



2026 Directors Handbook

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Great East Music Festivals

a program of

Inspire Arts & Music

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Greateastmusicfestivals.org



FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES & DEADLINES

Registration payment due: Upon registering

First payment (first 50%): February 15, 2025

Last day for group cancellations: March 1st

Second payment and last day to decrease the number of performers: April 3rd

Last day for schedule/venue changes: April 15th

- To change your numbers or cancel, please complete our [2026 Change Request Form](#). Number changes and cancellations are not recognized without a completed form.
- Registration fees are non-refundable, even if you cancel groups later on.
- **Six Flags customers: Great East Music Festivals does not handle bus parking at Six Flags. Bus parking at Six Flags is in the general lot. To acquire your bus parking pass for the park, please visit www.sixflags.com/newengland/store/one-day-add-ons**
- We will not refund cancellations received after the deadline dates.
- We will send revised invoices after each payment or number change. We indicate student and adult participants on all invoices.
- If a payment is late, your performance times are subject to rescheduling at the discretion of Great East Music Festivals.
- A **limited** number of additional tickets are available to purchase on the day of festivals upon request.
- You are financially responsible for all participants who appear on your statement. This includes the cancellation of a group. **AFTER MARCH 1st**, the following fees will be applied for:
 - Group Cancellation (\$250 fee per group after this date)
 - Date Change (\$75 fee per group after this date)

WHAT TO HAVE PREPARED

- **Repertoire.** Our festivals have no required repertoire – the music is your choice. Original music is allowed, along with different arrangements and non-traditional instrumentation. Most groups perform 2 to 3 pieces, but you can perform as many as you feel comfortable within the required **10-minute timeframe**. **If you play more than 10 minutes of music, you are subject to a shorter clinic so we can stay on schedule.**
- **Two sets of original scores.** You will give these to the judges before your performance. We recommend numbering the measures to make judges' comments easier to identify. If copied, please ensure the scores are bound for ease of reading during your performance.
- **A stage crew.** Stage crew members should report to the performance area 5 minutes before stage time and be ready to change the seating as soon as the preceding group leaves the stage. Great East Music Festivals staff may not be available to help with setting up your ensemble.
- **Program Order Form and Seating Chart.** Please provide 2 copies of the Program Order Form with your scores to the judges, and email your seating chart to the email provided. You can find both forms at the end of this handbook.
- **Fees.** Be sure to pay your fees before the festival per the above deadlines.
- **Travel time.** Please schedule sufficient time for travel, unloading, warm-up, etc. Failure to report at designated times and areas **will** result in loss or cancellation of performance time. Any ensemble that misses their initial time slots will be placed at the end of scheduled performances. If you have a problem and may arrive late at your performance site, please call the number provided on the venue information and let them know. Both the festival and your colleagues will appreciate your cooperation!

WHEN YOU ARRIVE

- Please arrive at your designated arrival time (at least one hour before your performance)
- When you get off the bus, a Great East Music Festivals site representative will greet you. They will show you where to go, give you the park tickets, and any other information you need.
- A director or lead chaperone must sign for the tickets. Someone must count the tickets before leaving the performance site. **We are not responsible for tickets once they are signed out.**
- A limited number of additional tickets will be available for purchase on the day of your festival for any additional performers or adults attending in addition to your previously invoiced numbers. Please let us know these numbers ahead of time, if possible.
- Classes will be in session at most sites. We expect your students to be quiet and orderly inside and outside the building.

EQUIPMENT

PLEASE MAKE SURE TO BRING ANY INSTRUMENTS NEEDED TO PERFORM YOUR PIECE.

Equipment guaranteed at each site:

Folding Music Stands (for transportation purposes)

Chairs

At Least 3 Timpani

Concert Bass Drum

Acoustic or Electric Piano for choral groups

Choral Risers

STUDENT CONCERT MUSIC SHOULD CONSIST ONLY OF MUSIC NEEDED FOR THE FESTIVAL. METHOD BOOKS, THREE RING BINDERS, ETC. WILL NOT FIT ON OUR FOLDING MUSIC STANDS.

SCHEDULING

The performance schedule considers the size and travel time of participating groups. Whenever possible, requested performance times will be honored on a first-come, first-served basis. Please understand that we do everything possible to satisfy each school's wishes. The tight schedules allow groups ample performance time and the earliest departure time for your entertainment option. ***Please ensure you have your bus driver's contact information to advise them when to come in for pick up.***

SCHEDULING EXAMPLE FOR VENUE WITH WARM-UP ROOM

20 Min		10 Min	20 Min	5 Min	5 Min	10 Min	10 Min	5 Min	5 Min	
Arrive/Unload	Director Check In	Load In Time	Warm Up	Travel	Set Up	Perform	Clinic	Load Out	Space Cleared	Depart for Park
7:00 AM	7:10 AM	7:20 AM	7:30 AM	7:50 AM	7:55 AM	8:00 AM	8:10 AM	8:20 AM	8:25 AM	9:00 AM

SCHEDULING EXAMPLE FOR VENUE WITHOUT WARM-UP ROOM/ON-STAGE WARM-UP

25 Min		10 Min	10 Min	10 Min	10 Min	5 Min	5 Min	
Arrive/Unload	Director Check In	Load In Time	Setup/ Warm Up	Perform	Clinic	Load Out	Space Cleared	Depart for Park
7:15 AM	7:30 AM	7:40 AM	7:50 AM	8:00 AM	8:10 AM	8:20 AM	8:25 AM	9:00 AM

PERFORMANCE INFORMATION

- We make every effort to have a piano/keyboard available in every warm-up area. Sometimes this is not possible. Please get in touch with us if you have any concerns.
- Choral performance areas will have risers and a piano/keyboard. Taped accompaniments are acceptable, but you must bring your own tape recorders/CD players.
- Please let us know if you anticipate needing extra risers.
- Groups typically receive 25 minutes on stage. This time includes setup time, the performance, and the clinic.
- Directors should be prepared to briefly announce their program selections on stage at the beginning of the performance. **Between each selection, please pause briefly to allow the judges a moment to finish their comments. A judge will give you the thumbs up when they are ready.**
- Sample judges' sheets and evaluation criteria are available on the GEMF website at greateastmusicfestivals.org/scoring-rubrics.
- Immediately after your performance and clinic, you will receive your score sheets and award.
- Judges' recordings will be available immediately after your performance. All judges' commentary will be available at <https://competitionsuite.com/login/>.
- Warm-up areas may not have stands or chairs. These rooms are intended for tuning and brief warm-ups, not for complete runs of your program.
- Be aware of the [equipment available at your performance site](#) and plan accordingly; hosts are not required to supply additional equipment. Please refer to the equipment section on page 4 of this handbook.
- **If your school has multiple groups, you may not change their performance order when you arrive on-site — the printed schedule is final.**

GENERAL INFORMATION

- **Complimentary Tickets**

- All schools receive one complimentary ticket to be used by a band director or school representative, up to the first 15 performing students.
- Additional complimentary tickets depend on the number of performers. We will provide one ticket for every additional 15 students performing.
 - I.e., 59 performing students would equate to 3 complimentary park tickets.

- **Site Rules**

- Buses can only park in the designated areas. Parking and additional venue information will be provided closer to the time of your festival.
- Instrument cases and backpacks are not allowed in schools and must remain on the bus. You will not be returning to the warmup areas.
- Do not leave your buses unattended. We are not responsible for any valuables left unsecured.

- **Park Closures Due to Weather**

- All festival portions will take place as scheduled, **RAIN OR SHINE**. We cannot reschedule festivals.
- Participation decisions made by school administrations in anticipation of inclement weather will not result in refunds or credits. Park tickets are purchased in advance, and Canobie Lake Park tickets are date-specific for your event date and location.
- Park closures due to inclement weather (or impacts to use of the park during your visit) are not within the control of Great East Music Festivals. Schools must pursue the park directly and follow park policies and or protocols around refunds or credits. Great East Music Festivals only administers the actual music festival and delivers your student and adult tickets for your use.
- If it is raining, you may bring instrument cases inside.

- **Dress Code**

- Uniforms are not required and are not a determining factor in musical evaluation. We encourage you to perform in the attire you are wearing to the park. We do not provide dressing rooms at host sites.

- **Behavior**

- Classes will be in session at most sites while the festivals are occurring. We expect your students to be respectful inside and outside of the building.
- We do not allow students to enter or exit the concert area during a performance, so please arrive early and seat your group before performance times.

JUDGES' COMMENTARY: COMPETITION SUITE

By using an online tabulation software called Competition Suite, your judges' tapes will be available to you immediately following your performance. It is free to sign up and is required to receive your commentary. **If you already have an account, simply visit <https://competitionsuite.com/login>.**

Please follow these directions prior to your first competition to set up your Competition Suite account:

1. If you do not have an account, please create an account here:

<https://competitionsuite.com/signup/>

2. **Wait for a notification that your group(s) has been added.**

3. Click this link:

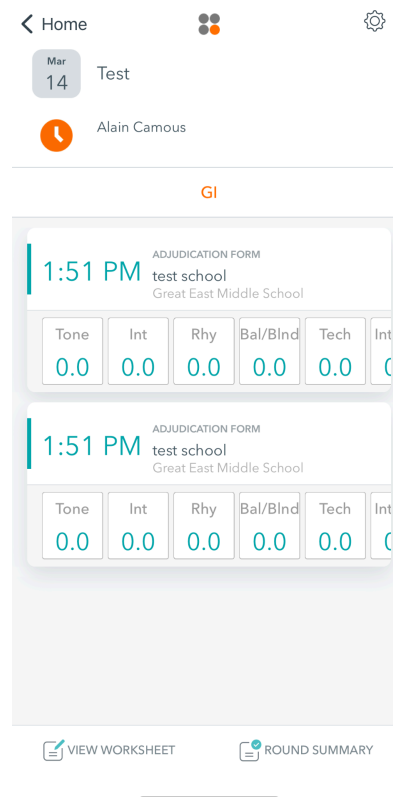
<https://competitionsuite.com/groups/find/>

4. Enter your group's name (enter part of the name if you have trouble finding it).

5. Click Request Access next to your group.

Once the association is approved, the group name will be displayed along the left side of the page.

Be sure to provide your phone number to ensure you can access your commentary from your phone!



PROGRAM ORDER SHEET

Please print and complete **two copies** of this form for each performing ensemble. You will turn this form in to the judges along with your scores! Scoring rubrics can be found at

www.greateastmusicfestivals.org/scoring-rubrics

School Name: _____

Group Name: _____

Director's Name: _____

Group Type (Select One): Band ____ Choir ____ Orchestra ____

Is this an auditioned ensemble? _____

How many times a week does this ensemble rehearse? _____

How long are the rehearsals? _____

Program Order

Title of Piece/Song	Composer

CONCERT BAND & ORCHESTRA SET UP CHART

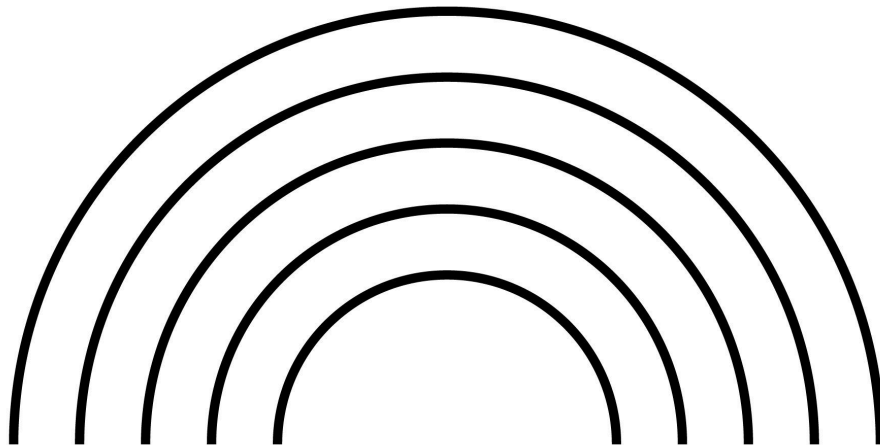
Please print and fill out this form for each ensemble performing. Email this form to afrachiseur@greateastmusicfestivals.org before your festival, and also provide a hard copy to Great East Music Festivals Staff at Check-In

School Name:

Ensemble Name:

Performance Time:

You must provide your own set up crew of chaperones and/or students. Great East Music Festivals staff is only responsible for providing the correct number of stands and chairs. Please be prepared to set up your own ensemble



Row 1 Chairs__ Stands__

Row 2 Chairs__ Stands__

Row 3 Chairs__ Stands__

Row 4 Chairs__ Stands__

Row 5 Chairs__ Stands__

TOTAL CHAIRS__ TOTAL STANDS__

HELPFUL LINKS

- [2026 Great East Music Festivals Change Request Form](#)
- [Great East Music Festivals FAQ](#)
- [2026 Great East Music Festivals Venue Information and Equipment by Site](#)
- [Competition Suite for Judges' Commentary](#)
- [Scoring Rubrics](#)
- [Financial Information and Deadlines](#)
- [Ansley Frachiseur, Great East Music Festivals Director, Email](#)