



NATS Audition Rubric – Classical Categories

As adjudicators hear singers they should compare the singer’s performance against the general standard for the category they are adjudicating.

STANDARD	Lowest 70-79	Average 80-89	Best 90-100
Tone: Resonance and timbre are appropriate to the style, with balanced chiaroscuro throughout range. Onset and offset are clean, clear and balanced allowing for vibrancy. Tuning is accurate throughout range. Dynamic flexibility is present; singer has the ability to make subtle changes appropriate to style and character.	Resonance is incomplete, chiaroscuro not evident in vocal range. Onsets are often delayed and with extra noise or air much of the time. Offsets have extra air or extraneous noise much of the time. Tuning is often problematic. The flexibility and warmth of the voice is not fully evident in the performance.	Resonance is developing, chiaroscuro through some of the range. Onsets are immediate most of the time but occasionally either tighten the tone or allow excess breath in the sound. Offsets have occasional extra air or extraneous noise. Tuning is mostly accurate. The flexibility and warmth of the voice is sometimes evident in the performance.	Resonance is complete, ringing chiaroscuro throughout range. Onsets are immediate and promote clear, complete timbre at all times. Offsets are silent and allow rebound in the breath system. Tuning is always accurate. The flexibility and warmth of the voice is fully evident in the performance.
Breathing/Alignment: Inhalation is easy, full and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, vibrancy, and vocal energy. Buoyant alignment assists a balanced engagement of the tone.	Inhalation is often noisy or insufficient. Exhalation does not provide stability, and the singer tenses or collapses in the body. The singer requires extra breaths to complete phrases. Buoyancy is occasional.	Inhalation is mostly easy and sufficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy some of the time, with some collapsing in the body at the ends of phrases. Buoyancy is developing.	Inhalation is silent, easy and sufficient all of the time. Exhalation provides support, balanced stability, and energized phrasing. Alignment is buoyant.
Language/Diction: Languages are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation, with idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics. The singer displays thorough understanding and communication of the text.	Languages are often inaccurate in pronunciation and articulation, and lack idiomatic characteristics. The singer often does not communicate the meaning of the text.	Some languages are accurate in pronunciation and articulation, and demonstrate idiomatic characteristics. The singer communicates the meaning of much of the text.	All languages are accurate in pronunciation and articulation, and demonstrate idiomatic characteristics. The singer communicates the meaning of all text.
Musicianship: Pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer, editor, or arranger are observed and presented with idiomatic style. Performance is easily sung from memory.	Many pitches and rhythms are inaccurate. Attention to the score is unclear or lacks understanding. The style requires further study. Memorization is incomplete with several errors.	Pitches and rhythms are accurate most of the time. Most of the markings in the music are observed, and much of the style presented is idiomatic. Memorization is natural and complete with some errors.	All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the music are observed, and the style presented is idiomatic. Memorization is natural and complete.
Artistry / Expression: The physical life, musicality, and vocalism of the singer fully express the music and story, and engage the listeners in a fulfilling aesthetic experience.	The singer has difficulty making physical, musical and vocal choices, and their individual artistry does not engage the listeners in the entire performance. The performance is expressive and meaningful some of the time.	The physical, musical and vocal choices made by the singer allow their individual artistry to engage the listeners in part of the performance. The performance is personally expressive and meaningful most of the time.	The physical, musical and vocal choices made by the singer allow their individual artistry to engage the listeners in the entire performance. The performance is personally expressive and meaningful all of the time.
Ensemble: COMMENT ONLY The singer and pianist are well rehearsed, and coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized, and the artistic goals of the performance were unclear.	The singer and pianist are coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance some of the time.	The singer and pianist are fully coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.

NATS Audition Rubric – Music Theater Categories

As adjudicators hear singers they should compare the singer’s performance against the general standard for the category they are adjudicating.

STANDARD	Lowest 70-79	Average 80-89	Best 90-100
<p>Tone: Singer shows mastery of the vocal technique required for their chosen selections (belt*, mix*, and/or legit*), and has the ability to make subtle changes appropriate to the style and character. Changes in registration are relatively smooth and even. Refer to the FAQ for additional explanation.</p> <p>Belt: This high-energy sound is often described as “called,” or “brassy,” an outgrowth of mix. While it must be possible to be vibrant in a belt, vibrato is a stylistic choice.</p> <p>Mix: This sound is often described as “speech-like,” and may be light or heavy based on the needs of the character. This sound is clearly distinguishable from typical classical timbre.</p> <p>Legit: This sound is often described as “lyrical,” “sweet,” and “round,” employing similarities to classical singing, but able to move easily to “mix” as needed.</p> <p>For audio examples of each style, refer to: nats.org/nsaresources.html</p>	<p>The singer shows little mastery of the vocal technique required for their chosen selections (belt, mix, and/or legit), and makes few appropriate choices in keeping with the style and character. Changes in registration are abrupt or uneven much of the time.</p>	<p>The singer shows mastery of the vocal technique required for some of their chosen selections (belt, mix, and/or legit), and makes some appropriate choices in keeping with the style and character. Changes in registration are smooth and even some of the time.</p>	<p>The singer shows mastery of the vocal technique required for all of their chosen selections (belt, mix, and/or legit), and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the style and character. Changes in registration are smooth and even.</p>
<p>Breathing/Alignment: Inhalation is easy, full and efficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. The alignment assists a balanced engagement of the tone and is appropriate for the character.</p>	<p>Inhalation is often insufficient. Exhalation does not provide stability, and the singer tenses or collapses in the body. The singer requires extra breaths to complete phrases. Buoyancy is occasional or may not be appropriate for the character.</p>	<p>Inhalation is mostly easy and sufficient. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy some of the time, with some collapsing in the body at the ends of phrases. Buoyancy is developing or somewhat appropriate for the character.</p>	<p>Inhalation is easy and sufficient all of the time. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Alignment is buoyant and appropriate for the character.</p>
<p>Language/Diction: The text is sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style or vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer displays thorough understanding and communication of the lyric.</p>	<p>The text is pronounced inaccurately or with articulation inappropriate to the character. The singer communicates little of the meaning of the lyric.</p>	<p>The text is pronounced well and articulated easily as appropriate to the character some of the time. The singer communicates the meaning of the lyric some of the time.</p>	<p>The text is pronounced well and articulated easily as appropriate to the character all of the time. The singer fully communicates the meaning of the lyric.</p>
<p>Musicianship: Pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and presented with idiomatic style. Performance is easily sung from memory.</p>	<p>Many pitches and rhythms are inaccurate. Attention to the score is unclear or lacks understanding. The style requires further study. Memorization is incomplete.</p>	<p>Pitches and rhythms are accurate most of the time. Most of the markings in the music are observed, and much of the style presented is idiomatic. Memorization is natural and complete with some errors.</p>	<p>All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the music are observed, and the style presented is idiomatic. Memorization is natural and complete.</p>
<p>Artistry/Expression: The physical life, musicality, and vocalism of the singer fully express the music and story, and engage the listeners in a fulfilling aesthetic experience.</p>	<p>The physical life, musical and vocal choices made by the singer often do not communicate the intentions of the character, and do not engage the listeners in the entire performance; gestures are missing or resemble mannerisms and are not integral to the character and situation.</p>	<p>The physical life, musical and vocal choices made by the singer communicate the intentions of the character some of the time, and engage the listeners in part of the performance; gestures are sometimes genuine and integral to the character and situation.</p>	<p>The physical life, musical and vocal choices made by the singer clearly communicate the intentions of the character, and engage the listeners in the entire performance; gestures are genuine and integral to the character and situation.</p>
<p>Ensemble: COMMENT ONLY The singer and pianist are well rehearsed, and coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized, and the artistic goals of the performance are unclear.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance some of the time.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are fully coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.</p>