



2026 All-Virginia Guitar Ensemble (AVGE) Audition Information & Materials High School



2025 AVGE - Darin Au, conductor

Auditions will take place September 12 and 13 2026 at sites across the Commonwealth. Site locations and sign ups will be posted by Labor Day.

Eligibility: In order to participate in All-Virginia Guitar Ensemble, students of qualified directors must be enrolled as an incoming 9 - 12 grade student, be regular participants in the guitar program. If the student attends a school where the guitar program and/or class curriculum is limited to an Intermediate Level or lower (*defined by the Virginia Department of Education Standards of Learning: HII.12 - 16), the student may be eligible to audition as long as they are registered in another music class at their school. If there is no guitar program at the student's school, the student must be a regular participant in another music class at their school. *<https://www.doe.virginia.gov/home/showpublisheddocument/2030/637949943128000000>

AVGE Performance: The 2026 AVGE will perform for the VMEA Professional Development Conference in Richmond, VA (tentatively scheduled) Nov. 20, 2026 with rehearsals starting on November 18. Should you win the audition to participate in the AVGE, you will be required to pay a fee of approximately \$400 to cover food and lodging. This price may drop as sponsorship increases. Some school districts may give financial assistance for this event. You are encouraged to discuss this ahead of time with your teacher and administrators.

Sight Reading

- 10 Points (out of 100)
 - 4 Points Notes
 - 4 Points Rhythm
 - 2 Musicality

D Major Scale - 3 Octaves

(See music included in this packet)

- 15 Points (out of 100)
 - 5 Points for correct notes
 - 5 Points for fluid, steady rhythm
 - 5 Points for tone quality (left and right hand techniques)

Solo: Rochester Scottish arr. by Justin Holland

(Included in this packet)

- 35 Points (out of 100)
 - 10 Points for correct notes and rhythms
 - 10 Points for tone quality from right hand and left hand techniques
 - 10 Points for musicality: dynamics, phrasing, interpretation
 - 5 Points for overall quality of preparation

Ensemble Excerpts

(Included in this packet)

Prepare 4 short excerpts from **Bensusan** and **Layover** by Michael Hedges (arr. Hirsh). You will be asked to play two of these excerpt at the audition (not free choice).

- 40 Points (out of 100)
 - 10 Points for correct notes and rhythms
 - 10 Points for tone quality from right hand and left hand techniques
 - 10 Points for musicality: dynamics, phrasing, interpretation
 - 10 Points for overall quality of preparation

2026 All-Virginia Guitar Ensemble Conductor

Alan Hirsh



Well known as composer/arranger/guitarist/and music educator, Alan Hirsh currently resides in North Carolina where he served for 25 years as Music Director and Fine Arts Department Chair at Bishop McGuinness High School as well as adjunct guitar instructor at Wake Forest University. Alan is also the founder of the Piedmont Guitar Orchestra and actively directs festival guitar orchestras around the country, including at the Appalachian Guitarfest, the Greensboro Guitarganza, the Long Island Guitar Festival, the Virginia Music Educators Association

and the Shearer Summer Institute. Alan serves as Executive Director and Vice President of Education of the Aaron Shearer Foundation. He began a collaboration with world-renown pedagogue, Aaron Shearer back in the 1980's, composing music for the ground-breaking 1988 three-volume method series: *Learning the Classic Guitar* published with Mel Bay. He since continued his collaboration with Aaron (until his passing in 2008) as composer, author, and editor of the five-volume Alfred Music publications: *The Shearer Method*, a work representing Shearer's lifetime culmination of thought on how the guitar should be taught. His most recent 2 volume work—*The Shearer Method Classroom Guitar Series* is now available. He remains active as a composer, having written and arranged extensively for orchestra, band, chorus, guitar and guitar ensemble. Alan's many published works include Mel Bay publications of *Twenty Etudes in Fixed Positions* and *New Music for Classic Guitar, Trio*.

Sight Reading Examples from the 2025 Auditions

Four staves of musical notation in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (D major), and 4/4 time signature. The first staff begins with a mezzo-piano (*mp*) dynamic. The second staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The third staff begins with a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic. The fourth staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and includes a crescendo hairpin leading to a mezzo-forte (*mf*) dynamic.

D Major Scale

There are no required fingerings.

Recommendations:

- Alternate right hand fingers
- Avoid audible glissandi

♩ = 120

Two staves of musical notation for the D Major Scale in treble clef, key signature of two sharps (D major), and 3/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as ♩ = 120. The first staff shows the ascending scale, and the second staff shows the descending scale.

Excerpt 1 - Guitar 1b from Bensusan by Michael Hedges

BENSUSAN - 2

37 ^② _{1 2 0 0} BVII _p ^{3 ③ ④ ② ③} _{i p m i i m p}

41 ^{3 ③ ④ ② ③} _{i p m i} ₃ ^{3 ③ ④ ② ③} _{i p m i} ₃

45 *pont.* *double pulloff*

49 *ord.* ^{3 ③ ④ ②} _{i p m} ^{3 ③ ④ ②} _{i p m} _{0 2 0} **B** ₁ *gliss*

53 _{④ ③ ② ①} _{p i m a} **XII** **VII** _{② ④} _{4 1 4 4}

Detailed description: This musical score is for guitar 1b, measures 37-53. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 37 starts with a red bar across the staff, containing a triplet of eighth notes (2, 1, 2) and a quarter note (0). A bracket above the staff indicates a B7 chord. The piece continues with various techniques: triplets of eighth notes (3, 4, 2, 3), slurs, and dynamic markings like *p* and *i p m i*. Measure 45 features a *pont.* (ponticello) marking and a *double pulloff* technique. Measure 49 includes an *ord.* (order) marking and a *gliss* (glissando) marking. Measure 53 shows fret changes to XII and VII, and includes a *p i m a* (pizzicato) marking. The score is annotated with fingerings (circled numbers) and articulation marks.

Excerpt 2 - Guitar V from Bensusan by Michael Hedges

♩ = 110

B II ⊕

p *mf* 0

(finger-prep slap)

p 0

sf *p* 0

slap harm XII

p hammer on VII with 1

6

mp

11

p tap soundboard

B — B —

16

B — B —

pont ⊕

1

3

strum as if with a pick

ord.

ord.

Rochester Schottish

W.H. Ruliston

Arranged by Justin Holland

Andante Moderato (♩ = 70)

The musical score is written for solo guitar in the key of D major (two sharps) and 2/4 time. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps. The tempo is marked 'Andante Moderato' with a quarter note equal to 70 beats per minute. The score includes various musical notations such as accents (>), slurs, and dynamic markings. Two specific measures are circled in red: measure 8 (marked *ff*) and measure 13 (marked *ff*). Red text annotations are placed above and below the score: 'Do not repeat during the audition.' appears above measure 8 and below measure 13. A '2.' marking is placed above the first measure of the final staff (measure 17), and a '1.' marking is placed above the first measure of the staff containing measure 13. The piece concludes with a double bar line and repeat dots.

Do not repeat during the audition.

ff

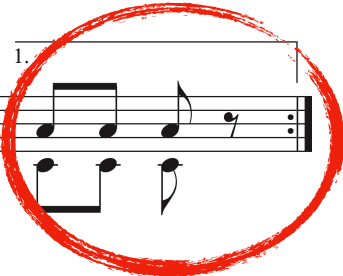
Do not repeat during the audition.

p

ff

Take the 2nd Ending.

2.



Rochester Schottish

20

23

26

29

32

Do not repeat during the audition.

36

39