

ASTA CERTIFICATE PROGRAM FOR STRINGS PERFORMANCE EXAMINATIONS

Dear Student and Parents,

I would like to acquaint you with the Certificate Program for Strings, a new program offered by the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) that is now available in Texas.

The Certificate Program for Strings is a national examination program for string students which measures technical progress and musical development. The program is based on eleven graded levels, from Foundation to Level 10, which covers a wide range of proficiency from the first-year beginner to music conservatory-level competency. In the coming months we will prepare one or more pieces, an etude, scales and arpeggios, as well as hone your sight-reading skills—all at the Certificate Program level that best suits your skills and musical maturity. In a few months, you will perform for a knowledgeable, highly experienced teacher/examiner who will use their best judgment to decide if you have achieved the level of playing appropriate to the expectations of your level, as well as offer constructive and reinforcing comments. Upon successful completion of the annual exam, you will be awarded a *Certificate of Achievement* by ASTA, the nation's largest organization for string teachers.

I would like to have all my students to participate because the work that goes into preparation and the feedback from the examiner are invaluable to everyone. Opportunities such as these examinations provide a goal to strive for and an occasion for every student to shine in a non-competitive environment. The certification you receive by successfully completing each exam level offers a way for you to personally track the progress you are making, and provides documentation of your achievements when applying for colleges and scholarships, summer programs, and so forth.

This year the Houston area exams are to be held at the Shepherd School of Music, Rice University on May 29th. The completed application form and exam fee will be due back to me by April 16th. I will keep you informed of any updates. Parents, we are also asking for some assistance with check in, room monitoring, and so forth on the day of the exam. Please let me know if you can help us out.

I am pleased to offer this opportunity to my students, as we work towards higher levels of achievement in making beautiful music. Please call if you have any questions.

Yours,