



AHS Chamber Strings are National Grand Champs

The Atascocita High School Chamber Strings recently gave a highly successful performance at the 2014 American String Teachers Association's National Orchestra Festival, earning the Grand Champion award among all public school competitors. Operated in conjunction with the association's annual conference, this year's National Orchestra Festival featured fifteen public school orchestras and two youth orchestras from the states of Florida, Kentucky, Nebraska, New York, Nevada, Ohio, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia. These ensembles were selected to compete in Louisville, Kentucky, based on a competitive application process, including the submission of live recordings and a listing of previous accolades.

Once selected to perform, ensembles spend time preparing a program of upper-level literature. For the Atascocita High School Chamber Strings this was represented in their program consisting of music from the great composers Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Henry Purcell, and Carl Nielsen, in addition to the more recent and well-known American composer, Eric Ewazen. At the contest, the orchestra performed in the main concert hall of the Kentucky Center for the Performing Arts, the same stage utilized by the Louisville Symphony Orchestra. After being evaluated and ranked among the competing public school orchestras from across the country, the Atascocita High School Chamber Strings was announced as the Grand Champion and was invited to give a special performance at the Grand Champions Recital – a featured event at the American String Teachers Association Annual Conference. At this performance, the ensemble had the honor of representing the state of Texas and the Atascocita community in front of an audience of some of the top-string educators from across the country.

During their tour to Louisville, Kentucky, the students had the opportunity to rehearse with the University of Memphis Orchestra Director Dr. Pu-Qui Jiang and University of Illinois Orchestra Director Dr. Donald Schleicher, in addition to tours at the Kentucky Science Center and the Louisville Slugger Factory and Museum.

The Atascocita High School Chamber Strings are the first orchestra from the state of Texas to earn the distinction of the National Orchestra Festival Grand Champion.