but not limited to classical, folk, jazz, and sacred. Chapters will choose either a time limit or a set number of pieces for each participant to play. Students should keep in mind this event is intended to be a learning experience; it is a good opportunity to set a goal, practice performing, hear others play, receive feedback from a professional other than your usual teacher, and then return to perform the same music again after feedback.

Chapters will choose either a performer’s worksheet or traditional theory test to complete on first day of the event. A short ear training test is also available. This is a nice way to encourage well-rounded music understanding. Students can challenge themselves to see how much theory they know (in the theory test) or they can reflect on the pieces they have performed and how their performance went (performer’s worksheet).

Participants should be members of their local chapter.

Teachers

Teachers may consider helping organize the event. The guest advisor's comments should reinforce and compliment things you have taught your students as well as give a new perspective. Theory tests can give insight into how much information your student has retained or also give opportunity for discussion and learning. The performer's worksheet can provide nice discussion points for you and your student and also keep them thoughtful about their goals and progress.

Teachers whose students are participating should be members of their local chapter as well as members of the American Harp Society, Inc.

Chapter Members

This two-part event builds great community among local harpists. Even if you or your students are not participating, consider volunteering for the event.

History of the Auditions and Evaluations Program

Marcel Grandjany and the Founding Committee envisioned education as the biggest priority for the American Harp Society. It was with great enthusiasm that in 1968 Lucien Thomson accepted the suggestion of the new President, Catherine Gotthoffer, to set up the Auditions and Evaluations Program. "The benefit this brings to students is enormous, giving them goals to work toward and improving musicianship in several ways."*

Lucien Thomson was the Chairman of the Music Education Committee from 1968 to 2000. Over the years, he visited many chapters as a guest advisor, and oversaw the preparation of nearly 3000 Certificates of Participation during his tenure. William Lovelace followed as chair and saw the number of certificates increase to nearly 5,500.

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