

Christopher Stanichar

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Dear Young Musicians:

Congratulations to all of you on your successful audition to participate in this year's South Dakota Middle School All-State Orchestra. I am very excited to work with all of you in February, and I know you will enjoy the music and camaraderie of your fellow all-state musicians. In short, it is going to be a blast!

The program for the MSASO includes a lot of variety and fun pieces:

- *Lion City* by Soon Hee Newbold
This is a wonderful piece by a living female composer that includes non-traditional uses of string instruments to help convey the sounds of Singapore. Follow all the tempos (use a metronome). Be careful that you don't rush the "con fuoco" at measure 30. Please note that measure 84 is divided arco and pizzicato. If you sit on an outside chair, you will play arco, and if you sit on an inside chair, you will play pizzicato.
- *Libertango* by Astor Piazzola, arr. By James Kazik
This is a tango by a famous 20th century Argentine composer that has lots of fiery rhythms. At the beginning, first violins should play this passage near the frog, until you have the melody at measure 18. The same is true for the second violins at measure 18, and for all the strings at measure 50 (except basses, which are pizzicato).
- *Love* by Christopher Stanichar
This will be the South Dakota premiere of my work for string orchestra that I wrote as a gift for my wife. At the beginning, upper strings should follow the printed bowing, and be careful with the bow distribution, especially the two hooked down bows on the first part of the measure. I encourage everyone to listen to the recording so that you are aware of how to play the syncopated pulse which occurs throughout the entire piece.
- *Serenade* by Norman Leyden
Written by an American composer who passed away in 2014, this classic piece contains four separate movements: Prelude, Fugue, Nocturne, and Cakewalk. I follow the printed tempos that Mr. Leyden indicates in the score. Use full bows for the lyrical passages (long notes)—make sure you make full use of the bow, going from frog to tip and back when you are playing forte passages. Count carefully throughout the Fugue and Cakewalk. For the Cakewalk, play the opening rhythm in lower half of the bow (or balance point) so that it bounces.
- "*Basse-Danse*" from Capriol Suite by Peter Warlock
This is our combined piece with the high school Honors Orchestra—I take this in a very quick tempo: quarter note equals 160 or dotted half note is about 53 (I conduct this in a quasi-one pattern). Play this in the middle of the bow and slightly off the string. Also, notice the retakes at letter C.

About Seating and Solos for South Dakota MSASO:

I have been asked by the committee for the MSASO to communicate to you that solos for each section are open to *ALL* performers in a section and will be assigned by me, the conductor, according to your level of

preparation. Seating in each section is subject to change based on the student's preparation of the music and my recommendation during the rehearsals. Your initial assignment does not necessarily mean that you will sit in that chair for the concert. If you have been assigned principal and you are not able to play the solos or lead as well as other fellow students in your section, I have been given the responsibility of recommending alternate seating based on the level of preparation of the student musicians. My advice to all participants in this year's MSASO is that you be as prepared as you can be, and learn all solo passages whether you are sitting principal or not.

There are many important lessons you will learn from your experience of playing in MSASO. Here are some tips to get the most out of your experience:

- Practice never really makes perfect... But it certainly improves our playing and our chances for success.
- I love this quote from the famous trumpeter, Wynton Marselis: "The humble improve." In music that means never feel arrogant about your musical abilities. A truly great musician always strives to play better, and you do that by being open and humble to learning what your teachers are teaching you.
- Being on time means being at least fifteen minutes early and ready play at the start of the rehearsal.
- Realize that each person in the orchestra is a valuable part of the sound we create. No one is more important than anyone else in the orchestra. We need the contribution of each of the players.
- Prioritize and focus on the most difficult parts of the music, so that we can enjoy the total performance. Practice those parts slowly and work them up to tempo!
- Use technology to your benefit! Take your part and watch Youtube clips (shared with you by Ms. Kortney Temple, Administrator of MSASO). Also, for live performances, watch the string players, and how they place the bow, how much bow speed they use, and the part of the bow they use. Make a playlist of the music and listen/watch often—even when you go to sleep at night and when you rise in the morning.
- No matter whether it is a rehearsal or concert, strive to play your very best. If we expect excellence and have pride in our product all the time, our audience will too!

I can't wait to meet all of you and your parents and family, and to make great music. Have fun practicing, and happy holidays!

Musically yours,



Christopher Stanichar

*Conductor of this year's South Dakota Middle School All-State Orchestra
Assistant Professor/Director of Aberdeen University-Civic Symphony at Northern State University
Music Director of Worthington Area Symphony Orchestra (serving Southwest Minnesota)
Music Director of Northwest Iowa Symphony Orchestra (NISO)*