

Planning Your Chapter's Auditions

At the core of Auditions and Evaluations is that it is educational and non-competitive. All harp students are welcome. A&E is a two-part program that emphasizes feedback and improvement. That said, there are many ways to have a successful program.

Steps to get started:

(these should take place at a chapter meeting)

pick dates The two days should be about a month apart. Be aware of school schedules, traditional vacation times, and avoid busy times of year. It will be useful to set a schedule for when specific things get done, for example, when invitations are set, when forms are due, when announcements are made.

pick a location Ideally your chapter will be able to find a central location with easy harp access and a big enough room. This may be a community center, church, or house of a chapter member.

choose an advisor The advisor should be a master teacher. Chapters may choose to ask a respected harpist outside of their area or a non-harpist musician with a great reputation for working with students. There are advantages to each. A harpist will of course know the repertoire and be very knowledgeable about technique. To avoid competition among teachers, chapters should not use a local harp teacher. Many chapters have found great success in using a non-harpist advisor. Consider a local pianist, choir or orchestra director, or other great musician. The advisor should be appealing to all teachers in the chapter so that they are enthusiastic about having their students participate.

Every three years, a Chapter may request to have an additional Advisor present for the second audition. The request should be made to the Music Education Auditions Committee Chair well in advance of the date the advisor is needed. If funds are available, the chair will then make arrangements for a respected teacher from the official AHS, Inc., National Advisor list to attend the second audition. The current National Advisor list is available upon request from

MusicEdAuditions@harp society.org

find volunteers It is helpful to assign roles to different chapter members so that things go smoothly. Here are some possible needs:

Host/Hostess to greet people as they arrive both days and show them where to put harps, etc.

Schedule Coordinator to decide who plays when and keep track of that the day of.

Refreshment Helpers and Cooks for after the event. Ask chapter members to sign up to bring goodies. Ask one to coordinate the refreshments table.

MC- to welcome everyone to the event, make announcements, and remind everybody of how the day will proceed (usually chapter president or another officer).

Test/Worksheet Proctor and or reviewer- Depending on which of these your chapter chooses to use, and how you would like them to be delivered, you may find it helpful to put someone in charge of passing out and collecting the materials as well as checking them and redistributing them later. This may be a very simple task, or rather demanding, depending on how formal you choose to be. If your chapter decides to give the ear training test, this person should be able to play some short examples on the harp (pedal or lever).

A&E Coordinator- To avoid having one single person carry all the weight in organizing the event, consider having a coordinator of volunteers. It is a good way to encourage many people be involved while also making sure things are getting done and that they are going smoothly.

decide a piece requirement Chapters can decide how many pieces or how long each participant should play. It should be the same for each participant (exceptions given for very young players or very early beginners). Consider a time requirement of 10-15 minutes each, or you could require 2 pieces or 2 movements of a piece for example. Time limits are a nice way to let beginners with short pieces play more. It is important to remember and remind participants that they will be playing the same pieces both days with the intention of making improvements by the second day. Chapters can decide if they want to call the pieces a “work in progress” on the first day or if they want to encourage participants to perform to the best of their ability on the first day knowing there will always be something to improve. Decide if playing by memory will be required or encouraged one or both days. Participants should be reminded to bring an original copy of their music to both A&E events. Chapters may decide to have them number measures.

choose the performer’s worksheet or theory test The chapter should decide which of these to do on the first day of the event. The theory test is a traditional theory test. The performer’s worksheet asks questions about the pieces each performer played and asks the students to reflect on their performance and what they heard at A&E. A short ear training test may also be added to either the performer’s worksheet or theory test. Chapters can decide how formal or informal to be with these materials. Students may choose to work together on the questions. They may also choose to do their best, and go over the tests with their teachers later. With the performer’s worksheet, students may choose to share some of their answers with the group or with their teacher. Chapters can decide how and when to give the worksheet/test so long as it does not distract from the performing. There are many

ways to use these materials; the intention is to get students thinking about music theory and context. It should not feel competitive or intimidating.

decide how formal to make the event Does your chapter want participants to dress up? Introduce themselves and their pieces before playing? Clap and bow? Are family members invited? Are chapter members not participating invited? Are pictures or videos welcome?

decide what harps to use Should participants bring their own harps? Will a few participants or chapter members share their harps with everyone? Keep in mind that if there are many harps, more time between participants is needed and a larger space is needed. There are benefits to either choice. Reflect this decision in the participant registration sheet.

Steps to take outside of meetings: *(after the initial chapter meeting)*

contact the Auditions and Evaluations Committee to let us know you are planning an event. Feel free to ask any questions or set up a phone or Skype conversation with one of us to help with organizing.
MusicEdAuditions@harpssociety.org

hire the advisor -to be done by chapter president or treasurer. Make sure all expectations are clear-money, date and time, type of feedback, and emphasize friendly, non-competitive environment. If the A&E event is held over a meal time, consider providing a meal and break for the advisor.
*If cost or scheduling is an issue, you may consider having the advisor appear via Skype or something similar for one of the days.

budget Keep track of all expenses for the event. This will include the advisor's fee, possibly a location fee, and possibly refreshments. Consider asking participants for an application fee to help with budgeting.
If a Chapter's expenses exceed the fees they receive from the participants, the Chapter may send a written formal request for up to \$100.00 to reimburse their losses to the Music Education Committee Chair, MusicEdAuditions@harpssociety.org. The requests must include the event budget statements. The chapter treasurer should be involved in collecting any application fees and reimbursing/paying anyone.

invite participants This may be the job of your chapter's media or newsletter person. Send materials advertising the event that include both dates and the name of

the advisor. Reach out to local teachers and students. Invitations should encourage participants to attend and also include expectations for the participants including how to prepare, what to expect, etc. Depending on the chapter, you may find that sending invitations in multiple formats and multiple times will spark the most interest.

*If participants are unable to make both days, they still may participate for one day, however they should be asked to pay the same registration fee and they will not qualify for a national certificate.

make a schedule Write out a schedule for the two A&E days including times students are to arrive, when they will play, etc. Share it with all the participants, teachers, and volunteers. If there is a large number of participants, you may want to hold the event in shifts-have a morning group and an afternoon group. Be sure to send reminders leading up to each of the days.

Remind students of expectations (if you want them to dress up or not, if they are expected to introduce themselves, if they are expected to arrive, warm up and harps tuned by a certain time etc.).

get the performer's worksheets, theory tests, ear training

tests For PDF files of or to request printed copies, contact MusicEdAuditions@harp society.org. Materials may vary from year to year so it is important to check in each year for the latest. Participants have three options for a theory test. There are four options for performer's worksheet to accommodate different ages and levels of experience. The performer's worksheet also has a preparation guide you may give to participants and their teachers prior to A&E day one.

apply for the certificates Send a list of participants (include full names) to MusicEdAuditions@harp society.org to have certificates printed and sent. Certificates may be given on the second day or sent to participants after the second event. Participants who do not attend the second day should not receive a certificate. *It is very important to apply for the certificates quickly after receiving all applications to allow plenty of time to have them printed and sent back to your chapter.

send out reminder emails often

share the news Contact your regional director with the news. Remember to post it on your chapter Facebook page if you have one and mention it in any local harp news letters you may have.

During the events

There are several ways chapters can decide to schedule the events of each A&E day.

how feedback is given: as each student performs, the advisor will fill out a comment sheet. Participants should bring the original (and a copy if needed) of their music for the advisor. Advisors may choose to comment on any of the following things: musicianship, interpretation/style, phrasing, tone, note accuracy, marks of expression, dynamics, rhythm, tempo, steadiness, memory, or stage presence. Participants should be given these sheets to take home and they should be encouraged to share the feedback with their teachers. A copy, scan, or picture should be taken of the comment sheet so that the advisor may use it for reference the second day, alternately participants may be asked to bring comment sheets back for the second day.

The advisor will also speak briefly with each participant to give some verbal feedback. There is some flexibility here-chapters may choose to have verbal feedback public, directly after each participant plays, private feedback given briefly between participants, or private feedback after all participants have played and while they complete their worksheet/test or while they socialize.

The same advisor will be present both days of the event so they may hear and remark on improvements the student has made.

theory, ear training test/performer's worksheet chapters should determine a time during the Auditions and Evaluations for participants to do the theory test, ear training test or worksheet. This should not distract from performances. After everyone has played and as students receive verbal feedback may be a good time. Chapters may also decide to use some of these materials as a take-home activity.

Performer's worksheet-After the participant finishes the worksheet, they may take it home and share it with their teacher. Chapters may also choose to let participants share answers and reflections with each other as or after they complete the worksheet.

Theory Test-After the test, a chapter member should gather the theory tests, grade them and have them ready to give back to students on the second day. The student should then share the test with their teachers.

Ear Training Test-all participants will start with the same test, students may go as far as they can or stop at suggested points during the test according to level. This test needs a professional harpist to play short examples. It may be graded similarly to the theory test.

schedule for the day

Chapters will decide a set up time for chairs, harps, refreshments etc. They should also set a time for participants to arrive. Chapters should decide if they will have a warm up time or warm up space for participants.

To start the day, consider having the Chapter President or a host/hostess greet everyone, explain how the day will work, and give any chapter announcements. Also remember to introduce and thank the guest advisor.

All participants should take turns playing and listening to each other. If there are many participants, chapters may decide to go in shifts-for example a morning group and an afternoon group (be sure to give the advisor a meal break). An ideal group size may be anywhere from 5-15 depending on age.

*The important part is that participants get to be heard and hear each other. This need not be set up like a formal recital but each should be respectful and encouraging. Clapping/bowing may be encouraged. Participants may be encouraged to introduce themselves or their pieces before they perform.

Following the performances participants take the performer's worksheet or theory and ear training test. Alternately, participants may take home their written test/ worksheet to complete by the second day.

Chapters may consider serving refreshments at the close of each day. Remember to thank the guest advisor and volunteers.

On day two, if certificates have arrived, they may be presented to participants at the end of the event. If they have not arrived, they will be sent to the chapter president who will distribute them.

Check out the sample documents and planning materials for ideas on how to make things go smoothly during A&E events.

After the events

meet The chapter (or key volunteers and organizers in the least) should get together and reflect on how everything went. We have a questionnaire which may be helpful for your chapter in organizing future A&E events.

send the questionnaire to MusicEdAuditions@harpociety.org. This feedback will help the A&E committee assist in making the program as effective and successful as possible.

send in your budget sheet if you are seeking the \$100 reimbursement offered by AHS, send your completed budget sheet/reimbursement request to MusicEdAuditions@harp society.org.

share the news! Be sure to mention the event in chapter and regional newsletters. Share news and pictures of the event with AHS Social media via Facebook, Twitter, or Instagram!

Several downloadable files are available at www.harp society.org/About/Programs/MusicEdAuditions.

For further information about the American Harp Society's Auditions and Evaluations Program, please contact:

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