

Re. Digital Scores

Festival performances require an original score. In terms of digital music, an original score means a printout of the digital file. It can also mean viewing the digital file on a tablet or computer. An original score **does not** only mean a traditional hard copy of a piece. The music publication industry has changed, and so must we. While seeing a traditional hard copy of music is considered the verification of legally obtaining the music, print outs of digital files are not so cut and dried, so there are specific verifications needed. See p. xiii in the 2024 Bulletin for the information regarding verification of digital scores.

Legally obtained digital music IS absolutely acceptable for use in NFMC Festivals. Purchase that digital piece, print it out, and you are good to go. You can also utilize tablets for performances and viewing judge's copies. Examples:

- Have a freebie digital download? YES, you can use it!
- Have a piece from IMSLP? YES, you can use it! (as long as it is in the public domain in the US)
- Bought a studio licensed piece? YES, you can use it!
- Bought a single use licensed piece? YES, you can use it! However, make sure that you have purchased the appropriate number of copies for your event's performance. Ensembles and events which utilize a collaborative pianist will need multiple copies.
- Want to load all your judge's scores on a tablet for viewing? YES, you can do that.
- Your collaborative pianist wants to use a tablet for performance? YES, you can do that.
- Have a score downloaded from MuseScore.com? a resounding MAYBE... Since there are a wide variety of users who upload scores to MuseScore.com (some of whom may not obtain legal permission to make an arrangement), scores from this source need to be utilized with extra consideration. MuseScore.com has been considered a file sharing forum, and not necessarily a publisher, so that is problematic since scores must be published (see p. xiii, #1). Since Hal Leonard has purchased MuseScore, there are links to HL to purchase scores, and those would be considered legally obtained. But there are so many composers who self-publish or upload their works to sites that serve as publishing entities, it's probably a good idea to stick to those type of sites rather than MuseScore.com or other file sharing sites/forums.
- If you have specific questions regarding a piece, utilize the chair chain (Area→State→Regional→National) to get an answer!

As always, if there is a doubt regarding the legitimacy of a score, do not let the issue interfere with a student's performance. If there's a question on the day of the audition, handle the matter discretely. Do not have a discussion about it in front of the student/parents or right before the student plays. If necessary, have the student perform, and then deal with the issue. Generally, most issues are easily resolved. Keep the student's experience being positive at the forefront when dealing with issues.

Be kind.

Be professional.

Approach issues with curiosity rather than condemnation.

Have a great Festival season!

Lori Jessen
NFMC Festivals Chair