

SYLLABUS 2025 HIGHLIGHTS

“Celebrate the Joy of Youth Performance”

The SMFA syllabus committee is excited to present our stream-lined document for 2025. Huge thanks to Carol Donhauser for the many hours she spent this summer revising. Also, thanks to Jeri Ryba for her thoughtful insights as we edited together and for Nancy Toppings’ eagle eye as she caught many errors and helped us work toward clarity. Mariel Unger has excellent skills that facilitated the presentation of this information in zoom meetings. The entire SMFA board gave us helpful input. THANKS TO ALL!

One of the main aims of the syllabus committee was to produce a shorter, simpler and more accessible document for all entrants and teachers while still offering a wide variety of class choices. To that end, we made some changes which are highlighted in these notes.

FORMAT

- More positive language is used, for example, “you may” instead of “you must not”.
- Some restrictions in class rubrics are removed to allow more choice of repertoire.
- Unused classes were removed, and some classes were combined with an expanded rubric.
- Repeated class title information was removed. Age categories are now listed after the class title.
- Classes relevant to school music teachers and their arts programs are included in the “School” tab. School music teachers and entrants are certainly encouraged to enter classes from other tabs as well.
- Provincial classes are now listed immediately following their corresponding local festival class, with a different number and a red (P). Entrants are welcome to enter both district and provincial classes in the same age and category providing they perform different repertoire.
- Classes streaming into each provincial scholarship are listed in the introductory information for each discipline.
- Categories for harp and accordion classes have been added.

AGE CATEGORIES

- We have changed the age categories to 2-year increments. We are hoping that there will be a few more entrants in each class so they get to enjoy hearing one another and learning from all the adjudicator's comments. This is part of creating a festival atmosphere – Celebrating the joy of performance!
- We have district festival classes for 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 19 years and under, as well as 28 years and under and “Open, any age” in some cases. Grade A and B categories have been removed as they were difficult to define.
- Provincial age categories will be 13, 15, 17 and 28 years and under. The gap between the 14 years and 17 years classes at the provincial level will help keep students engaged in those teen years.

(There is not yet a class for 15 years and under in the Canada West syllabus, and the oldest age category there is 22 years and under.)

- Age categories in non-competitive and workshop classes have been removed.

EXPANDED RUBRICS AND CATEGORIES

MUSICAL THEATRE

- In musical theatre classes, stand-alone repertoire and songs from revues are allowed in ALL CLASSES. The requirement to list the character in these classes has been removed. ***Please note that these songs are still not allowed in Canada West classes.**
- The ballad and up-tempo distinctions remain, but the rubric now includes this phrase:

When repertoire could be considered either ballad or up-tempo, this may be part of the adjudicator's consideration when choosing the winners.

- Era categories will still be used in musical theatre classes. The date of the first staging of the musical should be used unless the piece is a “stand-alone” choice. In that case, use the publication date of the print music.

PIANO and VOICE CONTEMPORARY AND POPULAR MUSIC CLASSES

- Contemporary and popular music classes have been added in the piano and vocal sections.

The Popular Music rubric is:

“One selection from any era”.

- A definition of popular music could be “music appealing to the popular taste, including rock and pop and also soul, country, reggae, rap and dance music.” Musical theatre selections performed without staging and costumes would fit here. This is a good place to perform music from the popular music lists in the RCM/CC syllabi.

The contemporary rubric is:

Contemporary music refers to any music that is being written today or relatively recently, regardless of style or genre. Own choice, one selection.

Contemporary music could include selections of any style, probably from the 21st century.

These rubrics are deliberately broad to allow entrants to share the music of their choice. Improvisation is welcomed in these classes, as well as in the jazz styles categories.

PIANO

- There is now one group of classes for duets. A performer can play with two different people in the same class, but the same team can't play two duets in one class. If a festival would like another category for the same team, addendum classes can be added.

ACCOMPANIMENTS

- Accompaniments can be played on an acoustic instrument of any kind or a digital piano.

PROVINCIALS

- Entrants in Woodwinds, Brass and Percussion at provincials are no longer required to perform by memory.
- Provincial piano classes for 17 yrs. and under require a difficulty level of RCM 8. If repertoire is not graded, the adjudicator will consider the level of the piece.
- Choral recordings for provincial competition are no longer required to be a “first take” and the supervision by a district committee member is not necessary.

CANADA WEST

- In Canada West competitions, there are no classes for 15 yrs. and under yet and no stand-alone or revue music allowed in musical theatre classes.
- SMFA travel bursaries will be awarded to Saskatchewan delegates AFTER they have competed at the Canada West competition. There will be no scholarships given to the delegates chosen to move forward at the time of the provincial competition.

DISTRICT FESTIVAL ADDENDA

- SMFA encourages district festival committees to add supplementary classes to an addendum to suit the needs of their community. First, please go through your current addendum and remove any classes that are now in the SMFA syllabus to avoid redundancies.
- If the classes you would like to add do not fall within the parameters of the SMFA rules and regulations, please submit a request for an

exception to the SMFA office. This will allow us to keep adjudicators in the loop about what they might hear and avoid disconcerting surprises!

- The syllabus will be available online, and small corrections may be made as we go forward. The date of the last corrections will be on the document. No significant changes will be made without notice to the district festivals. We don't anticipate making changes until we have worked with this syllabus for 3 years.

We sincerely hope that this document encourages more participation in music festivals around the province.

Dianne Gryba
SMFA 2025 Syllabus chair

