



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



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 sight-reading music in D major (two sharps) and 4/4 time. 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 the D Major Scale in 3/4 time. The key signature has two sharps (F# and C#). The first staff contains the first two measures of the scale, and the second staff contains the next two measures, ending with a double bar line.

Excerpt 1 - Guitar 1b from Bensusan by Michael Hedges

Bensusan - 2

37 ②

BVII

3 ③ ④ ② ③

1 2 0 0

p

i p m i i m p

41

3 ③ ④ ② ③

1 4

i p m i

3

3 ③ ④ ② ③

i p m i

3

Play the circled "B"s on the open second string for the audition.

45

pont.

double pulloff

49 *ord.*

3 ③ ④ ②

3 ③ ④ ②

i p m

i p m

0 2 0

B

1 *gliss*

53

4

p i m a

XII VII

④ ③ ② ①

② ④

4 1 4 4

Excerpt 2 - Guitar V from Bensusan by Michael Hedges

♩ = 110

B II ④

(finger-prep slap)

slap harm XII

p *mf* *p* *sf* *p*

hammer on VII with 1

6

mp

11

p tap soundboard

B — B —

16

B — B —

pont ④

1 3

19

strum as if with a pick

ord.

ord.

Excerpt 3 - Guitar 1b from Layover by Michael Hedges

8va

A little faster ♩ = 170

VII

VII

gliss

p

cresc

subito *p*

Excerpt 4 - Guitar V from Layover by Michael Hedges

29

hammer 1st finger bar

f

35

41

mf

mf

mf

47

Solo Guitar

Rochester Schottish

W.H. Ruliston

Arranged by Justin Holland

Andante Moderato (♩ = 70)

4

7

Do not repeat during the audition.

ff

10

p

13

ff

Do not repeat during the audition.

1.

17

2.

Take the 2nd Ending.

Rochester Schottish

20

23

26

29

32

36

39

Do not repeat during the audition.

The musical score is written for a single melodic line in treble clef, with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The time signature is 2/4. The score consists of seven staves of music, each containing five measures. The measures are numbered 20 through 39. The notation includes various rhythmic values (quarter, eighth, and sixteenth notes), rests, and dynamic markings (accents). A red circle is drawn around the double bar line at the end of measure 32, with the text "Do not repeat during the audition." written in red above it. The score ends with a final double bar line and a key signature change to one sharp (F#) at the end of measure 39.