

## **GSA Applicant Guide: Instrumental Music**

### **I. Program Description**

GSA's Instrumental Music program is structured to introduce a broad spectrum of musical styles and philosophies, developing students' fundamental musicianship. Students are provided with a unique range of musical experiences not typically available to high school musicians. This includes participation in faculty-coached chamber ensembles (both classical and jazz styles) and in seminars about auditions, college choices, careers, practicing techniques, résumés and competitions. In addition to weekly studies in music history and music theory, Instrumental Music students receive private instruction from GSA faculty or adjunct professional guest artists. Nationally recognized guest artists present workshops in the areas of performance and musically-related career opportunities. Students also attend live musical performances and partake in off-campus field trips. The Instrumental Music Program typically presents over 50 chamber music performances, 10 solo piano performances, and various interdisciplinary collaborative performances with some of the other GSA disciplines on the Final Day of the program.

### **II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 11<sup>th</sup>)**

*Applicants must submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Acceptd](#) no later than January 11<sup>th</sup>. NOTE: Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$30 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$35 if applying in two art forms). Students on free/reduced lunch may opt to have this fee waived when payment is requested.*

For the Preliminary Round, you must submit the following (*see below for more detail*):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Scales and/or Rudiments Video(s)
- e. Prepared Solo(s) Video

#### **a. Recommendation Forms (*do this first!*)**

You will identify two people to fill out recommendation forms for you: a school administrator (e.g. counselor) and a teacher/instructor (see below if those do not apply). You will enter their names and email addresses in your online application, and the individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation process.

- Please [login into Acceptd](https://app.getacceptd.com/kentuckycentergsa) (<https://app.getacceptd.com/kentuckycentergsa>) to initiate this process as soon as possible so your recommenders have time to complete the forms before the application deadline.
- You do not need to submit letters of recommendation. Recommenders will receive an online form to fill out, which will serve as their recommendation for you.
- If you are home schooled, and/or you otherwise do not have a school administrator or teacher/instructor who can fill out your recommendation forms, please seek out another adult

who can speak to your qualities/character/abilities in one way or another; this could include a mentor, a youth minister, a coach, etc.

- Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.

**b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)**

You will provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

*As you envision yourself attending GSA, describe to us one thing you will bring to/offer the community, and one thing that you know will challenge you.*

Be open, honest, and authentic in your response. You will upload this essay response as a document (as opposed to typing it in a text box, as was done in previous years). Please type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document. When uploading your essay, title the file "Personal Short Essay."

**c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)**

You will provide an answer to the following question in video form:

*Artists play a vital role in society, ranging from sparking large cultural movements, to facilitating meaningful interpersonal connections. What impact do you seek to make on your community/world as an artist, and why is that an important impact to make? How will GSA help you achieve this?*

- Be open, honest, and authentic in your response. While you are encouraged to prepare your thoughts before shooting the video and you may consult notes as you speak, please do not just read off a transcript. We want to get a sense of your personality.
- Record your answer in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc.
- Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.
- Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file "Personal Question Video."

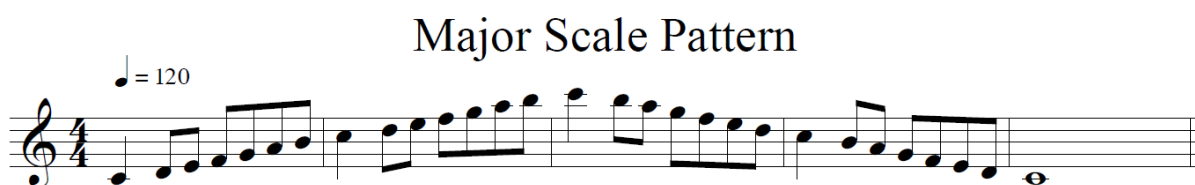
**d. & e. Scales/Rudiment and Prepared Solo Videos**

*All applicants must submit both (1) a Scales and/or Rudiments Video, and (2) a Prepared Solo Video. (Percussionists must provide two of each; see details below). However, depending on your instrument, your video submissions will look a little different.*

FOR ALL VIDEOS AND ALL INSTRUMENTS:

- You and your hands must be visible the entire time. If using a music stand, position it so your body is obstructed as little as possible.
- **Each video must be recorded in one take.** No edits, splicing, or stops are allowed. Transitions between scales should be swift.

- No human or technological assistance (metronomes, tuners) are allowed.
- No accompaniment (live, recorded or electronic) is allowed.
- Applicants are not permitted to wear headphones/earbuds while playing their instrument in videos.
- Record your video in an interior space that is free from interruptions, background noise, etc.
- Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location.
- When uploading, verify that image is upright (not sideways) and plays smoothly all the way to the end.
- For all scales videos: Play scales in eighth notes at the minimum tempo of 120 bpm to the quarter note. Play a different scale degree note on each note (e.g. do not play two eighth notes per pitch). Use the rhythm below as a guide, and be sure to review specific scale instructions for your instrument:



## REVIEW THE MORE DETAILED REQUIREMENTS BELOW FOR YOUR SPECIFIC INSTRUMENT TYPE.

### *Woodwinds and Brass (Preliminary Round)*

#### d. Scales Video (1 minute, 30 seconds max)

All applicants will play seven required major scales in this order: C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A. Scales must be played:

- both ascending and descending
- by memory
- in eighth notes at the minimum tempo of 120 bpm to the quarter note. Play a different scale degree note on each eighth note (e.g. do not play two eighth notes per pitch – see image above for correct rhythm). Faster tempos are permissible, but only if ALL scales are played at the faster tempo.
- in 2 octaves except for the following: **oboes & saxophones** may play their A & G scales in one octave; **trumpets** may play their D, Eb, and F scales in one octave.

- in a tongued, legato style
- If you play a transposing instrument (clarinet, saxophone, trumpet or horn), play the required scales in your keys, not concert pitch.

e. Personal Solo Video (3-5 minutes)

- All applicants will select and play a solo of their choice.
  - Announce your piece before you play it by stating both the composer and title.
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### ***Strings & Guitar (Preliminary Round)***

d. Scales Video (1 minute, 30 seconds max)

All applicants will play seven required major scales in this order: C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A. Scales must be played:

- both ascending and descending
- by memory
- in eighth notes at the minimum tempo of 120 bpm to the quarter note. Play a different scale degree note on each eighth note (e.g. do not play two eighth notes per pitch – see image above for correct rhythm). Faster tempos are permissible, but only if ALL scales are played at the faster tempo.
- in 2 octaves except for the following: **double bass** may drop the octave in the D and Eb scales.

e. Personal Solo Video (3-5 minutes)

- All applicants will select and play a solo of their choice.
  - Announce your piece before you play it by stating both the composer and title.
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### ***Piano (Preliminary Round)***

*NOTE: Pianists, please position your camera at an angle so that your hands, the music rack and/or the fall board of the piano are visible at all times.*

d. Scales Video (1 minute, 30 seconds max)

All applicants will play seven required major scales in this order: C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A. Scales must be played:

- both ascending and descending
- by memory
- in eighth notes at the minimum tempo of 120 bpm to the quarter note. Play a different scale degree note on each eighth note (e.g. do not play two eighth notes per pitch). Scales may be performed in the rhythm noted above, but for pianists, scales may also be performed in eighth notes only (without the quarter note “stop” on each tonic scale degree). Faster tempos are permissible, but only if ALL scales are played at the faster tempo.
- in a minimum of 2 octaves, but if possible, 4 octaves would be preferred for pianists.
- with both hands together

e. Personal Solo Video (3-5 minutes)

- All applicants will select and play a solo of their choice.
  - **Pianists must play their solo from memory.**
  - Announce your piece before you play it by stating both the composer and title.
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***Percussion (Preliminary Round)***

*NOTE: Percussionists Must Submit Materials for Two Instruments*

Students applying for Percussion must submit materials on both a keyboard percussion instrument (marimba, xylophone, vibraphone) and a non-keyboard instrument (snare drum, timpani, multiple percussion, or drum set). **As such, Percussionists must submit four videos; please see details below.**

d. Scales & Rudiments Videos (two videos)

- *Scales Video* (for keyboard instrument – one video, 1 minute 45 seconds max)  
All applicants will play seven required major scales in this order: C, F, Bb, Eb, G, D, A. Scales must be played:
  - both ascending and descending
  - by memory
  - in eighth notes at the minimum tempo of 120 bpm to the quarter note. Play a different scale degree note on each eighth note (e.g. do not play two eighth notes per pitch – see image above for correct rhythm). Faster tempos are permissible, but only if ALL scales are played at the faster tempo.
  - a minimum of 2 octaves
- *Rudiments or Drum Set Styles Video* (for non-keyboard instrument – one video, 1 minute 30 seconds maximum; **choose appropriate guidelines for your choice below.** You should only choose one of the following:
  - Snare Drum & Multiple Percussion  
Play 15 seconds of each of the following rudiments on a snare drum:
    - flams with alternating hands from slow to fast to slow
    - single drags with alternating hands from slow to fast to slow
    - single paradiddles with alternating hands
    - double paradiddles with alternating hands
    - multiple bounce/buzz (symphonic style) rolls from softest to loudest to softest
    - double stroke (rudiment style) rolls from softest to loudest to softest
  - Timpani
    - Play 15 seconds of single stroke rolls (fp crescendo) **each** on both high (23”) timpani **and** on low (32”) timpani. The low drum should have a slower roll speed and the higher drum should have a faster roll speed to maximize the resonance of each drum.

- If auditioning on timpani, you must also play 15 seconds of each of the following rudiments on a snare drum:
      - flams with alternating hands from slow to fast to slow
      - single paradiddles with alternating hands
      - double paradiddles with alternating hands
      - multiple bounce/buzz (symphonic style) rolls from softest to loudest to softest.
  - Drum Set
    - Play 15 seconds of each of the following styles (1 minute, 30seconds):
      - bossa nova
      - samba
      - shuffle
      - swing
      - funk
      - rock

e. Personal Solo Videos (two videos, 3-5 minutes **each**: one of a solo for keyboard & one of a solo for non-keyboard instrument)

- All applicants will select and play a solo of their choice on each instrument.
- Announce each piece before you play it by stating both the composer and title.

### **III. Final Round Requirements**

*Some applicants will be invited to participate in the Final Round of GSA Auditions/Reviews, which will consist of the elements described below. All applicants will be notified on February 27<sup>th</sup> of whether they are invited to the Final Round. If you are selected to participate in the Final Round, you will be required to attend in-person on March 22<sup>nd</sup> or 23<sup>rd</sup> in Danville, KY as scheduled by GSA.*

The Final Round for Instrumental Music will include the following (be sure to review the exact requirements for your specific instrument):

- a. Questionnaire
- b. Prepared Ensemble Excerpt
- c. Personal Solo(s)
- d. Sight Reading
- e. Interview

#### **a. Questionnaire (all instruments)**

When you arrive at the main registration table for your auditions/reviews, you will receive and complete a one to two-page questionnaire. This questionnaire may cover a range of topics, including your previous experience in your art form, your favorite artists, and/or your college and career goals. The questionnaire is not a quiz and is not scored, but it is a way for adjudicators to get to know you. The questionnaire may be used to customize questions in your interview.

## REVIEW THE MORE DETAILED REQUIREMENTS BELOW FOR YOUR SPECIFIC INSTRUMENT TYPE.

### ***Woodwinds & Brass (Final Round)***

Auditions in Woodwinds & Brass may last up to 10 minutes per applicant. Applicants are permitted to play a few warm up notes not to exceed 30 seconds total.

#### b. Prepared Ensemble Excerpt

All Woodwind & Brass applicants will play a prepared ensemble excerpt. Applicants are welcome to bring their own copy of the piece, but one will also be provided at the audition. Applicants will play the excerpt alone, not as a part of an ensemble.

This piece will be selected by the adjudicators, be about one minute in duration, and will be posted here on the GSA website by February 27. Do not memorize this piece; you will be asked to play it from the sheet music in the audition, and you may be interrupted by the adjudicators at any time.

#### c. Personal Solo

All Woodwind & Brass applicants will play one personal solo. All applicants must furnish the adjudicators with an original copy of their music, even if the piece is an original composition. Students are also permitted to furnish a duplicate of the music if it is in the public domain (e.g. free music printed from the IMSLP website). Applicants may use a duplicated copy for themselves at audition time. No accompaniment (live, recorded or electronic) is allowed.

This piece:

- will be selected by the student
- can be the same or a different piece as the solo from the preliminary round application
- need not be memorized
- will total 3 -5 minutes
- can be interrupted at any time by the adjudicators

#### d. Sight Reading

All Woodwind & Brass applicants will perform both a rhythmic sight reading and a melodic sight reading.

Both readings will be furnished by the adjudicators at the time of audition.

- For the rhythmic sight reading, applicants will have 15 seconds to practice on the instrument, and then 15 seconds to perform.
- For the melodic sight reading, applicants will have 30 seconds to practice on the instrument and then 30 seconds to perform.

#### e. Interview

Adjudicators will conduct a brief interview with each applicant. The duration of the interview is at the adjudicators' discretion.

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***Strings & Guitar (Final Round)***

Auditions in Strings & Guitar may last to 10 minutes per applicant. All applicants are permitted to play a few warm up notes not to exceed 30 seconds total.

**b. Prepared Ensemble Excerpt**

All Guitar & Strings applicants will play a prepared ensemble excerpt. Applicants are welcome to bring their own copy of the piece, but one will also be provided at the audition. Applicants will play the excerpt alone, not as a part of an ensemble.

This piece will be selected by the adjudicators, be about one minute in duration, and will be posted here on the GSA website by February 27. Do not memorize this piece; you will be asked to play it from the sheet music in the audition, and you may be interrupted by the adjudicators at any time.

**c. Personal Solo**

All Guitar & Strings applicants will play one personal solo. All applicants must furnish the adjudicators with an original copy of their music, even if the piece is an original composition. Students are also permitted to furnish a duplicate of the music if it is in the public domain (e.g. free music printed from the IMSLP website). Applicants may use a duplicated copy for themselves at audition time. No accompaniment (live, recorded or electronic) is allowed.

This piece:

- will be selected by the student
- can be the same or a different piece as the solo from the preliminary round application
- need not be memorized
- will total 3 -5 minutes
- can be interrupted at any time by the adjudicators

**d. Sight Reading**

All Guitar & Strings applicants will perform both a rhythmic sight reading and a melodic sight reading. Both readings will be furnished by the adjudicators at the time of audition.

- For the rhythmic sight reading, applicants will have 15 seconds to practice on the instrument, and then 15 seconds to perform.
- For the melodic sight reading, applicants will have 30 seconds to practice on the instrument and then 30 seconds to perform.

**e. Interview**

Adjudicators will conduct a brief interview with each applicant. The duration of the interview is at the adjudicators' discretion.

***Piano (Final Round)***

Auditions in Piano may last up to 10 minutes per applicant. All applicants are permitted to play a few warm up notes not to exceed 30 seconds total.

**b. Prepared Ensemble Excerpt**

All Piano applicants will play a prepared ensemble excerpt. Applicants are welcome to bring their own copy of the piece, but one will also be provided at the audition. Applicants will play the excerpt alone, not as a part of an ensemble.



This piece will be selected by the adjudicators, be about one minute in duration, and will be posted here on the GSA website by February 27. Do not memorize this piece; you will be asked to play it from the sheet music in the audition, and you may be interrupted by the adjudicators at any time.

#### c. Personal Solo

All Piano applicants will play one personal solo. All applicants must furnish the adjudicators with an original copy of their music, even if the piece is an original composition. Students are also permitted to furnish a duplicate of the music if it is in the public domain (e.g. free music printed from the IMSLP website). No accompaniment (live, recorded or electronic) is allowed.

This piece:

- will be selected by the student
- can be the same or a different piece as the solo from the preliminary round application
- must be memorized
- will total 3 -5 minutes
- can be interrupted at any time by the adjudicators

#### d. Sight Reading

All Piano applicants will perform both a rhythmic sight reading and a melodic sight reading. Both readings will be furnished by the adjudicators at the time of audition.

- For the rhythmic sight reading, applicants will have 15 seconds to practice on the instrument, and then 15 seconds to perform.
- For the melodic sight reading, applicants will have 30 seconds to practice on the instrument and then 30 seconds to perform.

#### e. Interview

Adjudicators will conduct a brief interview with each applicant. The duration of the interview is at the adjudicators' discretion.

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#### ***Percussion (Final Round)***

Those applying in Percussion must audition on both one keyboard instrument (xylophone, vibraphone, marimba) and one non-keyboard instrument (multiple percussion, timpani, snare, drum set). **Applicants invited to the Final Round must audition on the same two instruments as the Preliminary Round.**

Auditions in Percussion may last up to 20 minutes per applicant. All personal instruments, multi-percussion, etc. will be set-up outside the audition room by the applicant prior to their audition. Applicants will then be permitted time to set up, position, and remove their personal instruments in /from the audition room. Once set up in the audition room, applicants may play a few warm up notes not to exceed 30 seconds per instrument. Percussionists are allowed to tune the timpani if used in the audition.

#### b. Prepared Ensemble Excerpt

All Percussion applicants will play 2 prepared ensemble excerpts **on the same two instruments as the**

**Preliminary Round;** one for a keyboard instrument (xylophone, vibraphone, marimba) and one for a non-keyboard instrument (multiple percussion, timpani, snare, drum set). Applicants are welcome to bring their own copies of both pieces, but both pieces will also be provided at the audition. Applicants will play the excerpt alone, not as a part of an ensemble.

These pieces will be selected by the adjudicators, be about one minute in duration each, and will be posted here on the GSA website by February 27. Do not memorize these pieces; you will be asked to play them from the sheet music in the audition, and you may be interrupted by the adjudicators at any time.

#### c. Personal Solos

All Percussion applicants will play 2 personal solos; one for a keyboard instrument (xylophone, vibraphone, marimba) and one for a non-keyboard instrument (multiple percussion, timpani, snare, drum set). All applicants must furnish the adjudicators with an original copy of their music, even if the piece is an original composition. Students are also permitted to furnish a duplicate of the music if it is in the public domain (e.g. free music printed from the IMSLP website). Applicants may use a duplicated copy for themselves at audition time. No accompaniment (live, recorded or electronic) is allowed.

These pieces:

- will be selected by the student
- can be the same or different pieces as the solos from the preliminary round application
- should be used while auditioning
- will total 6 -10 minutes for **both** instruments (3 -5 minutes per instrument)
- can be interrupted at any time by the adjudicators

#### d. Sight Reading

All Percussion applicants will perform both a rhythmic sight reading and a melodic sight reading. Both readings will be furnished by the adjudicators at the time of audition.

- For the rhythm only sight reading, applicants will have 15 seconds to practice on each instrument, and then 15 seconds to perform on each instrument.
- For the melodic sight reading, applicants will have 30 seconds to practice on each instrument, and then 30 seconds to perform on each instrument.

#### e. Interview

Adjudicators will lead a brief interview with each applicant. The duration of the interview is at the adjudicators' discretion.

#### Special Notes for Percussionists:

- Percussion applicants must furnish their own instruments ( except for timpani or a keyboard percussion instrument which may be provided only if the applicant notifies GSA administration at least two weeks prior to the audition.)
  - Applicants may choose to bring their own keyboard instruments if they desire.
  - If utilizing a marimba, please note that the marimba provided at the audition site is 4 1/3 octaves. If your solo requires a larger marimba, you will need to provide your own instrument.
  - Percussionists are expected to bring their own sticks and mallets corresponding to their audition instrument(s), including sticks for drum set (if applicable). All percussionists are asked to bring sticks appropriate for snare drum.
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#### **IV. Criteria**

*The work of each student will be given an objective review by the adjudicators as to how they fulfill each of the following criteria:*

##### **Rhythm/Tempo/Evenness**

An ideal applicant plays evenly with correct rhythms; there are no pauses or restarts. In the preliminary round application, quarter note is equal to 120 bpm in scales/rudiments video.

##### **Technical Accuracy**

An ideal applicant plays with proper fingering, bowing or sticking technique; solos are played with precision.

##### **Musicality/Tone/Intonation**

An ideal applicant plays in an appropriate stylistic manner with musical expression, with characteristic instrument sound, and in tune.

##### **Dedication to Art Form, Growth, and Community**

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their art form, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully and authentically explain why they want to attend GSA and how they are uniquely qualified to contribute to a robust, diverse community of artists.

##### **Rhythmic and Melodic Sight Reading Proficiency (Final Round only)**

A successful applicant plays in time with correct rhythms; there are no pause or restarts. In melodic sight reading, pitches are played accurately; the piece is played in an appropriate stylistic manner with musical expression, with characteristic instrument sound, and in tune.

#### **V. Tips**

*These tips are suggestions. They are NOT eligibility requirements for admittance to GSA.*

##### **TIPS FOR SELECTING YOUR MUSIC:**

Choose ONE piece that:

- demonstrates both technically and musically the best aspects of your playing.
- is from the standard repertoire literature or equivalent music from your area.
- you know well, have performed before, and enjoy playing.
- demonstrates your ability to perform in time with other musicians—avoid selecting a piece that is primarily rubato in nature.
- is not too difficult or too easy for you to play—difficult literature performed poorly is not impressive, and easy literature, although performed well, may not provide enough information for the judges.

- Jazz and contemporary music selections are allowed, but classical literature is preferred. Avoid performing excerpts from previously used auditions (e.g. All-State music).
- Seek advice from your private teacher, ensemble director, or someone who is familiar with the GSA instrumental music program.

#### **TIPS FOR RECORDING YOUR APPLICATION VIDEOS:**

- Avoid over practicing on the day that you record your audition. Allow plenty of time for yourself to warm up, tune your instrument, mentally go over your audition music, and collect your thoughts before you record your scales and solo.
- Make sure you can accurately play all 7 required scales in the order and manner requested without hesitation and in time before you record them.
- Be sure to observe all dynamic, articulation, tempo, and stylistic markings written in your solo. You may skip over long rests when playing your prepared piece but should count in time all rests two measures or less.

#### **PREPARATION TIPS FOR THE FINAL ROUND:**

- Wear dress clothing (e.g. dress slacks, shirt, and shoes for men. Ties, jackets and suits are not necessary. Dresses, skirts, or pants for women), but dress comfortably. Do not overdress or underdress in anything that could cause a distraction from your audition.
- Practice in the clothes and shoes you plan to wear, especially if they are new.
- Come early to your audition. Avoid over practicing on the day of your audition. Allow plenty of time for yourself to warm up, tune your instrument, mentally go over your audition music, and collect your thoughts.
- Remember to bring a good quality original copy of your personal solo. If the piece is in public domain and you choose to bring copies, ensure the copies are good quality.
- Be sure to observe all dynamic, articulation, tempo, and stylistic markings written in your solo. If you intend to perform your piece significantly different from what is indicated on the score, be sure to write any of these changes on the music. If there are any cuts in your music, be sure to have them clearly marked. You may skip over long rests when playing your prepared piece but should count in time all rests two measures or less.
- Play confidently at all times. Once you begin playing, do not stop even if you make a mistake, ignore it and keep playing. Isolated mistakes do not automatically disqualify you from being accepted into the program. When you are finished playing, do not decide for the adjudicators through any verbal or physical gestures how well or poorly you perceived your playing to be.

- Practice sight reading music daily, as this is an important element of the audition process.
- Relax and enjoy yourself. The adjudicators want you to do well. They have all been through many auditions themselves and have experienced being nervous before. When performing, concentrate on your music rather than on what you imagine the adjudicators are thinking.
- Pay close attention to the adjudication criteria. While GSA students are accepted based on their holistic identity as a young artist, the criteria are the foundation of how your materials are being scored.
- **Remember the adjudicators are very excited to see your work and they want you to do well!** We know it takes hard work to submit this application, and that it can be scary to “put yourself out there.” We have faith in you, so put your best foot forward and don’t be afraid to show us the wonderful artist you are. You prove a level of dedication just by submitting your application, and you should be proud of yourself.

**For technical support with the application  
contact Acceptd**

Email: [support@getacceptd.com](mailto:support@getacceptd.com)

Phone: 1.888.725.2122, press 2

**For questions about Summer Program, the content and/or requirements of the application,  
contact GSA**

Email: [gsainfo@kentuckycenter.org](mailto:gsainfo@kentuckycenter.org)

Phone: 502.566.5192