



ISSMA Online Assessment Center

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of these virtual assessments?

While some schools are offering in-person learning, others are only offering e-learning, while still others are creating hybrid models which include both in-person and e-learning opportunities. ISSMA is committed to fulfilling our mission to provide educationally evaluated music performance opportunities for students and teachers of school music ensembles from member schools in Indiana, so flexibility to support music educators and their students regardless of their current teaching environment is needed.

Are these Fall Virtual Assessments meant to take the place of the regular Solo and Ensemble, Jazz, and Concert Organization festivals occurring second semester?

The Fall Virtual Assessments are not meant to replace the second semester ISSMA events. They are additional opportunities provided to students allowing them to perform any music they are currently studying for an external formative assessment. The focus of these non-competitive assessments is to enhance continued participation and musical growth, assist directors with student retention and engagement, and provide a sense of direction and purpose to student development, regardless of whatever their current learning format might be. Consequently, there are no required lists or expectations of specific literature to be performed, and there are no minimum time requirements for performance.

Deadline, Submission, Assessment Dates?

The ISSMA Fall Assessment offerings will include two virtual performance opportunities for Solo & Ensemble and two for Organizations, including Band, Orchestra, Choir, Instrumental Jazz, Vocal Jazz, and Show Choir. Directors must register all participants by the Entry Deadline. There are no late entries, additions to the original entry or level changes allowed once you have registered your performers. The Submission Deadline allows a 7-10-day window to record and upload the performance videos and PDF copies of the musical scores. Evaluations by ISSMA adjudicators will take place on the corresponding Assessment Date.

What is the difference between the Solo & Ensemble and Organization Assessments?

First, two different platforms will be utilized for uploading video submissions. Virtual Solo & Ensemble Assessments will be submitted through the *HeartOut App* and Organization Assessments will be completed by the submission of performance videos through *CompetitionSuite*. Second, written feedback and ratings will be done by an individual judge for the Solo & Ensemble entries, while a panel of three judges will provide recorded commentary for all Concert and Jazz/Show Choir submissions.

What is the definition of an ensemble?

Class enrollments and the composition of your band, choir or orchestra may look different this fall and so may the make-up of your ensemble entries. To help with in-person, virtual and hybrid classroom models, both Ensembles and Organization events may have non-traditional instrumentation/voicing, but the integrity of the musical selection and the printed score should be maintained. Directors will enter ensembles following the requirements of *Recognized Solo and Ensemble Events* and *Approved Organizations* outlined in the ISSMA Festivals Manual.

What does it cost to participate?

Fees for the Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessments are \$12 per Solo and \$5 per member for Ensembles. Fees for the Fall Organization Assessments are JME Choral - \$100, JME Instrumental - \$125, HS Choral - \$125, HS Instrumental - \$150, Jazz Combos - \$100, Large Instrumental Jazz and Vocal Jazz/ Show Choir - \$125.

What technology is involved?

For the Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessments, users will need to download the HeartOut App using a smartphone or iPad/tablet and allow access to the device's internal microphone and camera when prompted. Video submissions for Organization Assessments are to be created by each school using their own recording equipment, including a video camera, iPad/Tablet, or smartphone. Minimum audio requirement is one external microphone or the internal mic on the iPad/Tablet or smartphone.

How does this process work?

This is a non-competitive event with emphasis on assessment/feedback from judges facilitating student growth and development. Ratings and commentary are provided, with no ranking of groups. Directors must register entries and process payments online meeting the posted deadlines. Directors will be asked to identify each entry as Advanced, Intermediate, or Beginner. There will be no Group Level Classification or Required Lists for these assessments.

ISSMA will provide specific login information to directors for both HeartOut and CompetitionSuite. A unique **Media ID Code** will be provided for each Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessment. This code is printed on the registration form that during the entry process prints along with the invoice. Students will use this unique 5-digit Media ID Code assigned by ISSMA to login and submit their videos. Students will be allowed up to three attempts to record their video and may choose the best attempt to submit.

There are no requirements or expectations about the type of music/genre performed, but directors should assist the students in selecting appropriate music for the students' musical maturity, experience, and goals.

For Organization Assessments, directors will upload videos by logging into their CompetitionSuite accounts. Directors needing to activate a new account will receive an email from CompetitionSuite with instructions and links to establish that account. Organization entries may perform 1, 2, or 3 pieces, with no minimum time requirement.

Can I enter students in more than one Assessment date?

Directors may enter students in more than one assessment opportunity. The Fall Virtual Assessments were created to give directors and students short-term, performance benchmarks to surmount the unique challenges facing both music students and directors this fall.

Can I change the level of the performance?

Directors will be asked during the registration process to identify each entry as Advanced, Intermediate, or Beginner. There are no late entries, additions to the original entry or level changes allowed once you have registered your performers.

Can students enter more than one solo OR perform on more than one instrument?

A student may enter as a soloist for Solo & Ensemble Assessment #1 in November and then perform the same solo or a different one for the Solo & Ensemble #2 in December. If an instrumental student is performing on more than one instrument, directors must register separate entries. Vocalists may not perform the same selection twice on a single Assessment Date. Music may be reused for future events or District Solo and Ensemble.

Can singers wear face shields or instrumentalists use bell covers during the performance?

Providing a safe environment for your students is important. We understand that personal protective equipment, unique formations, and social distancing practices may be utilized when preparing and recording the performance.

Are uniforms required?

In the current ISSMA rules and regulations, uniforms or unified attire are not required.

Are there any time restrictions for submitted videos?

There will be no “minimum” required performance time for the virtual assessments. The maximum time for videos should follow the time allotment for the specific events listed in the ISSMA Festivals Manual for District Solo and Ensemble, District Jazz and Organization Events.

Do I need to show the entire ensemble in my video?

No, however, it is important that the video remain somewhat stationary. If the ensemble is too far back from the camera to see the entire group, you may zoom in or even slowly pan to include all the performers, but it is not necessary. The adjudicators will be evaluating the performance, not your video photography skills.

Can I submit a virtual performance combining separate videos of the individual performers?

Virtual performances created and produced by using synchronous videos of individual performers is allowed. This accommodates learning environments where full ensemble rehearsal time is reduced or not possible.

Will students have a chance to preview the Solo & Ensemble Videos before submitting?

Yes, HeartOut allows students three attempts before selecting which recording to upload for the solo or ensemble submission. Landscape view (horizontal) is preferred. Users may preview the videos through the app before selecting the best performance to submit.

Do we have to provide music for the adjudicators?

PDF copies of the music scores being performed must be submitted at the time of the video submission so that they may be distributed to the judges for use in the assessment process. These PDF copies must be produced from original, legally purchased music.

Can I change the music being performed?

Changing the music selection to be performed is not possible once the performance video is submitted and the PDF of the music is uploaded. *Note: If, for some reason, the music submitted does not match the selection performed on the recording, the adjudicator will still complete the assessment. However, not having the correct music may negatively affect the quality and thoroughness of the assessment.*

Does the music have to be memorized?

No. It is recommended that you discuss this and other details that will affect the recorded performance with your students such as proper use of folders, stands, posture, lighting, ensemble positioning, etc.

Can I use accompaniment?

Accompaniment is optional. Solos, ensembles, and organizations may or may not utilize accompaniment when performing. If using a pre-recorded accompaniment track during the recording process, check the balance to ensure the performer(s) is/are the dominant sound. Select the accompaniment track without the vocal/instrumental line being heard. Although a pre-recorded accompaniment track is acceptable, the preference is to use piano or piano recording. If using the Smart Music Accompaniment System, the keyboard mode should be used.

How will my rating be determined?

The Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessments will be completed by a single judge using the categories, descriptors, and rubrics of the current ISSMA District Solo and Ensemble sheets. The Fall Organization Assessments will be adjudicated by a panel of three judges using the categories, descriptors, and rubrics of the current ISSMA Concert Organization, Jazz and District Show Choir sheets. Gold, Silver, Bronze and Participation ratings will be awarded for both Assessments. Sight-reading will not be a

Will directors/students receive both written and verbal commentary?

Students will not receive feedback and comments directly for either virtual assessment type. For the Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessments, no verbal commentary will be provided. Directors can access the student videos written commentary, judges' scores, and ratings by logging into their director's account after the assessments are completed. The feedback is downloaded as a PDF document. A username and password will be sent from info@heartout.io to set up this web-based account separate from the HeartOut user app.

For Organization Assessments, **each of the three judges** will provide verbal commentary via CompetitionSuite for the 1 to 3 musical selections performed. Scoring, rating, and recorded commentary will be completed using CompetitionSuite. No written commentary will be provided. Judges will use electronic versions of ISSMA Jazz, Show Choir, and Concert Organization Adjudication sheets to complete their assessments. Directors can access the judges' scores, ratings, and commentary by logging into their CompetitionSuite account after the assessments are completed.

Will I be able to review the students' videos?

Many of the performance videos for Fall Solo & Ensemble Assessments will be recorded outside of direct contact between students and directors. After the assessments are complete, directors will have access to the videos, written commentary, and ratings. Like the District Solo and Ensemble **event**, directors will need to share the results and feedback of the audition with their students. For the Fall Organization Assessments, directors are personally responsible for uploading performance videos through CompetitionSuite.

Can students/directors download the HeartOut video?

No, directors can review the video with students for educational purposes after the event through their web-based account; however, to remain copyright compliant, all videos are being uploaded and viewed within the online platforms and cannot be downloaded, copied or shared.

Will my students receive medals or plaques?

Directors will receive *digital certificates* for the Fall Virtual Assessments to distribute for each registered entry designating Gold, Silver, Bronze, and Participation ratings. The certificate will use the *Student/Ensemble Name* from your online entry.

How does this affect the All Music Award?

The ISSMA State Board passed criteria for the ISSMA All Music Award for the 2020-2021 school year to accommodate the challenges directors, students and music programs are facing during the pandemic. The qualifications needed to earn the award at both the HS and JME levels include the possibility of live and/or virtual assessment events. The new qualifications for 2020-2021 can be accessed through the ["Useful Information"](#) link in the Director's Only Area of the ISSMA website.