



School Orchestra

Objectives of the Junior High String Program

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This article outlines the middle school curriculum which follows the 3-year elementary school curriculum published in MN ASTA's *Strings 'n Stuff* Fall 1997 issue. The first set of skills are ones students will have already learned in elementary school. The second set of skills are to be accomplished by the end of junior high. In choosing music for this level, it is important to be aware of stylistic demands through a wide range of music of the historical periods. Each piece selected to introduce a skill must not be too complex so that students will easily be aware of the new challenges.

To be Accomplished by the End of the Elementary String Program

Rhythm and Reading

Students must have a playing knowledge of $\frac{6}{8}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, $\frac{4}{4}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$. They must be able to play even patterns (♩ ♩, ♪♪, ♪♪♪), dotted rhythms (♩. ♪, ♪. ♪), and be able to differentiate between these and triplet patterns (♩♪♪). Students must be able to play these rhythmical patterns in scales and arpeggios and as they appear in musical literature.

Students must have a working knowledge of various scales/keys including: D Major, G Major, C Major, F Major, B \flat Major, b minor e minor, a minor, d minor, g minor. They must be able to sight read relatively easy works and be aware of key signatures, meters and tempo markings.

Left Hand Skills

Violin and violists must be able to play from first through 3rd position. Cellists and bassists must be able to play from first through 4th position. Students must begin using vibrato. They must be able

to play some harmonics and be able to play left hand pizzicato.

Right Hand Skills

Students must be aware of and execute differences in articulation such as staccato and spiccato bowing, legato and slurred bowing. Students must use the appropriate bowing for each historical period.

Students must be able to recognize the need for and play in extreme dynamic ranges. They must produce crescendos and diminuendos where the music obviously calls for them.

Students must begin to execute bow articulations using the proper amount and placement of bow.

Ensemble

Students must have an awareness of elementary harmonies and be able to play in two, three and four parts. They must be able to play alone, accompanied by piano, in chamber groups of two or three and in a larger group with a conductor.

To be Accomplished by the End of the Junior High String Program

Rhythm and Reading

Students must expand their knowledge of meter to $\frac{3}{8}$, $\frac{9}{8}$, $\frac{1}{8}$ $\frac{2}{8}$ and $\frac{2}{2}$. Students must be able to play the increased complexity of rhythmic patterns as is found in most junior high music. Students must be able to read and apply various orchestral signs such as D.C., D.S., Fine, Divisi, Ritard, Con Sord.

Students must expand their knowledge of keys to include A Major, E Major, E \flat Major, F \sharp minor, c \sharp minor, c minor. Students must be able to modulate be-

tween related keys in a piece of music and be able to play accidentals within a key. Students must be able to sight read fairly complex works. They must develop the ability to read ahead and be prepared for markings indicating expression, style, mood and key change.

Left Hand Skills

Students must expand their playing range to 5th position for violin and cello and to 4th position for viola and bass. Students must refine the use of vibrato and be aware of changes in vibrato depending on the character of the music used. They must expand use of harmonics to false or fingered harmonics and begin to use double stops when called for in music (thirds, sixths, octaves).

Right Hand Skills

Students must be aware of and execute subtle differences in articulation such as accented and unaccented martelé, staccato and spiccato, legato and slurred bowing. Students must have awareness of the bow distribution and bow placement necessary to execute the above articulations.

Students must be able to play with increased subtlety in dynamics. They must increase the differences between the loudest and softest tones they produce.

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