

THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING



National Association of Teachers of Singing

2023 – 2024 NSA REGULATIONS

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Preface

This document is more easily understood with the following definitions of NATS constituencies and acronyms:

NSA = term for all Student Auditions held by a NATS entity (chapter, district, region, or nation).

NMTC = National Musical Theatre Competition for Emerging Professionals

NATSAA = NATS Artist Awards Competition for Emerging Professionals

NATS National Student Auditions (NSA) are separate from the biennial national NATS Artist Awards (NATSAA) directed by the national Vice President for Auditions and the National Musical Theatre Competition (NMTC). The Coordinators of the National Musical Theatre Competition and the National Student Auditions report to the Board of Directors through the Vice President for Auditions.

Former NATS President Roy Delp believed "the idea of constructive criticism along with encouragement" is at the heart of our student adjudications. "Perhaps one of the greatest ties that binds us together as NATS members is the care we have for the students of our colleagues, as demonstrated at our student auditions."

—*Journal of Singing*, Vol.57, No.1, p.2

NATS Student Auditions Mission Statement

As an expression of the goals of the National Association of Teachers of Singing, the NATS National Student Auditions:

- Inspire and encourage students and teachers to continue their dedication to, and growth in, the art of singing
- Embrace all genres of vocal music as art worthy to be studied, respected, and appreciated
- Create a collegial, supportive, and inclusive atmosphere that encourages excellent artistic singing
- Provide constructive, written feedback from a panel of experienced and impartial adjudicators
- Recognize and honor outstanding performances
- Create the NSA as a structure that continues to evolve and improve with each audition cycle

The National Student Auditions Regulations emanate from the Mission Statement and are designed to:

- Standardize registration processes, categories, and repertoire based on research into NATS chapter, district, and 15 regions' student auditions, creating ease, uniformity, and fluidity across all NATS National Student Auditions
- Bring NSA to parity with other national organizations that have standardized requirements among their constituencies for local, regional, and national auditions
- Make audition scoring data comparisons possible across all National Student Auditions
- Create a common understanding of repertoire definitions in vocal music as they relate to the auditions
- Create common language, definitions, and scoring systems across all National Student Auditions so both students and teachers can cross chapter and region boundaries with knowledge and understanding of a NATS audition as a singer or adjudicator
- Create categories that reflect diversity, inclusion, and cultures represented in the ever-expanding NATS membership and their areas of expertise.
- Provide an opportunity for students of NATS members to develop the skills required to audition in a safe, supportive environment—that is not a talent competition.

NSA Constituencies

Roles in the Operation of Student Auditions

NATS National Student Auditions operate with the endorsement of the National Association of Teachers of Singing and, as such, they are expected to adhere to national bylaws and policies, including, but not limited to:

- ◆ NATS Code of Ethics
- ◆ NATS Policy on Copyright Laws
- ◆ NSA Regulations

These Regulations are available to the governing bodies of Chapters, Districts, and Regions on the NATS website (www.nats.org). In this document, the term “NATS entities” or “sponsoring entities” will be used when referring to any NATS chapter, district, or region holding the auditions. NATS National Student Auditions are sponsored and managed by the appropriate officers of a chapter, district, region, or combination of such NATS entities. Student Auditions are self-sustaining, funded through the budgets of the sponsoring NATS entities. NATS Discretionary Funds cannot be used for auditions themselves, but may help fund master classes and other appropriate activities associated with an event that includes auditions. Appropriate officers, boards, and/or memberships of NATS entities are responsible for implementing these regulations effectively.

Clarifying the responsibilities of those who prepare, coordinate, implement, and adjudicate NATS Student Auditions is of utmost importance in ensuring a successful event. Since the structures of NATS Regions, Districts, and Chapters vary, the officer designation for the operation of the Student Auditions may vary. For example, some chapters, districts, and regions combine duties of the Auditions Chair with another office—while others separate those duties into several designated offices or committee assignments. It is expected that each entity will assign duties as best fits the size, location, and resources of their respective Student Auditions. For the purposes of this document, the title “Auditions Chair” will be used for the NATS member preparing, coordinating, and implementing the auditions.

National Student Auditions Coordinator

The National Student Auditions (NSA) Coordinator reports to the NATS Vice President for Auditions. In coordination with the VP for Auditions, the NSA Coordinator assembles a committee to organize and implement the NATS Audition Regulations to fulfill the mission of the Student Auditions. The NSA Coordinator may choose to delegate various tasks to committee members, but it is the NSA Coordinator's responsibility to ensure they are completed. The NSA Coordinator serves as Auditions Chair of the national preliminary, semifinal, and final rounds.

Region Governor

Region Governors will employ and enforce the Student Auditions Regulations at all levels within their regions and organize as well as execute Regional Auditions that advance singers to the National Student Auditions. The expectation is that there will be live regional auditions in each region. Whenever live auditions are not possible, the region will develop a mechanism in consultation and with the approval of the NSA Coordinator. Region Governors may choose to delegate various tasks to District Governors and other leaders, but it is their responsibility to ensure they are completed in accordance with NSA Regulations.

Auditions Chair

The Auditions Chair will uphold the Regulations to fulfill the Mission of the National Student Auditions. The Auditions Chair may choose to delegate various tasks to NATS members, but it is the Chair's responsibility to ensure they are completed. The Auditions Chair may solicit advice from the Region Governor or the NSA Coordinator but shall be the final authority regarding the rules and regulations.

On-site Coordinator

The On-site Coordinator will assist the Auditions Chair with all details regarding the physical location at which the Student Auditions are being held. The on-site coordinator may choose to delegate various tasks to NATS members, but it is this coordinator's responsibility to ensure that all tasks are completed.

Adjudicators

Adjudicators will be expected to review NATS Adjudicator training materials and be familiar with adjudication rubrics (See Appendix B). Adjudicators will hear the performance, write constructive comments in response to the rubric's standards, and score each singer. Comments addressing a singer's repertoire, appearance, or gender-identity are inappropriate. During the auditions there must be no consultation, spoken or written, between adjudicators concerning the evaluation or performance of students. Adjudicators are not required to assign a high rating if, in their opinion, no student has earned it. No adjudicator will be asked to change a student's score or ranking. While it is expected that all panels are made of NATS members, occasions may exist where non-NATS member industry professionals serve as adjudicators.

Collaborative Pianists

Collaborative pianists are valued and respected colleagues in ensuring successful auditions. Some entities may provide staff collaborative pianists for a fee to provide accompaniment for singers. So that they are able to concentrate fully on providing the best support and partnership for singing artists in the auditions, collaborative pianists SHOULD NOT be required to serve as the arbiter of correct adherence to the NATS Copyright Policy. It is the singer's and teacher's responsibility to provide all necessary documentation for legally obtained sheet music and communicate effectively in auditions settings. Voice Teachers may not serve as collaborative pianists in NSA events in which they have entered students.

The NATS Membership and/or Board

The NATS Membership and/or Board of a Chapter or Region will implement and support the Regulations of NATS National Student Auditions. They will serve as adjudicators and will be available to assist the Auditions Chair and On-Site Coordinator/Host upon request.

NSA: Organizational Structure

The purpose of this section is to define a common organizational structure for all involved in the preparation, coordination, implementation, and adjudication of NATS National Student Auditions.

NATS Entity: Membership or Board of a Chapter, District, or Region

1. Implements and supports the Regulations of the National Student Auditions (NSA).
2. Determines the appropriate registration or application fees for participation in their entity's level of NSA. NATS Discretionary Fund Grants may not be utilized for National Student Auditions expenses.
3. Selects the audition site preferably at least one year in advance. The site should have adequate facilities (e.g., performance venues, audition rooms, practice rooms, pianos, and restrooms) to accommodate the auditions.
4. Serves as NSA adjudicators. All participating members need to be available to assist the Auditions Chair and On-Site Coordinator upon request. Each entity may develop an absentee policy and will clearly communicate such policy. Contact the NSA Coordinator with questions.
5. Ensures that times selected for their Region's National Student Auditions align with the National Student Audition deadlines. (The NSA national application deadline is the second Friday in April. Therefore, regions should schedule their auditions to allow enough time for their qualified singers to complete and submit their application materials prior to the national deadline.)
6. Selects subcategories and non-NSA categories for auditions within the National Student Auditions Regulations.
7. Establishes the amount and type of awards given to winners of their entity's auditions.
8. Assists singers and teachers when they relocate.
9. Standardizes the name of auditions organization-wide to assist in the branding, name recognition, and consistency of auditions.

Chapter and District auditions will be titled as:

"NATS National Student Auditions: _____ Chapter or District" as applicable

Region auditions will be titled as:

"NATS National Student Auditions: _____ Region"

National auditions will be titled as:

"NSA National _____ Round" (Preliminary/YouTube, Quarterfinal, Semifinal, or Final)

The official NATS NSA logo below and other [Promotional Materials/Branding Resources](#) are available to download online.



National Association of Teachers of Singing

Auditions Chair

All the following tasks may be completed by the Auditions Chair or delegated to various NATS members or officers; however, it is the chair's responsibility to ensure that all tasks are completed.

1. Secures date, time, and facility (at least a year in advance is strongly encouraged) and gives sufficient notice to the membership of the hosting region or chapter.
2. [Submits event details](#) to ensure that the audition event is included in the NATS Event Calendar on nats.org.
3. Ensures that liability insurance is secured for the site of the event, when required by the host facility. Many universities or buildings are already covered, but coverage must be verified for protection in the event of any accidents. Whenever the audition venue is not already covered with liability insurance, allow adequate time for this task to be processed by the NATS insurer. It is highly recommended that you complete this task early in the planning process once a host site is secured. NATS offers an umbrella policy that can be activated by filling out this [form](#) online. (*Before clicking on "form," login on NATS.org*)
4. Reviews the most current version of the NSA Regulations and takes note of any changes in rules, organization, or protocol to incorporate into the event registration and communication with members. Regulations are typically updated in late summer, following the conclusion of the previous audition season—with major revisions every other year.
5. Coordinates with the editor of the region's or chapter's Auditions' Handbook/Guidelines/Instructions to incorporate NSA Regulation updates into that document, ensuring all communication with members remains in alignment with the current national NSA Regulations. Rubrics for each genre of music should be included.
6. Communicates with the on-site coordinator to reserve a sufficient number of audition rooms and a tabulation room. Acquires room details including building name, room numbers, size of rooms, piano type, *etc.* for entry into AuditionNow. In some cases, rooms for workshops, master classes, hospitality, and luncheon may need to be coordinated simultaneously to avoid scheduling conflicts with events other than auditions.
7. Communicates expectations to the on-site coordinator regarding building access, practice rooms, piano tuning, door monitors, registration table, venue signage, parking, maps, *etc.* Expectations of these details may vary by region or chapter.
8. Establishes event registration in AuditionNow. Data required to establish registration include (but are not limited to) event dates and times, venue details, categories of entry, audition details for prelims, semifinals, finals, fees, and dates of registration opening, registration closing, repertoire change deadline, and any video submission deadline.
9. Vets repertoire submissions to ensure alignment with Regulations and communicates directly with teachers ahead of the audition date to encourage remediation of ineligible repertoire. Note that repertoire entered in CM categories will not be vetted.
10. Coordinates staff collaborative pianists if staff pianists are offered in teacher registration or student online entry.
11. Utilizes AuditionNow to produce an auditions schedule, organized by category of entry. Constructs the audition schedule to provide each entrant the opportunity to perform up to the time limit for the category of entry with the collaborative pianist assigned to the performer. Avoids scheduling conflicts for entrants and collaborative pianists. Takes care with students entered in multiple categories and/or students entered to sing and also playing for someone else's audition. Allows pianists adequate time to move between their assigned auditions.
12. Ensures at least three qualified adjudicators are assigned in AuditionNow to adjudicate each category of entry, based on adjudicators' level of experience, stated preferences, and limitations imposed by the regulations to minimize bias.
13. Educates adjudicators on auditions protocol, conduct and scoring including the use of rubrics in their adjudication's scoring, and supplies the adjudication training videos specific to each genre category.
14. Prepares and distributes preliminary, semifinal, and final adjudicator packets with scoring/comment forms, extra paper for notes, rubrics, and pencils—whenever not using online adjudication methods.
15. Communicates the availability of completed schedules to teachers, adjudicators, and collaborative pianists and encourages teachers to communicate audition details to students they have entered in the event.
16. Ensures the smooth execution of the auditions through effective delegation of responsibilities as well as communication with teachers and participants.
17. Adjudicates any issues of disqualification that may arise during auditions, often in collaboration with the region governor or chapter president, then communicates with a disqualified student's teacher regarding the infraction and any potential penalty.
18. When paper adjudication forms are used, establishes a reliable means of ensuring adjudication forms are securely transferred from adjudicators to tabulation, that scores are entered accurately and efficiently into AuditionNow, and that adjudication forms are subsequently returned to the appropriate teachers, who will return the forms to their students.
19. Posts and/or announces advancing round results communicating in a timely manner the date, time, adjudicators, and location of subsequent levels of auditions.
20. Announces final auditions results to event participants and to the region or chapter membership in a timely manner.

21. Provides finalists with a certificate documenting their achievement in the auditions, *i.e.*, First through Fifth Places, Honorable Mention, any special awards, *etc.* and any prize checks provided by the chapter, district, or region, if applicable.
22. Communicates the final auditions results of advancing singers in NSA categories to next-level entities when a qualifying progress event, *i.e.*, chapter or district to region, and always promptly from region to nationals via Mark McQuade at mark@nats.org
23. Runs the auditions as close to these live audition procedures as is possible, whenever auditions are either virtual or hybrid.

On-Site Coordinator/Auditions Host

1. Reserves the site with a sufficient number of rooms for performances, tabulations, and Chapter/District/Region meetings and expediently communicates this information to the Auditions Chair.
2. Prepares and provides information about directions, housing, and parking for posting and dissemination to attendees.
3. Coordinates tuning of all pianos when necessary.
4. Engages a sufficient number of door monitors and timers.
5. Reserves a hospitality room for NATS members and coordinates catering, if needed.
6. Posts signage throughout facilities
7. Communicates with guest adjudicators and/or performers about logistical arrangements.

Adjudicators

1. NATS members who register students to audition are expected to serve as adjudicators as necessary.
2. Adjudicators will be expected to review NATS Adjudicator training materials and be familiar with adjudication rubrics (see Appendix B for genre-specific rubrics).
3. Adjudicators will write comments that reinforce a spirit of cooperation and mutual concern. The comments should motivate the student in the pursuit of vocal artistry and technique through hearing and being heard, and being adjudicated in a supportive climate.
4. All comments should be consistent with the NSA Regulations in addressing only the standards for the category.
5. While it is expected that all panels are made of NATS members, occasions may exist where non-NATS member industry professionals serve as adjudicators.

Entering Students in NSA

NATS members should respect each student's prerogative to obtain instruction from any teacher(s) of their choice, including concurrent study with another teacher(s). **Transparency should be maintained among all parties.**

Whenever a student has multiple voice teachers, the following designations apply

Primary Voice Teacher—the teacher who currently teaches a student the majority of their voice lessons in an independent studio or in an academic degree program.

Concurrent Voice Teacher—a teacher, who in addition to a primary teacher, also currently teaches weekly voice lessons to the same student. Common examples: voice teachers addressing different genres of vocal music or having different areas of expertise desired by the student.

Supplemental Voice Teacher—a teacher, who in addition to a primary teacher, also currently teaches voice lessons to the student on a less-than-weekly basis.

Former Voice Teacher—a teacher who taught the student voice lessons within the previous eight months, but who no longer teaches the student being entered. Common examples: teachers of students who have changed voice teachers or voice teachers of students who have earned a diploma or degree and who have begun a subsequent vocal degree program at a different institution or with a different voice teacher.

Remote Voice Teacher—the teacher currently teaching a student that resides in a different NATS chapter than the teacher. Remote Voice Teachers are considered Primary Voice Teachers unless designated as Remote Concurrent or Remote Supplemental.

NATS Member-Teachers Entering Students at Different Levels of NSA

NATS National Student Auditions: Chapter and District Auditions

A primary teacher may enter any of their students in any chapter(s) in which the teacher is a current member. Remote and Concurrent Teachers may enter their students in either the chapter/district/region where the teacher resides OR the chapter/district/region where the student resides, providing the teacher has a current membership in that chapter. Teachers entering students must follow the rules and Regulations of the entity holding the NSA event. Teachers must be aware that some, but not all, chapter and/or district auditions qualify students to advance to the region's NSA auditions. Students may be entered in multiple chapter auditions, but teachers may enter each student in only ONE region's NSA in each audition cycle or academic year, which may impact participation in multiple chapter auditions.

NATS National Student Auditions: Region Auditions

The region of a NATS member is determined by the physical address in their NATS membership file. NATS members belong to the region of their membership-address. When teaching voice remotely, teachers may become members of multiple regions in which they have current chapter memberships. Each audition cycle or academic year, students may be ENTERED in only ONE region's auditions in accordance with the audition procedures of that region.

NATS National Student Auditions: National Auditions

For students of a NATS teacher to enter the National Student Audition, the NATS teacher must enter their students in a region's NSA auditions. National Student Auditions begin at the region-level with only students in first through fifth place in a region's NSA advancing to the national YouTube preliminary NSA round. Winners of Chapter or District auditions may not be automatically advanced to the National Student Auditions.

NATS National Student Auditions: ALL AUDITIONS

NATS Member-Teachers meeting the requirements of an NSA category in terms of their age and years of study may enter student auditions through the NATS member with whom they are currently studying, but they may not enter themselves in the audition. If they enter their students in the audition, they must be available to adjudicate a category in addition to auditioning. Post-high school categories are open to students who meet the age eligibility and study with a NATS member in an independent studio or in a college/university program.

A Checklist of 10 Rules for Entering Students in NSA

1. Teachers with whom the student currently studies must communicate directly with one another prior to registering their shared student. Each student may be registered in NSA only ONCE, regardless of the variety or number of categories that student may enter.
2. When entering students in the NSA, Full and Associate NATS members may enter only those students currently studying with them as a primary or concurrent teacher and may not enter students of other NATS members or non-NATS members.
3. Teachers registering students for auditions must be members in good standing at the national level of NATS at the time of registration as well as all rounds of the event. In addition, chapter-level events require chapter membership in good standing at the time of registration and all rounds of the event. Exceptions to this requirement will be granted by the NATS National Office only to Canadian chapters that are a Registered Charitable Organization with the Canadian government.
4. When registering/entering a student in any NSA event, a student's age on **September 1st** of each NSA Audition Cycle will determine the student's category of entry along with the student's year of voice study in progress on **September 1st**. Students will remain in the same category(s) for an entire audition cycle—even if later in the academic year on their birthday, they age out of the category. September 1st is the first day of each annual audition cycle and is designated here for that reason.
5. If a student has been studying with a sponsoring teacher fewer than eight months, acknowledgment must be made of the former teacher both on the application and in any public announcements. Members will disclose at NATS events the name of a student's previous voice teacher if the student has studied with the current teacher fewer than eight months. The immediately previous/former voice teacher is acknowledged whenever fitting the designation of a primary voice teacher — regardless of when the previous voice study occurred.
6. When a NATS member enters a student in NSA, the Primary Voice Teacher will acknowledge Concurrent Voice Teachers as well as any Supplemental Voice Teachers, who contributed directly to the preparation of the student's audition.
7. Members shall complete and submit required application forms by published deadlines for each level of NSA.
8. Members shall ensure that all requirements are met and support the NATS Copyright Policy.
9. Voice Teachers who enter students may not accompany any student auditions at any level of that NSA event including Award Concerts, with the noted exception of video audition submissions, and then, only when the teacher is not visibly present in the video.
10. Members shall serve as adjudicators and/or act in other capacities as requested at any NSA event.

The Preliminary Audition Format

1. Each singer entered in the same category is allotted the same amount of time to perform. Singers select their first song or aria to perform. The adjudication panel requests subsequent selections until the audition reaches the time limit or the singer performs all repertoire entered. Time begins when the singer begins to announce their first selection. Students chose the selection with which their audition will begin.
2. Time continues to run between selections. In preliminary rounds, each adjudication panel chair should expedite a rotation cycle among the panel members for subsequent repertoire selections. Repertoire selections should be made without delay because time continues to run between selections.
3. During the audition, selections are to be sung in their entirety as prepared by the student and required by the NSA Regulations, WITHOUT edits from adjudicators. Examples of prohibited edits are requesting a singer start at the B section or suggesting a student skip a prepared recitative and start with the aria or stopping a student in the middle of a piece to move on to the next selection.
4. Repertoire is heard as the time limit allows. If exceeding the audition's time limit, all repertoire will not be heard. An audition reaching the time limit will end when the time limit is reached even if a selection is in progress. Teachers should inform their students of this possibility.
5. When an adjudicator or time-keeper calls or signals "stop," the audition is completed and will end.

Rating and Scoring Systems

All NATS National Student Auditions must use the same scoring system, enabling scoring data uniformity across all NATS Student Auditions. Scoring is based on a national standard.

Most National Student Auditions have preliminary and final rounds. Larger enrollments may require semifinal rounds. Live auditions with a larger number of singers in a category may be subdivided into two or more groups for the preliminary round adjudications.

The following OPTIONS are possible to accommodate the structure and size of auditions:

- **Preliminary Round:** All singers will be scored with comments, excepting only students entering for comments only will not be scored.
- **Semifinals (when necessary):** All singers will be either **A.** scored with comments OR **B.** ranked numerically with or without comments.
- **Finals:** All singers will be ranked numerically without comments.
- **No Semifinal Round:** When scoring indicates that no semifinal round is necessary in categories with a smaller number of entrants or a small number of students advancing to the next round, audition chairs may advance students from preliminaries directly to finals without a semifinal audition.

Preliminary Round

1. Singers in all categories will sing one song of their choice followed by songs selected by their adjudicators until the category's time limit is reached or the student has performed all selections entered.
2. During the preliminary round, adjudicators will use the NATS rubrics to write constructive comments and a score between 70 and 100 on their adjudication form. If possible, these adjudication forms will be made available prior to the next round of auditions to allow singers to benefit from the adjudicators' written comments.
3. Chapters and Districts holding only a Preliminary and Final Round may use audition scores to advance an agreed upon number of singers to the final round. In the event of ties, the semifinal round procedure will be used as a run-off to determine the finalists.
4. Entities with only one round of auditions should follow the process for the Preliminary Round with highest average scores receiving awards. See "Final Round" on the following page for suggestions of potential culminating events.

Semifinal Round

1. Only students receiving 2 scores of 90 or above OR an average score of 90 or above in the preliminary round will advance to the semifinal round.
2. There is no limit on the number of semifinalists.
3. Each student will sing one selection of his/her choice in its entirety. This selection must be a song or aria entered in the preliminary round. Entities may opt to allow more than one selection in the Semifinal Round.
4. Each adjudicator will give only one score between 70 and 100 OR rank the singers numerically on a ranking sheet provided. If comments are written in this round, those comments will be made available prior to the final round when possible. If adjudicators write no comments, the rating sheets will not be made available to teachers or students. If using scores, the highest average scores advance. If ranking numerically, the lowest total scores advance.
5. Final tabulations will be made by the Auditions Chair and assistants.
6. The adjudicators are not to confer until after their rating sheets have been delivered to the Auditions Office/Tally Room.
7. A maximum of 5 singers will enter the finals unless there is a tie. Some entities may choose to advance a maximum of 3 to the finals due the size of the auditions.

Final Round

1. Each student will sing one song of his/her choice in its entirety. This selection must be one of a song or aria entered in the preliminary round. Some auditions may place a time limit on the selection performed in the final round. Selections chosen should take any required time limits into consideration.
2. The adjudicators will not confer. Each adjudicator independently ranks the finalists from 1 (highest) to 5 (lowest). Results are returned to the Auditions Office/Tally Room and tabulated. Lowest total scores are awarded appropriate prizes and/or recognitions.
3. All awards are presented after the Final Round is completed.
4. **Ties:** If two or more students tie for first place, the awards for the first and second places will be pooled and divided equally among the winners. All will be awarded as First Place Winners. This Regulation holds for ties in all the places. In the event that there are more than five finalists, a certificate of "Honorable Mention" will be awarded to additional finalists. See Recognition and Awards.
5. As a culminating event, entities may choose to organize the Final Round as a plenary event with all participants in attendance or alternately, present a winners or honors recital featuring all winners or a subset of winners, *i.e.*, 1st place in each category. The construct of these events is often determined by space and time constraints.
6. Monetary prizes and other awards will be developed at the discretion of the entity holding auditions.

Scoring System

The NSA scoring system is developed to allow objective as well as subjective measures of a singer's performance. The scoring system is structured to provide more detailed guidance to adjudicators as they seek to provide appropriate and constructive feedback to students. All auditions will use the official NATS National Student Auditions Adjudication Form available online. See sample adjudication forms.

Adjudicators' Responsibilities

1. Provide scoring for each singer in comparison to standards developed specifically for these auditions. See adjudication rubrics in Appendix B. Adjudicating relative to a common standard will provide a fairer overall result than comparing singers in each category to one another to determine scores merited.
2. For each standard on the adjudication form, place an **X** on the tick lines to indicate a general level of accomplishment. A specific numerical score is not listed for each standard; however, the range of developing to mastering is divided into three sections corresponding with the 70-100 range of possible scores. The Ensemble marking will not factor into an audition's score because some singers may be performing a staff or other unfamiliar pianist with whom they have had little opportunity to rehearse.

| STANDARDS | DEVELOPING | ADVANCING | MASTERING |
|-----------------------------------|------------|-----------|-----------|
| Tone | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Breathing / Alignment | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Language / Diction | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Musicianship / Accuracy | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Artistry / Expression | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| Ensemble (<i>comments only</i>) | ----- | ----- | ----- |
| TICKS REFLECT SCORES | 70 | 79 80 | 89 90 100 |

3. In the preliminary round, provide constructive comments on the performance that correspond with the ratings provided on the tick lines for each standard. The audition rubrics provide guidance to the adjudicator in constructing comments in agreement with their ratings. Entities may elect to also provide comments in semifinal rounds whenever possible.
4. The rubric's standards vary in importance; and therefore, also vary in weight in a composite score. Assign a score that is **generally** reflected in your markings on the tick lines. A significant discrepancy between the ticks and the composite score may questionably indicate something more than the standards contributed to the composite score. A majority of ticks in the mastering third must result in a composite score in the 90s. Similarly, a majority of ticks in the advancing third must result in a composite score in the 80s and a majority of ticks in the developing third must result in a composite score in the 70s. Assign a composite score between 70 and 100. Never score below 70. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form.

Adjudicating Standards

1. Detailed national performance standards are listed in the left column of each genre-specific rubric found in Appendix B.
2. Each standard describes the qualities an ideal singer will have.
3. In preliminary auditions, all entered students' auditions are adjudicated. Each student-singer's performance in their audition is adjudicated in comparison to the rubric's standards, not in comparison to the other singers in the same category.
4. Adjudicators are to use their professional expertise to adjust the rubric's performance standards to be reasonable expectations for the age and level of study required to enter the category being adjudicated.

Recognition and Awards

Recognitions and awards are important to students and collaborative pianists. Often monetary awards are important to students, both as an incentive and as a means of defraying expenses. Each NATS entity establishes the best means by which to recognize and award students. Examples:

Public Announcements

An announcement in order of placement of finalists for each category allows individual recognition of outstanding singers. Teachers of finalists may be announced during an award ceremony or posted on a website with the list of winners and their collaborative pianists. A moment to recognize semifinalists and or finalists as a group with applause may be an effective way to recognize the efforts and contributions of a larger group of people. A round of applause to recognize the efforts and artistry of collaborative pianists is also appropriate.

Finalist Certificates

Certificates may be given for first, second, and third place winners, or more as deemed appropriate.

Monetary Awards

While monetary awards are most often given to students in first, second, and third places, several NATS entities have been known to acknowledge 4 or 5 places per category. In recognition of the greater preparation and expense involved to enter the Upper Post-High School and Advanced Categories and as incentive for these students to participate, some NATS entities employ a graduated scale of monetary awards based on length of study. Typically, awards are paid from the total pool of entry fees.

Honors Concert

Performance on an honors concert at the conclusion of the auditions or at a later NATS event allows many members and students to hear and acknowledge the exceptional work of outstanding students of singing.

Special Awards

Special Awards may include Best Performance of a Selection included in the NATS Advocacy Initiative, Most Promising Professional Voice, Singer of the Year, Collaborative Pianist of the Year, *etc.* Certificates and/or monetary prizes for special may be awarded as deemed appropriate and financially feasible.

Awards for National NSA Finalists

Children & Youth Musical Theatre/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 1 & 2

TOTAL per category \$1,500

\$800 – 1st place in each category

\$400 – 2nd place in each category

\$300 – 3rd place in each category

6 annual C&Y categories = \$9,000

High School & Lower Musical Theatre/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 3A – 6

TOTAL per category \$2,350

\$1,200 - 1st place in each category

\$700 – 2nd place in each category

\$450 – 3rd place in each category

18 annual HS & Lower categories = \$42,300

Upper & Advanced Musical Theatre[†]/Commercial Music/Classical Categories*

Categories 7 – 10

TOTAL per category \$3,000

\$1,600 - 1st place in each category

\$900 – 2nd place in each category

\$500 – 3rd place in each category

10 annual Upper & Advanced categories = \$30,000

American Negro Spiritual Categories*

AS 9

\$1,600 – 1st place

\$900 – 2nd place

\$500 – 3rd place

AS 7

\$1,200 – 1st place

\$700 – 2nd place

\$450 – 3rd place

AS 3

\$1,200 - 1st place

\$700 – 2nd place

\$450 – 3rd place

Biennial Total = \$7,700

Hall Johnson Spiritual Competition*

HJ 7

\$2,000 – 1st place

\$900 – 2nd place

\$500 – 3rd place

Biennial Total = \$3,400

NSA AWARD TOTAL in Workshop Years = \$89,000

NSA AWARD TOTAL in Conference Years = \$84,700

* *Should adjudication result in a tie, the corresponding awards will be pooled and divided evenly between the singers. In a tie, both winners will be awarded the same place. Not all prizes must be awarded in all categories, depending on enrollment and/or scoring.*

† *Advanced categories in Musical Theatre do not advance to national levels of NSA. These advanced students are encouraged to enter NATS National Musical Theatre Competition.*

NATS Copyright Policy

NATS encourages its members, their students, collaborative pianists, and general populations to become educated about and to comply with all applicable copyright laws.

Reproduction of a copyrighted work constitutes copyright infringement unless

- a license to reproduce such work has been obtained
- the use is considered fair use
- the work is in the public domain

OR

- a valid exception to copyright infringement exists

NATS requires students, teachers, and other participants in NATS affiliated events, auditions, and competitions to affirm their compliance with the NATS Copyright Policy, and to use **ONLY** published original sheet music/scores or authorized reproductions of copyrighted works.

NATS Policy on Copyright Laws

NSA: Levels and Audition Rounds

The Categories of Entry referenced below are found in Appendix A of this document.

NATS National Student Auditions: Qualifying in Region-Auditions

The NATS National Student Auditions begin at the regional level and progress to the national preliminaries, semifinals, and finals. Some, not all, chapter-auditions serve as qualifying auditions to advance to their region's auditions. All region's student auditions should include **all categories eligible to advance to the national level of auditions**. Categories advancing to national preliminary auditions are highlighted in yellow in the "NSA Categories of Entry." To ensure fairness and appropriate rigor in the National Student Auditions, regions may only advance singers placing 1st through 5th in the region's eligible categories or subcategories. Students tied for 1st through 5th will all advance. Student-singers placing in Chapter or District auditions will not automatically advance to the National Preliminaries.

Each Region advances to the National Preliminary Round/YouTube Auditions, all students placing 1st through 5th in each eligible category or subcategory. Please note that some subcategories advance to nationals as independent categories as highlighted in green in "The Categories of Entry." When a category's number of entries becomes too large, a region may choose to subdivide the category into two subcategories. When subdividing a nationally eligible category, the 1st – 5th placing singers in each subcategory will advance to national preliminaries, *i.e.*, the region's Lower Post High School Treble Voices MT 5 may include the 5 singers placing in Lower Treble MT 5A (*1 year Post High School*) **plus** the 5 singers placing in Lower Treble MT 5B (*2 years Post High School*) to total 10 singers from the region advancing to Lower Post High School Treble CL 5 in the National Preliminary/YouTube Auditions.

As soon as possible after the region's auditions are completed, the Region's Governor or Region's Auditions Chair should forward to the National Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions: each advancing students' entry information including accurate email addresses, the repertoire list of the singers, and also certify that the repertoire submitted was the same repertoire that the singer submitted/performed in the region's auditions.

Musical theatre students who exceed the age limits for the Upper Musical Theatre categories are encouraged to enter the NATS National Musical Theatre Competition.

Exceptions to this or any NSA Regulation must be approved by the NSA Coordinator, National Vice President of Auditions, and National Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions.

National Preliminary Round/YouTube Auditions

The national level of the NSA will begin when the National Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions sends each student advancing from their region auditions an emailed invitation to enter/register for the national preliminary auditions. Eligible singers from each region complete an online registration/entry for the national preliminary auditions including submitting YouTube video links for adjudication and comments. Students must enter the same repertoire entered in their region's auditions. If regions use the subdivided categories, all the repertoire selections for the applicable audition category/subcategory in the "Categories of Entry" must be included in the YouTube videos (*one video per required selection, each uploaded to separate unlisted YouTube links, one link per selection*). The performance footage in each video must not be edited. The mandatory slate/introduction may be edited to the performance. **15 singers from each national preliminary audition category will be invited to the live National Semifinals.**

National Semifinal Auditions

The National Semifinal Auditions will take place alternately in conjunction with a National Conference (even-numbered years) or Summer Workshop (odd-numbered years). Semifinalists must audition with the same selections entered in their region's auditions. Each singer participating in the national semifinal round will begin with a selection of his or her choice and continue with selections chosen by the panel of adjudicators according to the national repertoire requirements and within the prescribed time limits for each audition category. **3 singers from each semifinal category will advance to National Finals.**

National Final Round

The National Final Round will also take place during a National Conference or Summer Workshop. Each participating singer will sing one selection of his or her choice. This selection must be one of the pieces submitted in the preliminaries of the competition. **Award certificates will be presented to all three finalists with monetary awards** for the First, Second, and Third Place Winners in each audition category

Schedule of National Levels of NSA

Immediately following Region-Auditions - Deadline for Region-Governor to submit a list of eligible singers and the repertoire for each to the National Student Auditions Chair.

Second Friday of April - Deadline for YouTube submissions, paying entry fee, and completing online entry for National Preliminaries

Beginning of May - Deadline for adjudication and scoring results from YouTube submissions

Middle of May - Date to notify semifinalists (Approximately 6 weeks prior to semifinals)

Late June/Early July - National Student Audition Finals at the NATS National Conference and in alternating years at the NATS Summer Workshop

Audition Fees

National NSA Registration/Entry Fee: \$75 per category entered (nonrefundable)

This is a registration fee for the national rounds of the National Student Auditions: National Preliminary Round/YouTube Screening, Semifinals, and Finals. This fee provides for a pianist at the Semifinal and Final rounds of the competition, should the singer so desire, and includes national conference/summer workshop registration for all sessions. This is separate from any Chapter, District, and/or Regional audition fees. **A separate registration fee is paid for each category entered.**

Collaborative Pianists

Collaborative pianists are valued partners in auditions. Each singer may collaborate with his or her own pianist at all levels of the competition. For those singers who elect to use a Staff Collaborative Pianist, one will be provided at National Semifinals for a fee and for National Finals at no extra cost to the singer. Rehearsals with the Staff Collaborative Pianists will be provided prior to the Semifinal Auditions. Singers who advance to the Final Auditions with Staff Collaborative Pianist, will be allotted a ten-minute rehearsal with the pianist preceding the finals audition.

Adjudication

Adjudication panels for the National Preliminary Round/YouTube Auditions, the National Semifinals, and the National Finals will be selected by the National Student Auditions Coordinator in consultation with the National Vice President for Auditions. Sources for eligible adjudicators may include:

- Any teacher with a singer who is competing may be invited to adjudicate a category in which his or her student is not competing.
- NATS members attending the Conference or Workshop may indicate on the registration form a willingness to serve as an adjudicator.
- NATS members who reside near the Conference or Workshop may be contacted to serve as adjudicators.
- Non-NATS members who are experts in the NSA category(s) they are invited to adjudicate as guests.

The adjudication panel ranks the singers from one through the number of entrants in their category, subcategory, or portion of a category. The singers with the lowest total scores are chosen to advance to the semifinal round. **Comments from adjudicators are included at National Preliminary and Semifinal Auditions.**

[Resources for NSA Adjudicators](#) are available on NATS.org including sample comments as applicable to different genres of categories, Dr. Matt Edwards' video: Tips for Adjudicating Musical Theatre Categories, Audio Examples of CM & Musical Theatre Vocal Stylisms, The Art of Being a Great Adjudicator, and so much more.

Adjudication Forms

The following 4 pages are samples of NATS NSA Adjudication Forms. When not using an electronic version of these adjudication forms, the [Adjudication Forms](#) to be duplicated for hard copy use must be downloaded from the reorganized NSA Resources webpage. Adjudicators should have immediate access to both adjudication forms and rubrics in Appendix B.

Each genre-specific group of NSA Categories have unique content defining standards of performance. Please note that the CL, MT, and all Spiritual Categories use one adjudication form, while the **CM Categories use a different Adjudication Form**. The CM Standards as listed on the adjudication form's tick lines are not organized the same as the standards of performance in all other categories.

Any exceptions to NSA Regulations must be approved by NATS: NSA Coordinator, National VP of Auditions, and National Coordinator of Competitions and Auditions.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA CL-MT-AS-HJ Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

← Check, if singing for **comments only**

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

| STANDARD | DEVELOPING | ADVANCING | MASTERING |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Tone | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Breathing/Alignment | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Language / Diction | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Musicianship / Accuracy | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Artistry / Expression | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| REFLECTING SCORES | 70-----79 | 80-----89 | 90-----100 |
| Ensemble (comments only) | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |

COMMENTS

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

SCORE

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA CL-MT-AS-HJ Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

← Check, if singing for comments only

REPertoire

| Title | Larger Work | Composer |
|----------|-------------|----------|
| 1. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ | _____ |

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

| STANDARD | DEVELOPING | ADVANCING | MASTERING |
|--------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Tone | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Breathing/Alignment | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Language / Diction | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Musicianship / Accuracy | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Artistry / Expression | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| REFLECTING SCORES | 70-----79 | 80-----89 | 90-----100 |
| Ensemble (comments only) | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |

COMMENTS

SCORE

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA **CM only** Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

← Check, if singing for comments only

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

| STANDARD | DEVELOPING | ADVANCING | MASTERING |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Artistic Interpretation | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Lyrics | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Vocal Stylisms | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Musicianship | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Tone | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Breathing | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| REFLECTING SCORES | 70-----79 | 80-----89 | 90-----100 |

Ensemble (comments only) -----|-----|-----

COMMENTS

SCORE

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.



NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING NSA **CM only** Adjudication Form



SINGER'S NAME or # _____ CATEGORY _____

← Check, if singing for **comments only**

REPERTOIRE

| Title | Larger Work | Composer & Lyricist Team |
|----------|-------------|--------------------------|
| 1. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 2. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 3. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4. _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 5. _____ | _____ | _____ |

ADJUDICATION

Using the NATS rubric as appropriate to the level of study and age of the singer, place an X along the tick line following each of the rubric's standards listed below. The standards are not of equal importance in a composite score. Align ticks with an composite score of 70–100. A numerical score should only appear in the score box at the bottom of the adjudication form. Support your ticks below with constructive criticism and encouraging responses in your comments.

| STANDARD | DEVELOPING | ADVANCING | MASTERING |
|-------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Artistic Interpretation | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Lyrics | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Vocal Stylisms | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Musicianship | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Tone | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| Breathing | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- | ----- ----- ----- |
| REFLECTING SCORES | 70-----79 | 80-----89 | 90-----100 |

Ensemble (comments only) -----|-----|-----

COMMENTS

ADJUDICATOR'S SIGNATURE _____

PRINT NAME _____ DATE _____

SCORE
If singing for
comments only,
mark an X in the
score box.

A History of NATS Student Auditions

Inclusive national guidelines for Student Auditions (SA) were first formulated in 1977. In 1992-93, a national survey of chapters and regions was undertaken to research the changes that had occurred in Student Auditions across NATS. In 1993, a revision committee comprised of Richard Berry, Myra Brand, Jerry Daniels, Edward Deckard and Judith Nicosia Civitano (Chair) drafted the excellent 1993 revision of the Guidelines for Student Auditions, which has served the Association well for 16 years.

In 2007, another survey of the policies of chapters, districts, and regions was conducted to assess the current trends in Student Auditions. The 2008 and 2009 Student Audition Guidelines committee included Kathleen Arecchi, Elaine Case, Roma Prindle, Connie Roberts and Anne Christopherson. This committee provided a mission statement for Student Auditions, outlined the responsibilities of NATS Members who coordinate and facilitate Student Auditions, and provided examples of best practices to fulfill the mission and responsibilities of the Student Auditions.

In 2010-2011, a committee chaired by Norman Spivey was charged with investigating the possibility of a student audition process that would be progress from the regional level to culminate at a national level by gathering information from NATS 15 regions regarding their current audition practices and beginning discussion of a national model for auditions.

In 2011-2012, a committee chaired by Deborah Williamson completed the National Student Auditions (NSA) Guidelines document to present to the NATS Board of Directors. Deborah represented the NSA committee at the NATS Board of Directors meeting in Orlando, Florida in July 2012 and presented the proposal. This proposal was passed by NATS National Board of Directors.

In 2012-2014, a committee chaired by Deborah Williamson implemented the audition categories, repertoire requirements, and audition fees based upon recommendations from the Board of Directors and redesigned the National Student Auditions (NSA) Guidelines document into a format that was posted on the NATS website. In 2013, the NATS Board of Directors approved the launch of National Student Auditions. The first national semifinal and final rounds were held in Boston in July 2014 as part of the NATS 53rd National Conference. More than 150 singers from across all NATS Regions participated in the semifinal round of the first annual National Student Auditions at The Boston Conservatory. Thirty-seven students advanced to the final round and 24 students won a combined \$30,000 in awards.

In July 2014, a committee chaired by Dan Johnson-Wilmot (NSA Coordinator), with Karen Brunssen, Mark McQuade, Robert Wells, and Melanie Williams developed a national model for Student Auditions (SA) based on the National Student Audition (NSA) Audition Guidelines. The national model's goal was to be workable for region, district, and chapter auditions across the 15 regions of NATS. This revised structure of NATS Student Auditions was necessitated by many factors that have a far-reaching impact on the work of NATS members. To have a system that facilitates the flow of auditions to a national level, a wider level of consistency in several areas is required. The result is a structure that will ultimately allow singers and their teachers to consider their performance in the context of other student performances in their immediate locale, while also being able to consider their performance in the context of other singers their age at their level of study throughout the country. With over 10,000 auditions being heard every year, the ability to consider this valuable context gives both teachers and students additional feedback on their progress in the study of vocal performance.

In July 2022, in the spirit of embracing all genres of vocal music as art worthy to be studied, respected, and appreciated, the NATS Executive Board announced their decision to add 16 new NSA Categories of Entry. The new categories included Commercial Music Categories to include all genres of pop and commercial musics with categories for all ages. The new categories also included categories in Classical, Musical Theatre, and Commercial Music for children and youth in middle school or younger. These new categories open in the 2023-2024 audition cycle and bring NATS total number of annual NSA categories to 34, plus the biennial three American Negro Spirituals Categories and in alternating years the Hall Johnson Spiritual Competition.

At regular intervals, NATS National Student Audition Regulations continue to be reviewed and revised by the National NATS Audition Regulations Committee with input gathered from NATS regions' auditions chairs.



—***—
National Association of Teachers of Singing

2023 – 2024 CATEGORIES OF ENTRY

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NATS National Student Audition Categories of Entry in NSA Regions, Districts, and Chapters

The National Student Auditions begin at the region-level and progress to the national preliminary, semifinal, and final rounds. If meeting the level of study and age requirements, student-singers may enter multiple genre categories. Region auditions should offer all yellow-highlighted categories contained in the “Categories of Entry” section of this document on page 8. Student-singers may only advance to the National Student Auditions by placing 1st-5th in a region’s NSA. Students placing in Chapter or District auditions will not be automatically advanced to the National Student Auditions.

Terminology applying to ALL NSA Categories

| | |
|--|--|
| CATEGORY | Categories are defined by voice type. Treble: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 TBB: Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14 |
| CATEGORY NUMBERS | Categories numbers also reflect the student’s level of study. Children–Middle School Youth 1 & 2, High School (HS) 3 & 4 Lower: one–two years post-HS 5 & 6, Upper: three–five years post-HS 7 & 8 Advanced: post-undergraduate 9 & 10, Other Adults 11 & 12 Nontraditional Students 13 & 14 |
| LENGTH OF STUDY | Length of voice study & age determine the selection of an appropriate Category of Entry. Total voice study with a voice teacher (NATS Member or Non-NATS Member) either in an independent studio or collegiate/conservatory program or with any number of voice teachers is a determining factor in NSA’s post-high school categories only. Length of voice study is counted in years, not in semesters. POST- HIGH SCHOOL STUDY Lower: students 22 or younger, in their 1 st or 2 nd year of post-high school voice study Upper: students 25 or younger, in their 3 rd , 4 th , or 5 th year of post-high school voice study and not enrolled in a graduate voice program Advanced: post-baccalaureate students aged 30 years or younger in their 4 th or higher year of post-High School voice study Counting years of study begins with the first day of post-high school study—meaning the first year of voice study is in progress. For example, a student in their fifth undergraduate semester of voice study is in their third year of study. Any reasonable portion of a year will be counted as one year—even if the singer stops taking weekly lessons during a portion of that year, excepting if the singer is ill and unable or forbidden to sing during that time for medical reasons. |
| AGE LIMIT | Age limits are determined by the age of the entered student on September 1st , the first day of each NSA audition cycle. Singers above the age limit of a category may not compete in that category. When a singer is above or below the age limits for their level of study, that student may enter their level of study category for comments only OR enter any available Non-Traditional student category, which does not advance to national levels of NSA. A student will not change their level of category(s) of entry or entered repertoire in an audition cycle. |
| REPERTOIRE | High school-aged categories and younger in Chapter and District auditions may require two or three selections as best serves the needs and tradition of the Chapter or District. Regional and National Auditions will require three selections in all High School Categories. |
| AUDITIONING MEMBER-TEACHERS | NATS teacher-members who meet the requirements of a student audition category in terms of their age and years of study—may enter student auditions through the NATS member with whom they are currently studying, but they may not enter themselves in the audition. If they enter their students in the audition, they must be available to adjudicate a category in addition to auditioning. |
| OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN AUDITIONS | The National Association of Teachers of Singing requests that NATS members guide their students in selecting NSA audition repertoire that embraces our mission to be a welcoming and supportive community of members and students who celebrate the unique identities, varied backgrounds, and experiences of all individuals. NATS asks teachers to remain mindful of lyric/text content that respects the wide range of ages and identities of those participating in our NSA as well as those present in our audiences at NATS events. To honor the music’s copyright owners, no lyric substitutions of offensive lyrics are allowed unless a clean version is published or legal permission for a change is obtained. |

Classical CL Audition Terminology

| | |
|---|---|
| Aria | An aria is a solo from an opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, zarzuela, operetta, or works titled “concert aria.” Oxford Online definitions will be used for the purposes of NATS student auditions. For example, Purcell’s selections from the semi-operas and masques are considered songs. |
| 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias | The repertoire found in the 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias collections may be counted as an aria or an art song in the high school and lower classical categories. For the singers in the upper and advanced categories, these pieces may ONLY count as an art song, regardless of origin. Any repertoire found outside of these collections will be considered only as the composer intended as an art song OR aria. |
| Memorization | All repertoire must be performed from memory with the exception of Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, and Cantata Arias. Singers may hold music scores for these types of arias as is traditional performance practice. |
| Original Languages | All selections should be sung in original language or in translation, if warranted by common performance practice. |
| Transposition | Published transpositions are permitted. Singers are expected to retain the composer’s intended style of music and to convey the essence of the character portrayed in the larger work. Performances not fulfilling these requirements may result in lower scores from adjudicators. |
| Art Song in English | English must be the original language of the art song. |
| Repertoire/Categories | The word “classical” in this context refers to art songs and arias from the classical genre, not limited to the Classical period of Mozart and Haydn. No musical theatre, pop, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues, <i>etc.</i> may be entered in the Classical Category. Published arrangements of folk songs, spirituals, and traditional hymn tunes in English are widely accepted as a part of the classical genre. Students in classical categories may present one selection of this type to fulfill the English art song requirement. |
| Judicious Cuts | Judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed as well as internal cuts of opera arias are allowed as is common performance practice. Cuts of verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included. |
| Comments Only | Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only. |
| Double-Dipping | Singers entering more than one NSA category (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) are allowed to enter the same selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards in each genre category are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. In exception, the Spiritual Categories and CL Categories are adjudicated by the same rubric of classical performance standards. If a singer advances in NATS Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple final auditions. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information. |

Musical Theatre MT Audition Terminology

| | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Musical Theatre Selections | Repertoire is selected from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, theatrical song cycles, and musical theatre's song literature. Only <i>one</i> of the required selections may be an operetta aria <i>or</i> from musical theatre's song literature. |
| Musical Theatre Styles | The singer is expected to select musical theatre songs from varied styles of music including bluegrass, blues, calypso, country, electro-pop, folk, gospel, jazz, legit, operetta, pop, pop-opera, rap, rhythm and blues (R&B), rock, soul, <i>etc.</i> The selected repertoire will engage the singer's ability to access a variety of vocal colors to communicate character and story (<i>see musical theatre rubric</i>). The audition will showcase the full spectrum of each singer's vocal and dramatic abilities. |
| Transpositions | Published transpositions are permitted, but singers are expected to retain the composer's intended style of music and to convey the essence of the character portrayed in the larger work. |
| Judicious Cuts | As found in common professional performance practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and dance breaks in musical theatre selections are allowed. • In the case of numerous verses, some verses may be cut. |
| Original Languages | Selections must be sung in the original language or in translation as warranted by common professional performance practice. |
| Memorization | All selections must be performed from memory. |
| Comments Only | Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only. |
| Double-Dipping | Singers entering an MT category plus CL and/or CM categories are allowed to enter the same selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Crossover repertoire may be judiciously entered in MT and additional categories. For example, "Lonely House" from <i>Street Scene</i> may be entered as a selection in an MT category and as an aria in a CL category. Similarly, "If I loved you" from <i>Carousel</i> may be entered in both MT and CM categories, but in the CM category, the song must be performed in a specific CM style different from the musical's original style of music. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards in these genre categories are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless the performance is altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. If a singer advances in NATS Student Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple finals. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information. |
| Authentic Performance | A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation. |

COMMERCIAL MUSIC CM AUDITION TERMINOLOGY

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Accompaniment Options | Singers may perform with any or any combination of the following accompaniment options: a pre-recorded instrumental track without backing vocals, a live collaborative instrumentalist, or in a limited capacity (<i>see CM categories of entry in Appendix A</i>), accompany themselves on an acoustic instrument. |
| Arrangements | Original or published arrangements of musical theatre selections are accepted in CM categories in NATS Student Auditions, ONLY when performed in a distinct commercial music style different from the musical or subsequent revival of the musical in which the song originated. |
| Commercial Music | Each CM audition may include one or more commercial music style(s). Commercial music includes all genres of vocal music performed by recording artists, not included in the classical and musical theatre NATS Student Auditions categories. Commercial music includes bluegrass, blues, contemporary Christian, country, folk, gospel, jazz, pop, rap, rock, rhythm and blues (R&B), soul, and all ethnic music, <i>etc.</i> |
| Cover Song | A cover song is a selection performed by someone other than the composer or original recording artist. Performing a cover does not imply an imitation of the original recording artist. |
| Diva Microphone | A smaller microphone worn on the singer's head. |
| Microphone Technique | Auditions are to be performed with amplification. In live auditions, all singers are required to use the amplification equipment provided. In video auditions, the use of a microphone off-camera or on-camera (on a stationary stand, diva microphone, and/or handheld microphone) is an artistic choice influencing interpretation. When using a microphone, the singer needs to make intentional choices of the microphone's placement (whether handheld, using a stationary mic stand, or diva microphone). When choosing to use a handheld microphone, the singer will make intentional choices in the distance of the microphone from their mouth to create stylized effects. |
| Rhythmic Groove | An organic embodiment of the beat that goes beyond specific notation or time signature, often referred to as the rhythmic feel of a song. |
| Vocal Stylisms* | In Commercial Music's genre-specific elements of vocal interpretation, vocal stylisms are often not notated in the music. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate ONSETS vary among fry, slide, yodel, growl, breathy, cry, creak, flip, scream, <i>etc.</i> • Appropriate RELEASES vary among abrupt glottal stops, breathy, fall-off, fall-up, shadow vowels, fry, creaky, gaspy, <i>etc.</i> • Appropriate NUANCES/EMBELLISHMENTS vary among riffs/runs, licks, flips, pitch slides, pop-appoggiatura, yodel/register shifts, pitch bends/scoops, <i>etc.</i> Visit NSA Resources on NATS.org to hear specific audio examples. |
| Memorization | All selections must be performed from memory including self-accompaniments played. |
| Comments Only | Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate in the preliminary audition. The judges will not score auditions entered for comments only. |
| Off-Camera | Not visible on video, placed beyond the edge of the camera's frame. |
| Full Song | An entire song. No internal cuts of vocals; intros and outros may be abbreviated to accommodate audition's time limits; instrumental breaks as well as repeat and fade tags may be cut, abbreviated, or kept to accommodate the audition's time limits. |
| Authentic Performance | A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation. |

**Edrie Means Weekly coined the term Vocal Stylisms in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.*

NSA Biennial Auditions

American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

Nationally, the American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NATS summer workshop years and the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is offered in NATS conference years (national finals in odd-numbered years). The 3 American Negro Spiritual Categories are offered in each region's NSA with singers placing 1st-5th advancing to the national preliminaries. Chapters are also encouraged to add these categories to chapter auditions. Where applicable, chapter auditions may serve as qualify students to advance to their region's auditions.

American Negro Spiritual Audition Terminology

| | |
|--|--|
| Spiritual Definition | Arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by composers similar in style to the spirituals of Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, Moses Hogan, Edward Boatner, Undine Smith Moore, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, Margaret Bonds and others. The classical style excludes Gospel, Blues and Jazz music. See below for a link to more information available online. |
| Memorization | All audition selections must be performed from memory. |
| Diction | Because of the idiomatic nature of the spiritual, diction restrictions will be relaxed. Standard English pronunciations may be observed, <i>i.e.</i> "de" or "duh" may be replaced with "the." For more advanced students, the scholarly study of diction in spirituals is equivalent to studying the lyric diction of other languages. |
| Transposition | Published transpositions consistent with the NATS Copyright Policy are allowed. |
| Spirituals in English | English must be the original language of the selection. |
| Spiritual Classical Performance Style | The word "classical" in this context refers to singing spirituals in the classical style with only mild deviations and interpolation to what is written in the music and without musical theatre, pop, gospel, contemporary Christian, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues expressions or vocal technique. See the NATS FAQ-Student Auditions for the difference between Spirituals and Gospel Songs |
| Judicious Cuts | Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of spiritual selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of a verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included. |
| Comments Only | Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only. |

[Additional information](#) about the Biennial American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

**Spirituals not found
in the [Approved Spirituals Repertoire](#) online**
may be vetted and approved by contacting one of the following NATS members:

Alexis Davis-Hazell adavishazell@ua.edu
Barbara Hill-Moore bhmoore@mail.smu.edu
Everett McCorvey everett.mccorvey@uky.edu
Marcia Porter MPorter@admin.fsu.edu

Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

Due to the generosity of the Hall Johnson Estate, a \$2000 award will be given in each national conference year (national finals in even-numbered years) to the best performance of a Hall Johnson Spiritual at NATS biennial conferences from 2016–2036. All interested performers will apply for this category as part of their region's NSA with student-singers placing 1st–5th in the region advancing to national preliminaries, as with all other NSA categories. Chapters are encouraged to add this competition to their auditions. Whenever applicable, Chapter Auditions may serve to qualify student-singers to advance to their region's NSA.

Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

(National rounds in this category will be held in even-numbered years)

[Additional information](#) about the Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

All approved Hall Johnson Spirituals eligible to be entered in this competition are listed below and available in the following publications

- The Carl Fischer "Hall Johnson Collection" (CF)
- The Hal Leonard Digital Series, "Hall Johnson Concert Spirituals" (HL)
- The G. Schirmer "30 Spirituals" arranged by Hall Johnson (GS)

ONLY REPERTOIRE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST MAY BE ENTERED IN THIS COMPETITION

Other selections in the collections listed above are not eligible repertoire in this category.

Ain't Got Time to Die - HL
City Called Heaven - HL
Crucifixion - CF
Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit - HL, GS
Fix Me, Jesus - HL
Give Me Jesus - CF
His Name So Sweet - CF
Honor! Honor! - CF
I Been in de Storm So Long - HL
I Got To Lie Down - CF
I'm Gon'ter Tell God All o' my Troubles - CF
Le's Have a Union - HL
My God is So High - HL
My Good Lord Done Been Here - CF
Oh, Glory! - CF
Po' Mo'ner Got a Home at Las' - HL, GS
Ride On, King Jesus!- CF, GS
Roll Jerd'n, Roll - HL
Take My Mother Home - CF
Wade in de Water - HL
Witness - CF

Hall Johnson scholar, Eugene Simpson's respected and researched opinion stated that the current repertoire listed above constitutes the spiritual arrangements that are verified as written by Hall Johnson.

All selections listed above are annotated and analyzed in *The Concert Spirituals of Hall Johnson: An Annotated Guide to Interpretation and Performance* by Eugene Thamon Simpson.

NATS National Student Auditions Categories of Entry

updated 9-19-2023



National Association of Teachers of Singing

TERMINOLOGY & ABBREVIATIONS

- Treble**—Soprano, Mezzo-soprano, Contralto, & Countertenor Voices
- TBB**—Tenor, Baritone & Bass Voices
- MT**—Musical Theatre
- CL**—Classical Art Songs & Arias
- CM**—Commercial Music
- AS**—American Negro Spirituals
- HJ**—Hall Johnson
- HS**—High School

- **Categories ADVANCING to National NSA Rounds in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle**

- **Subdivided categories ADVANCING to nationals by combining into a single category in the NSA National Rounds**

FOR EXAMPLE: **CL 1A** and **CL 1B** combine into one category, **CL 1**, in the national levels of NSA. If a region subdivides these categories, then up to 10 students (up to 5 from each subdivision) may advance to each combined category in the national YouTube round.

AN EXCEPTION: Some highly populated and/or disparate subdivisions do advance as individual national categories without combining—these national level subdivisions are independent categories. For example: **CL 3A** and **CL3B** are independent national categories and do not combine to become CL 3 at the national levels of NSA. See page 2.

- **Categories that MUST be subdivided in NSA regions to advance independently to the NSA National Preliminary Round.**
- **Categories that alternate biennially and also ADVANCE to National NSA Rounds in alternate years**
- **Categories NOT advancing to the NSA National Rounds**

CHILDREN & YOUTH CATEGORIES *(any length of study)*

| Number | Category | Age Range / Limit | | Time Limit | Repertoire Requirements |
|---|--|-------------------|---|------------|--|
| CATEGORIES 1 & 2 — CHILDREN & YOUTH | | | | | |
| MT 1 | Children Musical Theatre—All Voices | 11 & under | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | TWO contrasting age-appropriate musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 2 | Youth Musical Theatre—All Voices | 11–14 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | |
| CL 1 | Children Classical—All Voices | 11 & under | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | TWO contrasting age-appropriate selections from classical repertoire. |
| CL 2 | Youth Classical—All Voices | 11–14 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | |
| CM 1 | Children Commercial Music—All Voices | 11 & under | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | TWO contrasting age-appropriate selections performed in a CM style(s). |
| CM 2 | Youth Commercial Music—All Voices | 11–14 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | |
| Subdivided Categories 1 & 2 — Children & Youth | | | | | |
| MT 1A | Children Musical Theatre Lower—All Voices | 9 & under in MT 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 1A | Children Classical Lower—All Voices | 9 & under in CL 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 1A | Children Commercial Music Lower—All Voices | 9 & under in CM 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| MT 1B | Children Musical Theatre Upper—All Voices | 10–11 in MT 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 1B | Children Classical Upper—All Voices | 10–11 in CL 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 1B | Children Commercial Music Upper—All Voices | 10–11 in CM 1 | below 6 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| MT 2A | Youth Musical Theatre Lower—All Voices | 11–12 in MT 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 2A | Youth Classical Lower—All Voices | 11–12 in CL 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 2A | Youth Commercial Music Lower—All Voices | 11–12 in CM 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| MT 2B | Youth Musical Theatre Upper—All Voices | 13–14 in MT 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 2B | Youth Classical Upper—All Voices | 13–14 in CL 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 2B | Youth Commercial Music Upper—All Voices | 13–14 in CL 2 | 6 th – 8 th grade | 6 minutes | Same as above |

HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Age Range / Limit | Time | Repertoire Requirements | |
|--|---|-------------------|-------------------|--|---|----------------------|
| CATEGORIES 3 & 4 — HIGH SCHOOL | | | | | | |
| MT 3 | HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | THREE contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature. | |
| MT 4 | HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | | |
| CL 3 | HS Classical—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One additional art song or aria. | |
| CL 4 | HS Classical—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | | |
| CM 3 | HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): At least one ballad and one up tempo included in 3 selections. Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist. | |
| CM 4 | HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | | |
| AS 3† | HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i> | No limit – all HS | 14–19 | 8 minutes | THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 6 of this appendix. | |
| Subdivided Categories 3 & 4 — High School | | | | | | |
| MT 3A | Lower HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| MT 4A | Lower HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| MT 3B | Upper HS Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| MT 4B | Upper HS Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| CL 3A | Lower HS Classical—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CL 4A | Lower HS Classical—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| CL 3B | Upper HS Classical—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CL 4B | Upper HS Classical—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| CM 3A | Lower HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CM 4A | Lower HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 14–16 | 9 th & 10 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| CM 3B | Upper HS Commercial Music—Treble Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CM 4B | Upper HS Commercial Music—TBB Voices | No limit – all HS | 16–19 | 11 th & 12 th grades | 8 minutes | |
| <p>When the number of entries becomes large American Negro Spiritual may be split into Upper & Lower Ages. The same system would be used: AS 3A & AS 3B and/or AS 4A & AS 4B.</p> | | | | | | |

LOWER POST HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Age Limit | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|---|--|------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| CATEGORIES 5 & 6 — LOWER POST HIGH SCHOOL | | | | | |
| MT 5 | Lower Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 6 | Lower Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |
| CL 5 | Lower Classical—Treble Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One aria or art song. |
| CL 6 | Lower Classical—TBB Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |
| CM 5 | Lower Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist. |
| CM 6 | Lower Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 1–2 yrs. Post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |
| AS 7 [†] | 1 st – 3 rd yr. Post HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i> | 1–3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 10 minutes | THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 6 of this appendix. |
| Subdivided Categories 5 & 6 — Lower Post High School | | | | | |
| MT 5A | 1 st yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| MT 6A | 1 st yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | |
| CL 5A | 1 st yr. Classical—Treble Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 6A | 1 st yr. Classical—TBB Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | |
| CM 5A | 1 st yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 6A | 1 st yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 1 yr. post HS | 20 | 10 minutes | |
| MT 5B | 2 nd yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| MT 6B | 2 nd yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |
| CL 5B | 2 nd yr. Classical—Treble Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| CL 6B | 2 nd yr. Classical—TBB Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |
| CM 5B | 2 nd yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | Same as above |
| CM 6B | 2 nd yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 2 yrs. post HS | 22 | 10 minutes | |

†PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.

The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

*** English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.**

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Age Limit | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|---|--|--|-----------|------------|---|
| CATEGORIES 7 & 8 — UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL | | | | | |
| MT 7 | Upper Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | FOUR contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 8 | Upper Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |
| CL 7 | Upper Classical—Treble Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | FOUR contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One aria. One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented. |
| CL 8 | Upper Classical—TBB Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |
| CM 7 | Upper Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | FOUR contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Up to 2 songs may be original songs, instead of a cover. Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist. |
| CM 8 | Upper Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |
| AS 7 [†] | 1 st –3 rd yr. Post HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices (4 th yr. or more post HS students enter the AS 9 advanced category) <i>Not Active in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i> | 1–3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 10 minutes | THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 6 of this appendix. |
| Subdivided Categories 7 & 8 — Upper Post High School | | | | | |
| MT 7A | 3 rd yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| MT 8A | 3 rd yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | |
| CL 7A | 3 rd yr. Classical—Treble Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CL 8A | 3 rd yr. Classical—TBB Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | |
| CM 7A | 3 rd yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CM 8A | 3 rd yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 3 yrs. post HS | 23 | 12 minutes | |
| MT 7B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| MT 8B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |
| CL 7B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Classical—Treble Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CL 8B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Classical—TBB Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |
| CM 7B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CM 8B | 4 th & 5 th yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog | 25 | 12 minutes | |

Biennial HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Age Limit | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|--|-------------------------|---|-----------|------------|---|
| HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION | | | | | |
| HJ 7 [†] | Hall Johnson—All Voices | post HS undergraduate students only | 17–23 | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting selections from approved Hall Johnson spirituals repertoire. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 7 of this appendix. |

†PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.
The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

ADVANCED CATEGORIES

Post-Baccalaureate Students

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Age Limit | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|--|---|------------------|-----------|------------|--|
| CATEGORIES 9 & 10 — ADVANCED | | | | | |
| MT 9 | Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i> | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | FOUR contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 10 | Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i> | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CL 9 | Advanced Classical—Treble Voices | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | FIVE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One opera aria. One oratorio/cantata aria.†† One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented. |
| CL 10 | Advanced Classical—TBB Voices | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CM 9 | Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | FIVE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Up to 3 songs may be original songs, instead of a cover. Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist. |
| CM 10 | Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| AS 9† | 4 th & 5 th yrs. Post HS & Advanced American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i> | 4+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 12 minutes | FOUR American Negro Spirituals contrasting in composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 6 of this appendix. |
| Subdivided Categories 9 & 10 — Advanced | | | | | |
| MT 9A | Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| MT 10A | Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | |
| MT 9B | Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| MT 10B | Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CL 9A | Lower Advanced Classical—Treble Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CL 10A | Lower Advanced Classical—TBB Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | |
| CL 9B | Upper Advanced Classical—Treble Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CL 10B | Upper Advanced Classical—TBB Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CM 9A | Lower Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | <i>Same as above</i> |
| CM 10A | Lower Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 4–7 yrs. post HS | 26 | 15 minutes | |
| CM 9B | Upper Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |
| CM 10B | Upper Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices | 7+ yrs. post HS | 30 | 15 minutes | |

†PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.

The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

ADULT AVOCATIONAL CATEGORIES

Students neither pursuing nor holding a degree in music and not working as professional musicians

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Ages | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|--|
| CATEGORIES 11 & 12 — ADULT AVOCATIONAL | | | | | |
| MT 11 | Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 12 | Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | |
| CL 11 | Adult Classical—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria. |
| CL 12 | Adult Classical—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | |
| CM 11 | Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist. |
| CM 12 | Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18 + | 10 minutes | |

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT CATEGORIES

Students pursuing or holding degrees in music and whose age or level of study falls outside the limits of other categories

| Number | Category | Length of Study | Ages | Time | Repertoire Requirements |
|--|--------------------------------------|-----------------|------|------------|--|
| CATEGORIES 13 & 14 — NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS | | | | | |
| MT 13 | Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature. |
| MT 14 | Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | |
| CL 13 | Adult Classical—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria. |
| CL 14 | Adult Classical—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | |
| CM 13 | Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist. |
| CM 14 | Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices | No Limit | 18+ | 10 minutes | |

* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

PLEASE NOTE: NATS encourages chapters and regions to create additional categories to address the inclusivity and diversity of all students and repertoire. Additional categories should be created to meet the needs of that entity's membership. Currently, any additional chapter or region categories cannot advance to the national levels of our NSA.



NATS Audition Rubric

CLASSICAL CATEGORIES

Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

| STANDARD | DEVELOPING 70 – 79 | ADVANCING 80 – 89 | MASTERING 90 – 100 |
|---|--|--|--|
| TONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resonance and timbre are appropriate to the style with balanced chiaroscuro and ring throughout range. Transitions through passaggi are smooth and efficient. Onsets and offsets are clean, clear, and balanced allowing for uniform vibrancy and clarity. Dynamic flexibility is present. The singer engages the ability to make subtle changes in timbre appropriate to the style and character of the selection. | <p>The singer is beginning to develop vocal resonance and balanced chiaroscuro timbre. Onsets and offsets delay or press the tone and cause extra noise or air. Transitions through passaggi are difficult or uneven. Dynamic flexibility is missing in much of the performance. Vocal colors do not enhance the style and character of the selection.</p> | <p>The singer is advancing in resonance and balanced chiaroscuro through some of the range. Onsets and offsets are mostly immediate, but some pressing or breathiness is present. Passaggi transitions are inconsistent. Dynamic flexibility is evident much of the time. Vocal colors mostly enhance the style and character of the selection.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering resonance. A balanced chiaroscuro tone rings throughout range. Onsets and offsets are immediate and promote clarity. Passaggi transitions are smooth and efficient. Dynamic flexibility is consistently evident in the performance. Vocal colors consistently enhance the style and character of the selection.</p> |
| BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation is easy, full, silent, and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, vibrancy, buoyancy, loft, and vocal energy. The alignment, coordination, and release of the head, neck, larynx, jaw, ribs, back, abdomen, legs, and feet assist a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument. | <p>The singer is developing appropriate respiration. Inhalation is often noisy or insufficient. During exhalation, the singer tenses or collapses requiring extra breaths to complete phrases. Buoyancy and loft are inconsistent. The lack of coordination and alignment of the body hinders a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p> | <p>The singer is advancing toward appropriate respiration. Inhalation is mostly easy and sufficient. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy with some collapsing and tension. Buoyancy and loft are often present. The coordination and alignment of the body are mostly assisting a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering respiration. Inhalation is easy and sufficient. Exhalation provides support, balanced stability, and energy. Buoyancy and loft are consistently present. The coordination and alignment of the body consistently assists a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.</p> |
| TEXT & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Languages are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation with idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics. The singer displays a thorough understanding in communicating the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language. | <p>The singer is developing some language proficiency but is often inaccurate in pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are not present. The meaning of the text is ambiguous and poorly communicated. Phrasing and flow do not respect the nuance of each language.</p> | <p>The singer is advancing in language proficiency with accurate pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are inconsistently present. The singer often communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language inconsistently.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering languages with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation. Idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics is consistently present. The singer understands and communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow consistently respect the nuance of each language.</p> |
| MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is accurate throughout range. The markings of the composer, editor, or arranger are observed and present in the performance. Selections are accurately performed from memory. | <p>The singer's musicianship is beginning to develop with many accurate pitches and rhythms. Some errors are present. Tuning is often problematic. The markings in the score are rarely observed or present in the performance. Memorization is incomplete.</p> | <p>The singer's musicianship is advancing with pitch and rhythmic accuracy most of the time. Tuning is mostly accurate and complete with some errors. Many of the markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is mostly complete.</p> | <p>The singer's musicianship is refined. All pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is consistently accurate. The markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is accurate.</p> |
| ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody and express the character and story/poetry. The performance embodies clear musical intent and embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The listeners are engaged in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance. | <p>The singer's performance does not embody a thorough understanding of the text and music. Physical, musical, and vocal choices are not contributing to effective communication. The performance is self-conscious and insecure.</p> | <p>Physical, musical, and vocal choices coordinate to create believable moments. An authenticity that embraces the uniqueness of the singer is emerging. The singer is inconsistent in engaging the listeners in a fulfilling aesthetic performance.</p> | <p>Physical, musical, and vocal choices allow the singer to communicate effectively. An authentic performance embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The singer consistently engages the listeners in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance.</p> |
| ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance. | <p>The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized. The artistic goals of the performance were unclear.</p> | <p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.</p> | <p>The singer and pianist are consistently coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.</p> |



National Association of Teachers of Singing

NATS Audition Rubric

COMMERCIAL MUSIC CATEGORIES

- Students may choose to sing all their selections in one CM style or vary their selections in multiple CM styles.
- Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

| STANDARDS | DEVELOPING 70 – 79 | ADVANCING 80 – 89 | MASTERING 90 – 100 |
|---|---|---|---|
| ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The performance is authentic. • The performance offers a unique, stylized interpretation of the music. • The performance is specific to the selected style of commercial music. | The singer needs an increased understanding of the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation lacks authenticity and is not unique to the singer. | The singer is advancing in the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation has moments of authenticity unique to the singer. | The singer is mastering the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation is authentic and unique to the singer. |
| LYRICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lyrics are articulated in the style appropriate to the selected style of commercial music. • Vocal tract shaping and diction enhance the individuality of the performance. | Articulation is incompatible with the style of the song. The singer is beginning to engage the lyrics to embody the essence of each style. | Articulation is often compatible with the style of each song. The singer is often engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style. | Articulation is compatible with the style of each song. The singer is consistently engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style. |
| VOCAL STYLISMS* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The song's artistic interpretation includes expressive vocal stylisms characteristic of the selected style. • Interpretive vocal stylisms may include varied vocal onsets, releases, nuances, and embellishments, which stylistically color the vocal tone with fry, cry, growl, breathiness, etc. (See <i>CM Terminology</i>) | Vocal interpretations lack the vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer is beginning to develop a facility with vocal stylisms. | Vocal interpretations include some vocal stylisms characteristic of each selection's style. The singer is developing a facility with artistic vocal stylisms. | Vocal interpretations include vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer has proficient facility with artistically effective vocal stylisms. |
| MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance is in tune. • Rhythmic groove enhances the performance. • Memorization is secure and accurate. | Pitches need to be more accurate. The style and rhythmic groove require further study. Memorization is incomplete. | Most pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove are developing. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate. | All pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove enhance the performance. Memorization is organic and accurate. |
| TONE Singer shows mastery of the vocal demands of songs selected and makes subtle or dramatic adjustments appropriate to the style and emotional expression of each selection. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Each commercial style requires a variety of authentic vocal colors and sounds culturally viable for the chosen style of music performed. • Vocal tone may include some form of a mix of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT) as well as varied organic, primal sounds born of raw emotion. • All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection. | The singer is beginning to show ability in meeting the demands of each song and is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song. | The singer shows advancing ability in meeting the demands of each song and is often able to make appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song. | The singer is mastering the ability to meet the demands of each song and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song. |
| BREATHING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inhalation is efficient to the style and may be noisy or silent in response to raw emotion. • Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. The appearance of effort may be intrinsic to style. | The singer is beginning to inhale efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation needs to provide more stability and vocal energy. | The singer inconsistently inhales efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation inconsistently provides stability and vocal energy. | The singer is mastering efficient inhalation to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. |
| ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer coordinates with the accompaniment effectively to accomplish artistic goals. | The singer needs to coordinate more effectively with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals. | The singer is advancing in the ability to coordinate with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals. | The singer is mastering effective coordination with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals. |

*Edrie Means Weekly coined this term in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.



NATS Audition Rubric

MUSICAL THEATRE CATEGORIES

Each singer's performance is adjudicated in comparison to the following standards as applied to the category of entry.

REMINDER: All vowels in MUSICAL THEATRE are some form of a MIX of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT).

Speech Mix: Based on the closed vowels of vernacular speech. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant quality.

Belt Mix: An acoustic strategy. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant call between G4 and D5. Resonance is achieved on American open vowels as in "hat," "met," and "shot." Above D5 in Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant resonance, high belt is achieved on American closed vowels as in "hoot" and "feet." A belt is used to express moments of soaring emotion. Belt is dynamically balanced with energized airflow. It may be vibrant or retain a straight tone.

Legit Mix: An acoustic strategy. Mode II (Head/CT) dominant. Legit refers to a more spacious resonance *similar* to classical singing but retains speech-like articulation.

Hear [audio examples](#) of varied Musical Theatre mixes

| STANDARDS | DEVELOPING 70 – 79 | ADVANCING 80 – 89 | MASTERING 90 – 100 |
|---|--|---|---|
| STONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The singer shows mastery of the vocal techniques required for the repertoire selected. (See above) The singer makes subtle or dramatic vocal adjustments appropriate to the style and character. The singer produces a wide variety of vocal colors throughout the song in the service of character, story, and style. Resonance is speech-like; intelligibility is a priority. | <p>The singer is beginning to show ability in vocal techniques and is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer needs to explore more control of registration/resonance shifts and adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p> | <p>The singer shows advancing skill in vocal techniques and is making some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. The singer shows some control of registration/resonance shifts and makes some adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering vocal techniques and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer shows intentional control of registration/resonance shifts and makes adjustments to serve character, story, and style.</p> |
| BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inhalation is easy, full, and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Alignment is dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character. | <p>The singer is beginning to show easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation needs to provide more stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath needs to flow more evenly without being pressed. Alignment needs to become more dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p> | <p>The singer shows easy, full, and efficient inhalation with increasing consistency. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath often flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is often dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is consistently dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</p> |
| LANGUAGE & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics. | <p>The singer needs more accurate pronunciation and more effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer needs to understand and communicate the lyrics more effectively.</p> | <p>The singer is often using accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer often embodies an understanding and communication of the lyrics.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.</p> |
| MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate. | <p>Pitches and rhythms need to be more accurate. More markings of the composer need to be observed. The style requires further study. Memorization is incomplete.</p> | <p>Most pitches and rhythms are accurate. Most of the markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate.</p> | <p>All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate.</p> |
| ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance. | <p>The synthesis of vocal and physical communication needs to embody the character and story more clearly. Performance skills and artistry are emerging. The performance is superficial or artificial.</p> | <p>The singer is advancing in the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is mostly honest and believable.</p> | <p>The singer is mastering the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is honest and believable.</p> |
| ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance. | <p>The singer and pianist need to coordinate toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p> | <p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p> | <p>The singer and pianist are fully coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p> |