

## **Judges Meeting Notes November 18, 2019**

### ***AIM Theory Registration Period is November 18 – December 9, 2019***

**Volunteer Sign Up form is required before teachers can enroll students.** This will only need to be filled out once. However, if registration continues on a different device (different computer, tablet, or phone), it will take you to the Volunteer Sign Up form again. Best to do all registration on same device OR be sure all information is the same if you fill the form out more than one.

Northwestern Volunteer Shifts:        8am-11am; 11am-2pm; 2pm-5pm  
Lake Forest Volunteer Shifts:        11am-2pm; 2pm-5pm

**All Teachers are requested to register students in one location only.** All teachers will be assigned one location as Northwestern or Lake Forest for student registrations and volunteer location.

**Teachers can register students at any time during the registration period,** singly, a few at a time, or all at once. Students added to cart will remain in cart until checkout process is completed (like online shopping). If you notice errors before checkout, please delete student and re-enter student information. If you notice errors after check out, go to Edit Student Registration page in the Members ONLY page to make any changes. Changes can be made any time until the registration deadline.

**Students will ONLY appear in the Edit Student Registration page** after the checkout and payment has been made. After checkout, be sure to check the Edit Student Registration page, to make sure all students are registered. If a student does not appear on this page, the student is not registered. Please take care to spell student names carefully, as what is entered is how it will appear on the certificate (proper capitalization requested!).

**Only Teachers are requested to register and pay for their students.** Please do not give your account information to parents and have them register their child, or make payment. Teacher accounts are linked to the billing address of the credit card payment, so if a parent enters their name and billing address during payment, this new name will override the teacher account name.

### **Level 1's and 2's**

Level 1's and 2's can take their exam at either Northwestern or Lake Forest in either of the January exam dates and should be registered now. Level 1's and 2's that will take the exam on April 19 at My Piano Studio should NOT register now. These registrations will occur with the Performance Exam registration

Repertoire information is only required for Level 2. Please enter only last names for composers and simple titles. These entries are used to generate score sheets so long titles will create errors during the mail merge process. For example, Write:

Mozart, instead of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart  
Sonata in C, 1<sup>st</sup> mvt, instead of Sonata in C Major, first movement  
For Source, L4-23, instead of Level 4, page 23, etc.

### **Repertoire Permission**

- If you want to use a piece that is not in the syllabus, please request it from Stephanie Myers, state repertoire chair, by the Jan. 15th deadline. (Send copy of the first and last page with the level you want to use it for.) Her email address is: [hisamimyers@gmail.com](mailto:hisamimyers@gmail.com) Be sure to forward her email granting permission to your location chairperson.

- If you have received permission from Stephanie in the past, keep her email and forward that email to location chair when entering the piece another year.
- Students may play pieces off competition lists as long as it is from the CURRENT year.
- If a piece is in a collection listed on the first page of the level and the piece is ALSO listed separately under the spelled out lists later, please use the page from the individual list to save time for the person checking everything. You can always play pieces from higher levels.

Students who took only the theory last year and are taking the performance this year should wait to register until March. There is a reduced re-registration fee of \$15.

Prepare by double-checking against the syllabus. There may still be some inconsistencies in the Workbooks.

**Transposition:** Students need to bring their ENTIRE workbook to the exam. Not a copy or a single page. Some fingerings written in are fine. Best not to put in every fingering as they are not reading by interval then.

### **Harmonizations:**

For harmonizations that students can choose chords (i.e. Peter Gray, level 8), be open to “any” chord selections. These harmonizations are designed to spark students’ creativity, so even if they are not the same as the suggested chords in Karen Roger’s workbooks, or selections that you would choose, give the student more latitude and do not deduct points, especially if performed smoothly. Students can be creative and does not need to be traditional.

For harmonizations with slash chords in level 7 and above, students need to play specified position. If there are no slashes, the chord should be played in root position. (i.e. Go Down Moses, level 10, even D7 D7 in. m 7 – should both be played in root position). These harmonizations indicate a specific bass line. Looking ahead to Level 11 aural skills, it might be good here to have the student play in practice just the bass notes with the melody.

### **Judging Notes**

If a student does not have pieces memorized, hear them and give comments, but mark as “incomplete” with no score.

**Sight-reading** - allow students time to shadow on the keyboard (if needed) and enough time to look over comfortable. Any tempo is acceptable with minor fluctuations. If you deduct for tempo fluctuation do it only once rather than each time it happens.

**Aural Skills** - Students ARE NOT supposed to rewind or pause in the middle of the dictation. Coach your students not to do this in the lesson. Stopping the example after every note is not practical or allowed.

Work on logic - a simple meter, a dotted quarter will always be followed by the flagged eighth. In 6/8 you will have 3-eighths barred together, or dotted quarter, or quarter-eighth.

Up to Level 6 - notes will be within the 5FP. If you are writing notes outside that, check again. Level 7 - expands to the 8ve.

### **Sight-reading:**

Right-at-Sight (Peters) are recommended by some teachers.. 8 levels. Can be hard to get.

Others like the Kevin Olson and Helen Marlais – Sight Reading and Rhythm Every day also good resource.

Sample Exams — A new set of sample exams for all levels will be available as a download from the ISMTA website. Conference price was \$12 for the entire set, but download version price has not be established yet. You may print as many as you want.

- There are no aural files for the new test (only aural files are for the sample tests in the syllabus.)
- Blank test sheets are for the old syllabus.
- LeAnn Halvorson has workbooks —now there are separate books for level 1A, 1B, and 1C. She also has aural skills for each of the units. Good for transfer students and those who need extra work.
- Craig Sale has a new book about intervals.

### **Free Apps for Ear Training**

- EarWorthy - light version is free.
- Tenuto - has more theory.
- Name the Note

Some of the older apps go obsolete.

Teachers s are receiving some backlash from parents for encouraging/requiring app time. Teachers who assign the Apps find the students just want to play their own games, not the music ones.

\*\* You could use it as a reward at the end of a well prepared lesson.

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## **Repertoire Substitution and Level 12 Approval**

Send all requests for repertoire substitution and Level 12 approval by January 15, 2020, by email to Stephanie Myers, [hisamimyers@gmail.com](mailto:hisamimyers@gmail.com)

**For Repertoire Substitution Piece** – scan the 1<sup>st</sup> and last page of piece and include the number of pages in your request. Be sure to include which level you are requesting permission. Once you receive permission for a repertoire substitution, you may use the same piece in the future for other students in your studio without having to obtain permission again.

**For Level 12 Repertoire Approval** - if the piece(s) are found in the syllabus, list the syllabus page number. Please be specific with the title of the piece, including correct Op., Hob., Longo numbers, etc. Do not list simply “Sonata in C”! Remember that students need to perform a Sonata-Allegro movement at either level 11 or 12.

Level 12 Recital can be in a student’s home. A recital is defined as any performance where guests are invited to attend.

### **Upper Level Repertoire:**

- At Level 10: one piece can be from Level 9
- At Level 11: one piece can be from level 10
- At Level 12: one piece can be from level 11

### **Enrollment Fees:**

- Level 1-2: \$15
- Levels 3-8: \$25
- Levels 9-12: \$30

## Theory exams, Levels 3 thru 12

For early levels, be aware of differences in terminology. If a student seems confused, try to rephrase the question using other terminology.

**Harmonizations:** Students do not bring in their own copy of the harmonization.

Use of accompaniments other than blocked chords will receive 1 bonus point. This can be a combination of blocked and broken chords. Even if only a few measures were not blocked chords, award the full bonus point.

Be flexible about acceptable chord choices. Don't take points off if student doesn't play the chords in parentheses. Also don't take points off if students add extra chords, even if they are not correct, as long as the other chords are OK. No minimal speed is required.

**For level 12 Harmonization** – student may play the melody alone first, as well as “shadow” chords before playing the sight harmonization.

**2-Note Slurs** (level 2): evaluate on lift and connection of the slurred notes. Deduct ½ - point if the rhythm is not accurate.

**Sight Reading:** Students may play the 5-finger pattern or scale and chord progression before playing the example. Students may also "shadow" the example, and play it silently on the lap or the keys beforehand. Counting out loud is not required. If a student asks about counting, tell them to "do it however you do it at your lesson with your teacher."

Do not deduct points for wrong “counting out loud.” Only deduct points when rhythm or notes are inaccurate.

**Dictations:** Students are not allowed to pause the iPod until the entire dictation example is heard. Please remind your students that they may only pause the iPod if more time is needed. Students are not allowed to go use the rewind button for any of the examples.

Also, remind students who sing, to be aware of their singing volume. Encourage them to sing to themselves so as not to distract others nearby. Remember that one might sing louder with earbuds on.

**Transposition:** Example from Karen Roger's AIM workbooks are allowed, but no photocopies are allowed. Students must bring in their purchased copy of the workbook to use the example. If a student brings in a photocopy of the music, make a comment to the teacher but don't take off points. If a student brings a downloaded copy of music that they have purchased, or from a public domain site, this is legal and acceptable. (You should be able to tell if something is legally purchased by looking at a permission written at the bottom of the page.)

If there is confusion about a photocopy issue during an exam, do NOT leave the room to ask for clarification. Just proceed and write a note to the teacher.

**Playbacks:** Allow the student to play a 5FP and starting note before playing.

**Aural Files from Sample Tests** from 2014 Syllabus is now on the website. This is a great place for students to take a practice aural exam prior to the actual exam. The format, instructions and speed are all identical to the actual exam.

Please remind students to go to different rooms for written and aural exams for levels 2-12.

In levels 1 and 2, the examiner will give the aural exam.

## Notes from Past AIM Theory Judges Meeting

Volunteering – please be flexible. You can e-mail Jia-Yee if you are available at additional times that you weren't able to check off in the on-line registration for Northwestern site.

### Sight-Reading

- Be generous when taking off points. Indicate why you took points off.
- Do not take off points if the student plays slowly.
- Do not take off points for every hesitation or rhythmic mistake. Ex. – 1/2 point for hesitations. or - 1 point for missed dotted rhythms. Even if students consistently make the same mistakes, do not count of each time.

We discussed students at upper levels who take a long time to prepare for sight-playing. Give them at least a minute or two even if you're pressed for time. Try to be sympathetic. If the student really takes a long time you could ask "Do you think you're ready?" "Ghosting" on the piano is acceptable.

### Transposition

- If student forgets book, make an educated decision on the score. If they don't have a transposition prepared, give a "0" and student will receive an incomplete that they can makeup later.
- Teachers – give good instructions to Students on what to bring. For Theory exam, students only need to bring their transposition piece.
- Bring a pack of "Sticky notes" to the exam for notes to the teacher or administrator if necessary. Better than making comments on the student's score sheet.

### Harmonizations

- Students can play in any position or with blocked 5ths, simple tonic-dominant notes/chords unless there are slashes and specific positions are indicated.
- Harmonizations with "No Symbols" – should accept almost anything as long as it is within the key. Don't come with a pre-conceived notion of what the chords should be, but a missed Bb in the key of F for example would be wrong.
- Level 11 - Minuetto – should have LH in the style of Bach with single tones (not blocked chords).
- Level 8 - Peter Gray – OK if the secondary dominant doesn't resolve. You may want to make a note about it but not take off points.
- Level 12 - the harmonization is at sight with a piece the student hasn't seen before.

### Playback

- Don't take off points if there is a restart and student fixes the mistake. But if student restarts several times and is struggling to fix the mistake by ear, then take points off.
- Count one measure aloud then play the example slowly. Rhythm and pitches are judged. OK if the student plays at a different tempo than you. We're judging if they hear the longer sounds, etc.
- The student may play the 5-finger pattern and the starting note first, then the judge plays the example. Play the example in the same 8ve that the student will play it.

### Aural Skills

- Will be on iPods. Earbuds will be provided but students can bring their own.
- Level 3 - only need to write the interval number (2, 3, 5).
- Level 4 - circle the correct interval
- Level 5 and above, students need to identify qualities (Major, minor, Perfect)

## Notes from the Past Judges Meetings (Theory):

- AURAL skills will be pre-recorded on iPods and computers again this year. Each exam site will have earbuds available, but students may choose to bring their own.
- There are 3 separate testing rooms for the Theory exam: Judge's room for the Keyboard Skills, Writing room for the written exam and Aural Skills room for the listening exam.
- In levels 1 and II only, the aural skills exam will be given by the judge.
- Some fingers have been given for sight reading examples on the Keyboard Skills pages. The student is not required to use this fingering. It is only a guideline. Whether or not they use the suggested fingering, the student's grade should not be affected. However, if fingering choices have affected the student's ability to play the piece, you may wish to comment on it.
- Encourage students to take time looking over the sight reading before they start. If a student asks "Do I have to count" – rather than saying "no," encourage students to play as they would for their teacher.
- Don't take points off for false starts, but give student another chance to begin again.
- Deduct ½ a point for minor slips rather than full points. Also, deduct only once for the same mistake that may be made in different keys. No ¼ point deductions please!
- If a student plays a wrong note but corrects it, don't take any points off, but if it happens repeatedly, deduct ½ point.
- For Rhythm, if a student plays in the wrong octave or wrong pitches, do not take points off if rhythm is correct.
- For Harmonizations that have no written harmony, remember that students are encouraged to be creative, so don't deduct any points unless the chord choice is obviously wrong. Slightly "off" color should be acceptable.
- Be sensitive to terminology students are familiar with, and how a student was taught. Rephrase a question if student doesn't seem to understand specific direction or term.
- In lower level technical skills, don't take points off if rhythm isn't exact, i.e. the student doesn't hold the last note of the 5 finger pattern for the full 4 counts, etc.
- For Transposition pieces, students must bring in repertoire from an original source, like method or literature books. No photocopy or AIM Workbook pages can be used as a source. Selections should come from the syllabus for levels IV and above. Be sure to hear both keys. Students can transpose to ANY 2 keys.
- When giving the example for the Playback in levels 3-6, do not count any preparation measures. Simply play the exam, following the instructions on the judge's sheet.
- **Be sure to make written comments whenever possible**, i.e. why you took points off, or when something was done well. Always be as positive and encouraging as possible. The more comments you write, the more helpful it is to both the student and teacher.

- Finally, remember that we want to be as encouraging to these students as possible. When in doubt, it's always better to deduct less than more!

**NO photocopying of all or any part of the AIM Workbooks are allowed for student use, or for the use of transposition pieces for practice or exam. Please adhere strictly to this policy!**

Resources for Aural Skills Review

[www.nsmta.org](http://www.nsmta.org) – AIM midi files

Test example of all aural skills at each level.

[www.musictheory.net](http://www.musictheory.net)

[www.good-ear.com](http://www.good-ear.com)

[www.emusictheory.com](http://www.emusictheory.com)

[www.musicperceptions.com](http://www.musicperceptions.com) – Music Study Sheets created by LeAnn Halverson

has level 1A, B, C workbooks. Also included with her workbooks are online .mp3 files for all the aural skills drills in the workbooks.