



THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

2026-2027

NATIONAL STUDENT AUDITIONS MUSICAL THEATRE CATEGORY GUIDE



**Clearer expectations.
Better resources.
Stronger auditions.**

The National Student Auditions are evolving to better serve today's singers, teachers, adjudicators, and auditions teams while preserving the educational excellence and integrity that define the program. Discover a clearer, more consistent, and more accessible NSA experience through refreshed regulations, practical resources, and the OneAudition initiative.

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National Student Auditions Mission Statement

The NATS National Student Auditions are put forth in the spirit of the National Association of Teachers of Singing's objectives.

The National Student Auditions are designed to:

- Inspire and encourage singers 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

Our National Student Auditions Regulations are an outgrowth of the Mission Statement and have been put in place to achieve a number of objectives. They are meant to standardize the registration, categories and repertoire for all NATS auditions with an eye toward uniformity and ease of process, drawing on research from singer auditions in the 15 regions as well as at the chapter level. In this way we can bring the NSA in line with other national bodies that have set their own standards for local through to national events.

The regulations also serve to:

- Allow for a comparison of scoring data from one end of the NSA to the other.
- Establish a shared vocabulary and definitions for vocal music repertoire as it is presented in our auditions.
- Put in place common systems for language and scoring so that a teacher or singer, whether acting as adjudicator or singer, can move between chapters and regions with a clear grasp of what a NATS audition entails.
- Offer categories that are reflective of the diversity, inclusion and cultures within our growing membership and their particular areas of expertise.
- And finally, to give the singers of our members a chance to hone the necessary skills in a setting that is safe and supportive, rather than one of a talent competition.

Why the National Student Auditions?

What is the purpose of NSA auditions?

The National Student Auditions exist first and foremost as an educational experience and series of opportunities for a singer. The audition process promotes intentional repertoire selection, artistic discovery, and the development of efficient, versatile, and expressive singing.

Teachers play a central role by selecting repertoire that builds progressively from one level of achievement to the next. Each selection serves as a stepping stone, reinforcing established skills while introducing new artistic and technical concepts. Over time, these carefully sequenced experiences develop complete singers who communicate with technical security, musical understanding, stylistic versatility, expressive artistry, and professional confidence.

The National Student Auditions recognize that artistic excellence is achieved through consistent growth rather than a single performance highlighting ten minutes of the singer's semester. Success is not simply measured in the NSA Auditions by rankings or awards, but by each singer's continued development as an artist, musician, and communicator. Every audition provides an opportunity to celebrate progress, identify the next stage of growth, and advance the educational mission of NATS.

The Role of New Repertoire in Artistic Development

One of the primary educational goals of the National Student Auditions is to encourage the continued study, growth in building competence in varied musical styles, and performance of new solo repertoire for every singer. Each audition cycle provides an opportunity for singers to expand their musical knowledge, develop new technical and artistic skills, and discover works that contribute to their long-term growth as complete musicians.

To support this educational mission, repertoire performed in a previous National Student Auditions cycle should not be reused during the next annual chapter and region cycle. While revisiting repertoire remains an important part of vocal study and performance, the National Student Auditions are intended to inspire continued exploration and learning through the preparation of new literature. By encouraging fresh repertoire each cycle, NATS helps singers broaden their artistry, deepen their musicianship, and build a more diverse and meaningful repertoire throughout their studies.

Auditions or a Competition?

Isn't this a competition?

Using the Oxford definitions as a starting point, there is an important conceptual distinction that supports the philosophy of the NATS National Student Auditions. Oxford defines an audition as *“a short performance given by an actor, singer, etc., so that somebody can decide whether they are suitable to act in a play, sing in a concert, etc.”* In other words, an audition is fundamentally an adjudication of readiness or suitability.

By contrast, Oxford defines a competition as *“an event in which people compete with each other to find out who is the best at something.”* The defining purpose of a competition is ranking participants against one another to determine winners. Applied to the National Student Auditions, these definitions highlight a distinction that is often misunderstood:

NSA Auditions	NATS Competitions
Evaluates the individual singer against the standards established by the NATS rubrics	Compares singers against one another
Focuses on artistic development and growth	Focuses on determining rankings and winners
Multiple singers may demonstrate the same level of achievement	Rankings are necessarily limited
Recognition is earned by meeting objective standards	Awards are earned by outperforming other competitors

The National Student Auditions are an educational audition process that includes competitive elements. Singers are first evaluated against published standards of vocal and artistic achievement. Those who meet established benchmarks may earn recognition, such as Semifinalist, based on merit rather than quota. Competitive ranking is then used only to determine advancement to the final round and the awarding of final placements.

The National Student Auditions are rooted in the educational mission of NATS. They provide a structured environment in which singers learn to prepare, perform, receive professional feedback, and refine their artistry. While the auditions include competitive recognition, their primary purpose is to promote excellence in the teaching and learning of singing.



NATS

NATIONAL STUDENT AUDITIONS

ONE AUDITION

ONE PROCESS. ONE STANDARD. EVERY STUDENT.

Different voices.
Different journeys.

One destination.

The NATS **OneAudition** initiative creates a consistent, transparent, and sustainable audition experience at every level while honoring local traditions and individuality.

A strong community.
A bright future.

Together!

CLEAR & ACCESSIBLE

Clear, easy to understand regulations that set expectations and empower every participant.

FAIR & CONSISTENT

Systems that promote fairness, consistency, and opportunities to resolve errors before they impact student eligibility.

STRONGER TOGETHER

Practical resources and collaborative networks that empower and support singers, teachers, and auditions teams.

OneAudition strengthens the integrity of NATS auditions and preserves the spirit of encouragement, collegiality, and student-centered growth.

ONE COMMUNITY. ONE MISSION. ONEAUDITION.

NATS OneAudition Initiative

The NATS OneAudition initiative seeks to create a more consistent, transparent, and sustainable audition experience for singers, teachers, adjudicators, and Auditions Chairs at every level of the organization. Whether participating in a chapter, region, or national audition, NATS members should encounter a process that is recognizable in format, language, expectations, and adjudication practices while still allowing space for local traditions and regional identity.

OneAudition is focused on three primary goals:

- creating clear and easily digestible regulations for all participants,
- establishing systems that promote fairness, consistency, and opportunities to resolve errors before they impact singer eligibility,
- and supporting Auditions Chairs through practical resources and collaborative networks.

By developing common frameworks, terminology, and procedures, OneAudition strengthens the integrity of NATS auditions while preserving the spirit of encouragement, collegiality, and singer-centered growth that has long defined the organization.

Something New Just for You!

A Better NSA Experience Starts Now

For generations, the National Student Auditions have inspired singers, challenged teachers, and served as one of NATS' premier educational experiences. As our organization has grown, musical styles have expanded, and technology has transformed the audition process, it was time for our resources to evolve alongside them.

The NSA Refresh is designed with one goal in mind: to make every audition experience clearer, more consistent, and more accessible for everyone involved.

Behind the scenes, every regulation, rubric, and audition process was carefully reviewed. We simplified language, removed unnecessary complexity, reorganized information around the needs of our members, and created practical resources that help singers, teachers, adjudicators, and auditions teams understand expectations before the first note is sung.

The result is not a new National Student Auditions—it is a stronger one. The educational mission and integrity of NSA remain unchanged, while the experience becomes more transparent, more equitable, and easier to navigate at every level.

Clearer expectations. Better resources. Stronger auditions.

What can you expect?

- Consistency through OneAudition
- Dedicated rules and regulations documents for each division: Classical, Commercial Music, and Musical Theatre
- Educational growth over competition
- Repertoire guidelines with a renewed emphasis for the long-term development of our singers as artists ending double dipping
- Revised repertoire regulations to simplify the process and keep the categories serving the music they were created for
- Simplified regulations written for singers, teachers, adjudicators, and Auditions Chairs
- Standardized auditions across every level of NATS
- Transparency in procedures and advancement

Your Path to NSA

The annual NSA cycle begins on September 1st and ends on July 31st.



Region Auditions

- NSA starts at the region level. Some regions use chapter auditions as qualifying rounds, but only the final region results can send a singer to NSA.
- Only singers placing 1st–5th in their region's nationally eligible categories advance to the National Preliminaries, and only with qualifying scores of two 90's or an average of 90 from the regional preliminary round. Singers tied for 1st–5th also advance. Winning at the chapter or region level does not automatically qualify you.
- The songs you submit at the national level must be the SAME songs you performed at your region audition.

National Preliminaries (YouTube Round)

Qualified singers get an invitation in April. To enter, you must:

- Complete the online registration and pay the national fee
- Submit one unlisted YouTube video for each required song
- Perform the same repertoire you entered at the region auditions
- Follow all the video submission rules

About 15 singers per category advance to the National Semifinals.



National Semifinals

Semifinals happen at the NATS National Conference (even years) or the Summer Workshop/AuditionCon (odd years).

- You perform songs from your regional entry
- You choose your first song
- Adjudicators pick the rest, within your category's time limit
- Three singers per category advance to the Finals

National Finals

- Each finalist performs one song from their list
- Adjudicators rank the finalists independently
- 1st, 2nd, and 3rd place awards are given in each category
- Every finalist receives a certificate



National Entry Timeline

- March 30: Regions send in qualified singers and approved repertoire
- 2nd Friday in April: Deadline for national registration, fees, and YouTube videos
- Early May: Preliminary adjudication finished
- Mid-May: Semifinalists notified
- June/July: National Semifinals /Finals

National Entry Fee

- \$95 per category
- Covers the Preliminaries, Semifinals, Finals, and admission to conference or workshop events
- Separate from chapter or region fees
- Nonrefundable
- \$25 technology fee for CM entries

Collaborative Pianists

- You may bring your own or request a staff pianist
- Staff pianists for Semifinals cost an extra fee
- Short rehearsals are provided before Semifinals
- Finalists using staff pianists get a short rehearsal or sound check before Finals

ENTERING SINGERS IN NSA

A quick-reference guide to eligibility, teacher designations, and singer entry requirements.

Who May Enter NSA?

- When entering a singer, there is an age and voice type requirement as well as a length of study component to determine category eligibility.
- The relevant date for age is September 1st of the 2026-2027 audition season.
- The singer is required to be currently studying with a NATS Professional, Emeritus or Emerging Professional member who is in good standing.
- Where applicable, teachers are to provide the information of any former or other instructors on the list.

Eligibility to Enter Singers

- Singers may be entered in chapter, region and national auditions by Professional, Emeritus or Emerging Professional members who are in good standing. The NSA Audition process is not open to Pre-professional or Affiliate members to enter singers.
 - An exception can be made for Canadian chapters that have charitable organization status.
- In the case of a teacher with membership in more than one chapter, or region, entry into NSA auditions for each singer is limited to a single region.

Voice Teacher Designations

- **Primary Voice Teacher** - main instructor teaching regular lessons
- **Concurrent Voice Teacher** - teaches regularly alongside primary
- **Supplemental Voice Teacher** - teaches occasionally (less than weekly)
- **Former Voice Teacher** - previously taught singer but no longer teaching
- **Remote Voice Teacher** - teaches singer from a remote online location

Transparency and respect for singer choice are emphasized in all auditions.

NSA OVERVIEW

The Rule of 90

A singer must earn two scores of 90+, or an average score of 90+ from the three adjudicators, in the preliminary region rounds to be eligible to advance to the NSA YouTube rounds

Eligibility & Advancement

- Students must meet age & study requirements as of Sept 1 of the current cycle
- May enter multiple genre categories
- Place 1st–5th with qualifying score (two scores of 90+ or an average of 90+) to advance to nationals
- Chapter winners do NOT automatically advance to region events
- Students may only enter one region's NSA per genre and cycle

Region & National Rules

- Teacher's region based on NATS address
- Students follow that region's specific procedures regarding chapter/ advancement to region
- Qualify for nationals only through regional participation
- Singers must score 90+ (two scores or average) from preliminary round to advance
- Teachers may belong to multiple chapters and regions

Teacher Responsibilities

- Coordinate with co-teachers before registration
- Submit all forms and materials on time
- Cannot submit telephone numbers nor emails of minor singers in any NATS auditions. All information for minors must be that of the parent/guardian.
- Follow repertoire & copyright policies
- Cannot accompany singers live
- Must not appear in video submissions
- Serve as adjudicator when requested
- Assist singers advancing to nationals

Key Rules for Students

- Each singer can only be entered once per cycle in one region's auditions
- Must currently study with entering teacher
- Age/study level fixed as of September 1
- Member-teachers cannot enter themselves into an audition
- Post-high school categories are open to age-eligible singers studying with NATS member depending on the length of study and degree enrollment and progress

What's New in MT 2026-2027

Sing NEW Repertoire

Repertoire performed in the 2026-2027 National Student Auditions cycle should not be reused from the previous NSA cycle's chapter, region, or national student cycle. (page 4)

No Double Dipping

Singers entering multiple NSA categories (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) may NOT use the same selection in any other category including the American Negro Spirituals category. (page 14)

When does my time begin?

The time for ALL NSA auditions begins when the singer begins their slate. (page 26)

Reminder: No arrangements allowed in MT

A limited exception is made for published solo editions approved by the copyright holder—authorized arrangements that preserve the complete original solo line while omitting only incidental chorus or ensemble passages. Rare exceptions allowed for published solos approved by the copyright owners. (pages 12 and 15)

Teachers enter singers in the NSA Qualifying Round

Teachers will now be responsible for entering their singers in the NSA Rounds using AuditionNow. (page 37)

NSA REGULATIONS - ALL CATEGORIES

AGE LIMIT

A singer's age category is determined by their age on September 1, the first day of the NSA audition cycle, and remains the same throughout that cycle. An audition cycle begins in September and finishes in July.

- Students may not enter a category if they exceed its maximum age limit.
- Students enrolled in or holding a music degree who are older than the age limit for their level of study may enter that category for comments only or enter an eligible Non-Traditional Student category (non-advancing) according to requirements.
- Students whose age qualifies them for a higher category than their current level of study may choose to enter the higher age-appropriate category competitively.
- NSA categories have no minimum age requirements except the Avocational Adults Category, Non-Traditional Adults Category, and the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition.

ARRANGEMENTS

An arrangement is an adaptation of an existing song that may change the accompaniment, melody, rhythm, harmony, form, or musical style. In the Musical Theatre categories, only published arrangements in the style of the MT production available for purchase from an official publisher or licensed digital publisher may be used. Arrangements that omit verses of the selected work, or CM arrangements of MT repertoire regardless of publication, are not permitted. Arrangements obtained from production rentals and/or unofficial sources, such as MuseScore, are not allowed.

AUDITIONING MEMBER TEACHERS

Eligible NATS member-teachers may compete in NSA auditions through their current teacher but may not self-enter. Those entering singers must also be available to adjudicate one category at the auditions.

CATEGORY

Categories are defined by voice type, age range, and length of study.

- All Voices: Children 1, Youth 2, and Spiritual Categories
- Treble Voices: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices in Categories: 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13
- TBB Voices: Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices in Categories: 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14

CATEGORY NUMBERS

Children & Youth: 1 & 2 - All Voices. Unchanged voices sing in treble categories.

For the remaining categories, odd numbered categories are for treble voices:.

- High School (HS) - 3 & 4
- Lower Post-HS: one-two years Post-HS - 5 & 6
- Upper Post-HS: three-five years Post-HS not in a grad program - 7 & 8
- Advanced: four+ years Post-HS and/or in graduate program - 9-10
- Avocational Adults: 11 & 12
- Non-Traditional Adults: 13 & 14

NSA REGULATIONS - ALL CATEGORIES

COMMENTS ONLY

Any singer may elect to enter a category auditioning for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only.

LENGTH OF STUDY

Children, Youth, and High School categories are based on grade level, not years of study.

Post-high school categories are based on a combination of age and the total years of voice study with any teacher, including private study, group lessons, college, university, or conservatory instruction.

- Lower Post-HS: Age 22 or younger; 1st-2nd year of post-high school voice study
- Upper Post-HS: Age 25 or younger; 3rd-5th year of post-high school voice study and not enrolled in a graduate voice program
- Advanced: Age 30 or younger; 4th year or higher of post-high school voice study after completing a bachelor's degree.

Counting a year of study begins on the first day of post-high school voice study. Once a singer begins study during an NSA cycle (September-July), that cycle counts as one full year of study, regardless of whether the singer continues weekly lessons for the entire cycle. Exceptions may be granted only in extraordinary circumstances when the singer is medically unable or formally prohibited from singing for a substantial portion of the cycle. Any exception must be approved by the auditions chair.

OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN REPERTOIRE

NATS encourages teachers and singers to select NSA repertoire that reflects its commitment to a welcoming and respectful community for participants and audiences of all ages and backgrounds. Teachers should carefully consider lyric content. To respect copyright, lyrics may not be altered unless a published clean version exists or permission has been obtained from the copyright holder.

REPERTOIRE CHANGES

Once the qualifying NSA event has concluded, there is no room for any alteration of the repertoire. Those singers who move on to the NSA YouTube rounds from the region auditions must put forward the very pieces that were submitted, vetted and approved by the chair of the region audition. Any deviation from performing the approved repertoire following the region level, even in part, will render a singer Ineligible to Advance to the next step of the NSA rounds.

NSA Musical Theatre (MT) Regulations

ACCOMPANIMENT

A live collaborative pianist is required for in person MT auditions. A piano-only accompaniment track is allowed only for video auditions in MT.

ACTING

In an MT audition, a singer is portraying a character telling a story. A story requires a distinct beginning, middle, and ending. When integral to the character and storytelling, physical movement is essential. Movement that does not serve to facilitate the character's communication should be avoided. Fully danced choreography should be avoided.

AGE APPROPRIATE

Selections should be appropriate in technical difficulty, musical style, language, subject matter, and performance demands, allowing the singer to perform with musical accuracy, comprehension, and efficient vocal production. Teachers should carefully consider emotional content, staging, choreography, gestures, and physical interactions. Repertoire involving mature romantic relationships, sexuality, abuse, violence, addiction, suicide, or other adult themes is generally not appropriate for Children and Youth categories. Selections should reflect emotions, experiences, and performance expectations that the singer can communicate authentically and age-appropriately.

CONTRASTING SELECTIONS

Contrasting selections will vary in tempo, text, dramatic content, composer, character portrayed, vocal colors, and style of music. Two or more songs by the same composer is a violation of this regulation and renders the singing Ineligible to Advance. Substantial variety among selections should result in a higher preliminary audition score.

DOUBLE DIPPING

Singers entering NSA categories (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) may NOT use the same selection in more than one category.

JUDICIOUS CUTS

Full, complete selections are required; however, judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano postludes as well as internal cuts within selections are allowed as is common professional performance practice. Cuts of verse or verses of selections are not allowed.

NSA Musical Theatre (MT) Regulations

MEMORIZATION

All repertoire must be performed from memory.

MUSICAL THEATRE SONG LITERATURE

MT Song Literature is defined as songs by a composer of musicals. MT Song Literature includes songs cut from musicals, songs from unfinished musicals, songs from unproduced musicals, songs written specifically for musical theatre artists, or cabaret-styled musical theatre songs not from a musical.

MUSICAL THEATRE SELECTIONS

Repertoire is selected from musicals including filmed, animated, televised, or internet musicals, revues, operettas, theatrical song cycles, televised or streamed musical series, and musical theatre song literature. Only one of the required selections may be an operetta aria or from musical theatre song literature.

ORIGINAL LANGUAGE

Selections must be sung in the original language or in translation as warranted by common professional performance practice.

REPERTOIRE LIMITATIONS

At the NATS Student Auditions, singers are adjudicated on their individual artistry, vocal technique, musicianship, and interpretation through **the performance of solo repertoire**. Accordingly, repertoire originally written for duets, trios, quartets, or larger ensembles in a production is not permitted. A limited exception is made for published solo editions approved by the copyright holder—authorized arrangements that preserve the complete original solo line while omitting only incidental chorus or ensemble passages. In these cases, the musical and dramatic integrity of the work remains unchanged, and the selection continues to function as a genuine solo performance.

TRANSPOSITION

Transpositions that are available for purchase by a publishing company 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. Octave displacement is a transposition.

Is it This OR is it That?

How do I determine if a song is CM or MT?

Step 1: Google the song's title

- Check out Wikipedia
 - Do you see the words **from, originated by (singer) in larger work, for, or trunk song?**
 - Yes? Go to Step 2
 - No? You have a CM song

Step 2: Google the larger work

- Check out Wikipedia
 - Do you see the words **abandoned/unfinished musical, animated musical, animated musical series, concept musical, cruise ship musical, internet musical, movie musical, musical, musical film, musical song cycle, musical television series, revue, televised musical...**
 - Yes? You have an MT song!

Always Remember Us This Way

Article Talk

Read Edit View

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

Always Remember Us This Way is a song by American singer [Lady Gaga](#) from the 2018 film *A Star Is Born* and its [soundtrack](#). Written by Gaga, [Natalie Hemby](#), [Hillary Lindsey](#), and [Lori McKenna](#), and produced by Gaga with [Dave Cobb](#), the piano-driven [country ballad](#) was inspired by 1970s music and recorded at the [Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival](#) and [EastWest Studios](#) in Los Angeles. In the film, Gaga performs it

"Always Remember Us This Way"

Single by [Lady Gaga](#)

from the album *A Star Is Born*

Released	January 4, 2019
Recorded	2017
Studio	EastWest (Los Angeles)
Venue	Coachella Valley Music and Arts Festival
Genre	Country
Length	3:30

A Star Is Born (2018 film)

Article Talk

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A Star Is Born is a 2018 American [musical romantic drama film](#) produced and directed by [Bradley Cooper](#) (in his directorial debut) with a screenplay by Cooper, [Eric Roth](#) and Will Fetters. It stars Cooper and [Lady Gaga](#) in lead roles, with [Dave Chappelle](#), [Andrew Dice Clay](#) and [Sam Elliott](#) in supporting roles. It follows an [alcoholic](#) musician (Cooper) who discovers and falls in love with a rising country singer (Gaga).

A S

A S



Still unsure? Email the MT Coordinator at nsamt@nats.org.

Keep in mind that many composers and/or producers release songs in advance of the musical's premiere as promotion to increase ticket sales or viewership. The release date of any song is not a reliable indicator of whether or not a song pre-exists a musical.

NSA Musical Theatre Categories of Entry

TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

- TREBLE - Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor, and Unchanged Voices
- TBB - Tenor, Baritone, Bass

Categories Advancing to the National Rounds: MT 1, MT 2, MT 3, MT 4, MT 5, MT 6, MT 7, MT 8 including their sub-divided categories in the region. Upper (7/8) and Advanced (9/10) categories will be combined at the National Levels.

- AS – American Negro Spirituals
- CL – Classical Art Songs and Arias
- CM – Commercial Music
- HJ – Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition
- HS – High School
- MT – Musical Theatre

Determining the category and repertoire requirements

When a singer studies with a current NATS Professional, Emeritus, or Emerging Professional member in good standing, teachers should consider the following details and collect information before beginning registration:

1. First determine what category the singer belongs in:

a. Treble or Tenor Bass Baritone (TBB) - Singers will sing in the category that best describes their voice type that fits into the Treble or TBB designation.

2. Second, determine the singer's age as of September 1 of the competition cycle (September - July)

3. Finally, determine the singer's Grade or Length of Study

a. Singers in Pre-K through Grade 12 enter the category that matches their current grade level, provided they do not exceed the category's maximum age limit.

b. Singers having completed the equivalent of high school and/or secondary education must consider the length of study.

i. Counting a year of study begins on the first day of post-high school voice study. Once a singer begins study during an NSA cycle (September–July), that cycle counts as one full year of study, regardless of whether the singer continues weekly lessons for the entire cycle. Exceptions may be granted only in extraordinary circumstances when the singer is medically unable or formally prohibited from singing for a substantial portion of the cycle. Any exception must be approved by the Auditions Chair.

ii. **Spirit of the Rule:** The purpose of this policy is to ensure equitable placement by counting a singer's progression through time, not simply the number of lessons taken. Exceptions are intended only for extraordinary situations in which a singer is genuinely unable to continue vocal study because they cannot sing—not for scheduling conflicts, changes of teacher or school, study abroad, personal choice, or temporary interruptions in lessons. Auditions Chairs should apply the exception only when the extraordinary circumstances clearly prevent the singer from engaging in voice study for a substantial portion of the NSA cycle.

4. After determining the category the singer will compete in, then the teacher should consult the repertoire requirements for the category found on pages 18-24 in the Musical Theatre Category Guide.

NSA MT Children & Youth Requirements

Category MT 1 - Children Musical Theatre - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 11 years
- Length of Study: Does not apply
- Grade: Pre-K, 1st Grade, 2nd Grade, 3rd Grade, 4th Grade, 5th Grade
- Audition Length: 6 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (TWO Songs)
 - TWO age-appropriate selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - Repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
 - MT 1A - Age Limit: 9 years. Grades: PK - 3rd Grade
 - MT 1B - Age Limit: 11 years. Grades: 4th - 5th Grades

Category MT 2 - Youth Musical Theatre - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 14 years
- Length of Study: Does not apply
- Grade: 6th Grade, 7th Grade, 8th Grade
- Audition Length: 6 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (Two Songs)
 - TWO age-appropriate selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - Repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
 - MT 2A - Age Limit: 12 years. Grades: 6th and 7th Grades
 - MT 2B - Age Limit: 14 years. Grade: 8th Grade

NSA MT High School Requirements

Category MT 3 - High School Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 19 years
- Length of Study: Does not apply
- Grade: 9th Grade, 10th Grade, 11th Grade, 12th Grade
- Audition Length: 8 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE age-appropriate selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
 - MT 3A - Age Limit: 16 years. Grades: 9th - 10th Grades
 - MT 3B - Age Limit: 19 years. Grades: 11th - 12th Grades

Category MT 4 - High School Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 19 years
- Length of Study: Does not apply
- Grade: 9th Grade, 10th Grade, 11th Grade, 12th Grade
- Audition Length: 8 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE age-appropriate selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
 - MT 4A - Age Limit: 16 years. Grades: 9th - 10th Grades
 - MT 4B - Age Limit: 19 years. Grades: 11th - 12th Grades

NSA MT Lower Post-High School Requirements

Category MT 5 - Lower Post-HS Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 22 years
- Length of Study: 1-2 years post-high school
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 5A - Age Limit: 20 years. Length of Study: 1 year Post-HS
 - MT 5B - Age Limit: 22 years. Length of Study: 2 years Post-HS

Category MT 6 - Lower Post-HS Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 22 years
- Length of Study: 1-2 years post-high school
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 6A - Age Limit: 20 years. Length of Study: 1 year Post-HS
 - MT 6B - Age Limit: 22 years. Length of Study: 2 years Post-HS

NSA MT Upper Post-High School Requirements

Category MT 7 - Upper Post-HS Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 25 years
- Length of Study: three-five years Post-HS not in a grad program
- Audition Length: 12 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (FOUR Songs)
 - FOUR selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 7A - Age Limit: 23 years. Length of Study: 3 years Post-HS
 - MT 7B - Age Limit: 25 years. Length of Study: 4-5 years Post-HS not in grad program

Category MT 8 - Upper Post-HS Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 25 years
- Length of Study: three-five years Post-HS not in a grad program
- Audition Length: 12 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (FOUR Songs)
 - FOUR selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 8A - Age Limit: 23 years. Length of Study: 3 years Post-HS
 - MT 8B - Age Limit: 25 years. Length of Study: 4-5 years Post-HS not in a grad program

NSA MT Advanced Requirements

Category MT 9 - Advanced Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 30 years
- Length of Study: four+ years Post-HS and/or in graduate program
- Audition Length: 15 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (FIVE Songs)
 - FIVE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
 - This category does NOT advance to the NSA rounds. Singers are encouraged to enter the National Musical Theatre Biennial Competition for emerging musical theatre performing artists in 2027
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 9A - Age Limit: 26 years. Length of Study: 4-7 years Post-HS
 - MT 9B - Age Limit: 30 years. Length of Study: 7+ years Post-HS

Category MT 10 - Advanced Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 30 years
- Length of Study: four+ years Post-HS and/or in graduate program
- Audition Length: 15 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (FIVE Songs)
 - FIVE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
 - This category does NOT advance to the NSA rounds. Singers are encouraged to enter the National Musical Theatre Biennial Competition for emerging musical theatre performing artists in 2027
 - Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
 - MT 10A - Age Limit: 26 years. Length of Study: 4-7 years Post-HS
 - MT 10B - Age Limit: 30 years. Length of Study: 7+ years Post-HS

NSA MT Adult Avocational Requirements

Category MT 11 - Adult Avocational Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 18+ years
- Length of Study: no limit
 - For singers neither pursuing nor holding degrees in music nor working as professional musicians
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

Category MT 12 - Adult Avocational Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 18+ years
- Length of Study: no limit
 - For singers neither pursuing nor holding degrees in music nor working as professional musicians
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

NSA MT Adult Non-Traditional Requirements

Category MT 13 - Adult Non-Traditional Musical Theatre - Treble Voices

- Voice Type: Treble
- Age Limit: 18+ years
- Length of Study: no limit
 - For singers pursuing or holding degrees in music whose age or level of study falls outside the limits of other categories
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

Category MT 14 - Adult Non-Traditional Musical Theatre - TBB Voices

- Voice Type: TBB
- Age Limit: 18+ years
- Length of Study: no limit
 - For singers pursuing or holding degrees in music whose age or level of study falls outside the limits of other categories
- Audition Length: 10 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
 - THREE selections from musical theatre repertoire
 - Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature
 - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
 - Reminder: singers CANNOT sing the same repertoire in MT, CL, and CM categories during any NSA audition cycle no matter the region.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

NSA Musical Theatre Division Tools

Access the forms and tools you need for your chapter, region, and the national rounds of the auditions.

Minor Chaperone Jot Form

- A parent or guardian must complete the NATS NSA Minor Chaperone Form for their student.
- Failure to submit this form AT LEAST two weeks (14 days) prior to the beginning of the chapter, region, or national event will remove the minor student from the competition. Late forms will not be accepted.

Printable Musical Theatre Division Elements

- All-in-One 2026-2027 MUSICAL THEATRE CATEGORY GUIDE
- [NSA Musical Theatre Regulations, Rubrics and Sample Comments](#)
- [NSA Regulations - All Categories](#)

Tools and Reminders for Recording Videos for NATS Auditions

- [Printable Full CL-MT NSA Video Guidelines](#)

NSA Audition Materials

- [Minor Chaperone JOT Form](#)
- [NSA Blank Adjudications Sheets](#)
- [NATS Code of Conduct](#)
- [NATS NSA Appeal Process](#)

NSA Adjudication Training Videos

- [NSA Children & Youth Adjudicators Training](#)
- [NSA Classical Categories Adjudicators Training](#)
- [NSA Commercial Music Categories Adjudicators Training](#)
- [NSA Spirituals Categories Adjudicators Training](#)
- [NSA Musical Theatre Categories Adjudicators Training](#)

NSA RATING AND SCORING

All NATS National Student Auditions use the same scoring system to ensure consistency across all levels of auditions.

Audition Structure

- Rounds may include: Preliminary, Quarterfinal (when needed), Semifinal (when needed), and Final.
- Larger categories may be divided into multiple preliminary groups.

Preliminary and Quarterfinal Auditions

- An audition begins with a piece of the singer's choosing, followed by whatever the adjudicators call for up to the time limit.
- Time begins when the singer begins their slate.
- Performance must start from the beginning of the song; alternative starting points or cuts to ensure a certain portion of the song fits in the time limit are not allowed.
- Adjudication completed in accordance with the official NATS rubrics with scores from 70-100.
- Advancement to the next round requires a mark of 90 or higher, whether from an average or two individual scores.

Semifinal Auditions

- Perform one selection from submitted repertoire
- Adjudicators score (70-100) or rank numerically
- Up to five singers advance to Finals; when there is a tie for the lowest place, all tied singers may advance
- Adjudicators may not confer before submitting results

Final Auditions

- Perform one complete selection from entered repertoire
- Adjudicators rank independently, highest to lowest. Adjudicators will confer to break ties.
- Lowest combined ranking = top placement
- Awards presented after all finals completed

NSA Scoring System

- Current official NATS adjudication forms and rubrics used at all levels
- Scores range from 70-100 for objective adjudication and constructive feedback as guided by the NATS rubric
- Written comments must be provided during preliminaries; may be provided during semifinals
- Adjudicators must provide sufficient comments to reflect the score given

Understanding ITA

Although uncommon, a singer, singer's teacher or the singer's collaborative pianist may make a decision during a live or recorded audition that renders the singer Ineligible to Advance to the next round of the competition because they violated a rule of the NSA Auditions. An Auditions Chair may issue an ITA at any stage of the audition process once the matter has been reviewed, even if the protocol violation was not identified by previous adjudication panels or Auditions Chairs. An ITA is issued to ensure the consistency of the auditions throughout chapter, region, and national auditions.

What actions might render a singer Ineligible to Advance?

- entering repertoire that does not meet the category's requirements
- entering repertoire that does not contrast by composer, tempo and text
- entering the same repertoire in multiple categories and/or regions in the same season
- entering a song originally written for a stage musical, film musical, television musical, opera, or other dramatic work in the Commercial Music categories
- entering the auditions under the name of a teacher who is not the singer's primary or concurrent teacher
- failure to submit required documents by published deadlines at any level of the auditions
- performing in a category for which one's age and grade or level of study as of 9/1/2026 does not qualify them
- performing repertoire not entered in the qualifying region audition in National NSA
- performing with any visual or auditory cues to assist with recollection of text or music (Exception: Oratorio, mass, requiem and cantata arias may be performed with a score, consistent with common practice)
- performing invalid cuts of vocal content
- performing with invalid accompaniment for the given category
- performing in costume, using props, and/or set pieces during the audition
- performing WITH a microphone amplifying the voice through an external speaker in MT auditions
- violating copyright law when accompanying musician performing from a score that is not compliant with U.S. copyright law
- violating the NATS Code of Conduct
- violating anything listed on the Video Submission Guidelines as making a video audition invalid (page 38)
- visually or audibly revealing the identity of one's teacher, or the teacher's or singer's school, location, chapter, or region
- please note: this is not an exhaustive list but provides the most common ITA violations

NATS COPYRIGHT POLICY

NATS encourages all teachers, singers, and collaborative pianists and requires participants to affirm compliance with the NATS Copyright Policy.. Copyright law protects musical works and prohibits unauthorized reproduction, including photocopying, scanning, photographing, or taking screenshots of copyrighted sheet music. Students and collaborative pianists are responsible for using only authorized music. Failure to comply with copyright law may result in ineligibility to advance in NSA auditions.

Acceptable Music

- ✓ Original printed scores
- ✓ Legally purchased digital scores with proof of purchase
- ✓ Public domain editions legally downloaded in the US from sources such as IMSLP or Song Central

Unacceptable Music

- ✗ Photographs, scans, or screenshots of copyrighted music
- ✗ Shared PDFs or screenshots provided by teachers, friends, or colleagues
- ✗ Copies made from library books, anthologies, or online images without a licensed download

A musical work can be in the public domain, while a specific edition of the score can still be under copyright. For example, Schubert's songs are public domain, but a newly engraved Peters edition is not.

- Collaborative pianists and their singers may use any legally owned printed score, but they cannot scan, photograph, or copy a copyrighted edition simply because the underlying composition is public domain.

Copyright law prohibits photographing or digitally reproducing sheet music, including taking photos, to be used on iPads or tablets.

- ✓ Singers and their collaborative pianist must perform from legally purchased, printed music or an officially licensed digital score with proof of purchase.
- ✓ Downloads from the public domain in the United States- such as IMSLP or Song Central – must be the exact downloadable editions.
- ✗ When a collaborative musician chooses to perform from an illegal copy during the auditions, the onus of responsibility for the copyright violation preventing the singer from advancing to subsequent rounds rests with the musician.

By participating in NSA events, all teachers, singers, and collaborative pianists affirm compliance with the NATS Copyright Policy.

NSA Musical Theatre Auditions Rubric

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.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
STONE • 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.	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.	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.	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.
BREATH & ALIGNMENT • 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.	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.	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.	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.
LANGUAGE & DICTION • The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. • The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.	The singer needs more accurate pronunciation and more effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer needs to understand and communicate the lyrics more effectively.	The singer is often using accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer often embodies an understanding and communication of the lyrics.	The singer is mastering accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.

NSA Musical Theatre Auditions Rubric, cont.

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

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
MUSICIANSHIP - Pitches and rhythms are accurate. - The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. - Memorization is organic and accurate	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.	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.	All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate.
ARTISTRY - The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. - The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance.	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.	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.	The singer is mastering the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is honest and believable.
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized. The artistic goals of the performance were unclear.	The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	The singer and pianist are consistently coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.

NSA Children & Youth Rubric

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

STANDARD	EXPLORING 70-79 points	DEVELOPING 80-89 points	ADVANCING 90-100 points
VOCAL EASE & COMFORT - Vocal freedom in singing - Lack of strain in singing - Accessing a vocal range appropriate for the age/physical maturity of the singer - Demonstrating an emerging awareness of healthy vocal coordination	The singer demonstrates emerging vocal freedom with occasional tension or inconsistent tone. Range and vocal choices are generally appropriate for their age and stage of development.	The singer performs with increasing vocal freedom, healthy tone, and age-appropriate range. Breath and vocal coordination are becoming more consistent.	The singer performs with natural vocal ease, consistent healthy production, and confident use of an age-appropriate range without unnecessary tension.
PITCH & RHYTHM - General pitch matching - Tempo awareness - Rhythmic consistency - Timing vocal entrances - Ability to continue with recovery skills - Musicianship skills are developing	The singer demonstrates basic pitch and rhythmic accuracy with occasional errors but is able to recover and continue.	The singer performs with generally accurate pitch, steady rhythm, and growing musical independence.	The singer performs with consistently accurate pitch, rhythmic security, musical confidence, and stylistic awareness appropriate to the repertoire.
TEXT COMMUNICATION Clarity and understanding of lyrics is present at a level appropriate to the student's age NOTE: Missing teeth, retainers, teeth-straightening trays, braces, etc.—will all alter some pronunciations/articulations.	The singer communicates the text with emerging clarity and understanding appropriate for their age. Diction supports basic communication.	The singer clearly communicates the text with growing expressive intent and understandable diction.	The singer communicates the text with confidence, clarity, and genuine connection while remaining age appropriate.
EXPRESSIVE ENGAGEMENT Willingness to communicate and connect to the song's music and lyrics/text in age-appropriate expression.	The singer shows a willingness to communicate the character or mood of the song with emerging expressive choices.	The singer makes thoughtful expressive choices that support the text and demonstrates increasing confidence in performance.	The singer presents an engaging, sincere performance that communicates the story naturally and authentically for their age.

NSA Children & Youth Rubric, cont

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

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
PERFORMANCE READINESS - Secure memorization - Independence in performance - Ability to complete selections with continuity - Foundational performance skills	The singer is generally prepared, demonstrates memorization, and completes the performance with occasional lapses in confidence or independence.	The singer performs from memory with growing confidence, independence, and stage awareness.	The singer performs with confidence, secure memorization, poise, and independence throughout the performance.
STYLE OF MUSIC Age-appropriate levels of differences in the audition's performance as appropriate to the category— whether CL, MT, or CM music. NOTE: See genre-specific rubric as needed for further details	The singer demonstrates emerging awareness of the stylistic expectations of the selected genre.	The singer performs with increasing understanding of the style, character, and performance practices appropriate to the genre.	The singer demonstrates a confident, age-appropriate understanding of the musical style and performs with stylistic consistency.

Musical Theatre Sample Comments

Adjudicators can utilize these suggestions to guide them in making useful comments for each singer during their session.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
TONE - 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.	- Pretty voice. - Chest voice is a bit of a struggle-hard to hear. - Continue to strive for a brighter balance in your overall vocal production. - Continue developing vocal colors that serve character and story. - Registration shifts need greater consistency. - Prioritize speech-like resonance throughout the performance.	- You have a rich, full head voice. - Work for more balance in your belt, as it gets a little heavy and pressed at times. - Excellent legit singing. - The belt has too much chest in the mix, which is flattening the pitch. - You are negotiating the demands of this contemporary rep. really well for the most part.	- In the opening section, you do an excellent job of balancing the registration for a really natural speech mix. - In the climax of the belt section, strive for more vibrancy within your registration in order to balance the increasing amount of chest in the tone. - I love the clarity and honesty of your sound.
BREATH & ALIGNMENT - 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.	- Greater breath efficiency would support phrasing and vocal stability. - Some phrases lose energy before completion. - Continue developing breath management that serves the style of the song.	- Breath management supports most musical and stylistic demands. - Increased consistency will further enhance vocal freedom and expression. - Your breathing is sometimes too high in the torso/chest. Work to bring it in lower and stay connected through the end of each phrase.	- Continue to strive for breaths that are inspired by your emotional intent. - Consider maintaining the low inner core connection for most of your inhalation/exhalation cycles... - The buoyant alignment/stance you do so well should help you keep that stability in your core follow-through.
LANGUAGE & DICTION - The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. - The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.	- I am struggling a bit to understand the first sentence. - Some syllables are indistinct. - Don't over modify your vowels. The tone isn't carrying the thought and we no longer understand the word.	- I can understand most of your words, but sometimes lose the clarity in the low sections. - Syllables are too evenly weighted, which can detract from the meaning of your line.	- In the lower range, strive for more brilliance by keeping more open to the mask as you descend to balance the intelligibility of your words in the low sections. - Consider speaking the line like a monologue and note where you naturally stress and release syllables, then incorporate that into the way you sing it.

Musical Theatre Sample Comments, cont

Adjudicators can utilize these suggestions to guide them in making useful comments for each singer during their session.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
MUSICIANSHIP - Pitches and rhythms are accurate. - The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. - Memorization is organic and accurate	- Fine legato singing and expressive phrasing. - Your mix is great. - Be careful not to over sing. - Aim for even more precision with each note and rhythm.	- In the Golden Age selection, you sing with beautiful line and lyricism. - Your contemporary mix could use more chest balanced in the sound in order to increase audience understanding.	- Thank you for selecting pieces that showcase your different styles and abilities. - As you explore the more contemporary mix, consider speaking through the text in your own vernacular.
ARTISTRY - The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. - The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance.	- Gestures are often too predictable. - Good expressive energy here. - Character development needs greater specificity. - Increase commitment to the emotional journey.	- This piece needs something more tender and intimate in its approach to show the difference in the character from the first selection. - Character remained engaging throughout most of the performance. - Continue deepening emotional specificity.	- Consider going back and working through the lyrics of this piece like a monologue, and see if you can find not just the truth of the words, but unearth the backstory of this character. - I want to understand who Lawrence is and what is being revealed about him in the meaning behind these words.
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	- Greater coordination with the pianist will strengthen the performance. - More attention to ensemble details will support your artistic goals.	- Consider responding more actively to musical details from the accompaniment. - The collaboration supports the performance effectively.	- Excellent collaboration with the accompaniment. - You demonstrate strong awareness of ensemble, timing, and communication to bring this tale to life.

NSA VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES



NATS VIDEO AUDITION CHECKLIST



National Association
of Teachers of Singing

RECORD IT. SHARE IT. OWN THE STAGE.



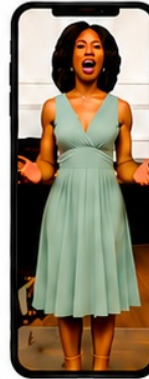
DO THIS
RECORD HORIZONTALLY
(*Landscape*)



GIVES JUDGES THE BEST VIEW!



NOT THIS
RECORD VERTICALLY
(*Portrait*)



VS.

Uses less
screen space
& doesn't show
your best.



Questions?
Check the official
NSA Video
Submission Guidelines
at nats.org
or ask your teacher.



CAN THE JUDGES SEE YOU?

YES!

- ✓ Face is visible
- ✓ Full or upper body in the frame
- ✓ Good lighting
- ✓ Expression & storytelling are easy to see

NOPE!

- ✗ Dark or backlit
- ✗ Half your body off screen
- ✗ Camera pointed too high or low
- ✗ Face hidden behind music stand



SOUND CHECK

DO

- ✓ Make sure judges can hear YOU
- ✓ Balance singer & track
- ✓ Watch your video before uploading
- ✓ Are you using an amplified mic in CM?

DON'T

- ✗ AutoTune
- ✗ Audio filters
- ✗ AI voice enhancement
- ✗ Audio editing



ONE TAKE ONLY

DO



Record each song
in ONE continuous take.
Start. Perform. Stop.

DON'T



No splicing.
No editing mistakes out.
No combining takes.



ACCOMPANIMENT

BEST CHOICE

Live collaborative pianist



REMEMBER

- ✓ Instrumental tracks are allowed for CM only.
- ✓ Use legal music.
- ✓ Follow copyright rules



LOOK PROFESSIONAL

THINK:

- 🎵 Recital
- ★ Audition
- 🎓 Masterclass

DON'T WEAR:

- zzz Pajamas
- 👔 Costumes

FINAL UPLOAD CHECKLIST



Slate on each video



Sound checked



Video watched completely



Landscape video



Correct repertoire



Uploaded before deadline



Good lighting



Singer visible



Single-take recording



Questions?
Check the official NSA
Video Submission Guidelines
at nats.org or ask your teacher.

YOUR GOAL:

MAKE IT EASY FOR ADJUDICATORS TO FOCUS ON

- 🎵 YOUR SINGING
- 🎭 YOUR STORYTELLING
- ★ YOUR ARTISTRY
- NOT ON TECHNICAL PROBLEMS.



TOP 5 MISTAKES



Recording vertically



Performer too close



Missing deadlines



Poor lighting



Uploading the wrong song

Full NSA Video Recording Guidelines

Recording Location

Record your submission as you would a live audition or recital. Videos may be recorded in a home, school, church, synagogue, recital hall, rehearsal room, or voice studio with suitable acoustics, with or without an audience. Dress professionally as you would for an audition or recital; costumes and inappropriate attire are not permitted.

You may submit an unedited video of a performance before a live audience, provided you can be clearly seen and heard in the video, the video was recorded after September 1st of the current NSA audition season, and the accompaniment and microphone requirements for the category are met. Remember to record and attach your verbal slate.

Recording

- Record in LANDSCAPE (horizontal) orientation from a fixed, audience-centered position.
- Face the camera as you would face adjudicators in a live audition.
- Keep your face and at least your upper body visible in the frame; adjust as needed to capture your performance and avoid excessive headroom.
- Include the required slate either as part of the recording or edited onto the beginning of the otherwise unedited performance video.
 - I am (Your Name)
 - I will perform (Title of Selection)
 - from (Title of Larger Work when applicable)
 - by (Composer's Name and Lyricist's Name)
- All video auditions must be recorded on or after September 1 of the current NSA audition season.
- Submit a separate, unedited video for each song or aria
- Videos cannot:
 - pan or zoom during a performance
 - use recording equipment that alters the acoustics of the venue or the sound quality of the singer by adding distractingly unrealistic reverb, altering the pitches sung, digitally altering or filtering the vocals either during or after the video is filmed

Full NSA Video Recording Guidelines

IMPORTANT: Teachers will register qualifiers for NSA

- Moving forward, the student's primary teacher will be responsible for entering qualifying singers into the National Student Auditions Qualifying Preliminary Round and completing all required post-qualification materials, with the exception of the NATS Minor Chaperone Form, which will continue to be completed separately.

Video Audition - Performance

- Each video requires that the singer complete their slate as outlined above.
- Perform each of your selections from memory in your video.
- Participants in ALL NSA Categories must perform full songs. Performing from 16-bar, 32-bar, student versions, audition cuts, etc., are not accepted and will result in ITA.
- The identity, logo, or image of your teacher, school, location, or NATS chapter/region must not be spoken or revealed in your video in any way or the audition will be moved to ITA. This includes posters, photographs, reflections in mirrors/glass/shiny surfaces, diplomas, flags, banners, video's titling and description, etc.

NSA Collaborative Pianists in CL and AS Categories

- Perform with a live pianist whenever possible. If one is unavailable, a piano-only accompaniment track may be used.
- If your voice teacher serves as the pianist, their face and identity must not be visible in the video.
- Pianists must perform on piano or keyboard using memory or a copyright-compliant score.
- A page-turner (other than your voice teacher) may appear on camera if needed.

Full NSA YouTube Setting Guidelines

YouTube Video Settings

YouTube is the only video platform accepted. No video auditions uploaded to Vimeo, Flickr, Vevo, or personal websites, etc. will be accepted.

- You MUST upload your video in LANDSCAPE/HORIZONTAL ORIENTATION or the platform will automatically qualify the video as a SHORT and the recording will not be eligible for adjudication.
- Select “Unlisted” in the privacy settings found under the Broadcasting and Sharing Options, when uploading your video files to YouTube. No other settings are accepted in NSA.
- Each video’s title should be in the following format: NATS NSA – Singer’s Full Name
- All video titles must be the same at all levels of NSA. Video titles must not contain any reference to chapter, , or region, school, teacher, etc.
- Type in the YouTube “Description” for each video:
 - I DO NOT OWN THE COPYRIGHT TO THE MUSIC PERFORMED IN THIS VIDEO. THIS IS A STUDENT AUDITION NOT FOR PROFIT OR MONETIZATION.
 - Title of Selection”
 - Title of LARGER WORK whenever applicable
 - Composer’s Name
 - if a Musical Theatre selection, ADD: & Lyricist’s Name
- Turn OFF the video comments option on each video uploaded to YouTube.
- YouTube channel background, banner, titles, logos, and Images must NOT reveal teacher, school, location, NATS chapter, region, studio names, or affiliations of the teacher or the student auditioning.

Please follow these guidelines

- Corrections to invalid videos, broken video links, and incorrect video links will not be accepted after the submission deadline.
- Whenever possible, invalid video submissions will be adjudicated for comments only.
- Invalid video submissions are Ineligible To Advance to the next level of auditions.

Full NSA Video Submission Guidelines

Before Adding Video Links

Prior to pasting video links into AuditionNow, it is the responsibility of the NATS member entering the singer to:

- confirm that you have the required slate for each video
- confirm that the video was uploaded and plays in landscape orientation
- confirm that the video and music are in sync;
- confirm that the volume of the singing is adequate to be adjudicated;
- confirm that the performance is of a complete selection.
 - Extended silences before and after your performance may be trimmed.

It is essential to confirm that the video performance matches the selection's title on YouTube and on your entry's registration. Copy and paste errors duplicating links make an audition Ineligible To Advance.

Confirming Video Links

- NSA National Qualifying Round video submissions are always due on the 2nd Friday of April.
- Whether using AuditionNow or AuditionWare, the teacher will need to paste the individual web link/URL for each YouTube video to upload under the correct repertoire item on the platform
- Do not paste video links with a space before or after the link
- Upload 2, 3, 4, or 5 separate videos matching the number of selections required in your NSA Category of Entry.
- Confirm that there are not any copy and paste errors nor duplicate links well in advance of the deadline.

Full NSA Video ITA Considerations

Invalid Video Considerations

Teachers and singers are responsible for ensuring that all repertoire, video recordings, submissions, and registration materials comply with NSA requirements. Failure to meet these requirements will result in a singer being designated Ineligible to Advance (ITA). Careful review before submission allows adjudicators to focus on the singer's artistry and performance rather than avoidable procedural or technical issues.

The following issues make a video submission and singer's entry Ineligible to Advance to subsequent rounds:

- YouTube & Access Issues
 - Videos uploaded as private or public
 - Videos removed by the user or by YouTube for copyright infringement
 - YouTube submissions that are monetized
 - Copy and Paste issues, duplicate video links, and failure to override a link from a previous audition
- Repertoire & Eligibility Issues
 - Repertoire that violates the NSA Guidelines for the category
 - Video submissions of repertoire not vetted, approved and performed in the region category that qualified the singer for National Preliminaries
 - Videos recorded before September 1 of the 2026/2027 NSA audition cycle
 - Videos that are incomplete; full songs are required
- Identity & Confidentiality Violations
 - Videos revealing the identity, image, school, location, studio, or affiliation of the teacher, singer, NATS chapter or region that might be included in the YouTube channel, title, description, reflections, posters, diplomas, banners, flags, etc.
- Recording & Technical Violations
 - Videos without the required spoken slate
 - Videos recorded in portrait orientation
 - CM Videos that did not utilize an external speaker for amplification of the solo vocals - no direct mic to video is acceptable
 - CM videos that recorded with multiple microphones or headset/diva mics
 - AS, CL, MT videos that use an amplified microphone in the recording
 - Videos that pan or zoom during the performance or that use multiple cameras
 - Videos using audio or video processing that alters the singer's sound, pitch, or acoustics through filters, effects, excessive reverb, or digital manipulation
- Performance Rule Violations
 - Videos in which the singer appears to be reading or using written aids
 - Videos conducted or side-coached by another person during the recording
- Accompaniment Violations
- Other violations listed in the division category guide

A History of NATS Auditions

National guidelines for Student Auditions (SA) were first conceived in 1977. Following a national survey of chapters and regions, a committee chaired by Judith Nicosia Civitano developed the 1993 Guidelines for Student Auditions, which served NATS for the next sixteen years.

A 2007 survey of chapter and regional policies led to further revisions by a committee including Kathleen Arecchi, Elaine Case, Roma Prindle, Connie Roberts, and Anne Christopherson. Their work established a mission statement for Student Auditions, clarified responsibilities for organizers, and identified best practices.

In 2010–2011, a committee chaired by Norman Spivey explored creating a national audition system that would allow singers to advance from a region to the national student auditions. Building on this work, a committee chaired by Deborah Williamson developed the National Student Auditions (NSA) Guidelines, which were approved by the NATS Board of Directors in 2012.

From 2012–2014, the NSA structure, categories, repertoire requirements, and fees were finalized and published online. The NATS Board approved the launch of National Student Auditions in 2013, and the inaugural national semifinals and finals were held in Boston during the 2014 NATS National Conference. More than 150 singers participated, 37 advanced to the finals, and 24 singers shared \$30,000 in awards.

In 2014, Dan Johnson-Wilmot and committee members Karen Brunssen, Mark McQuade, Robert Wells, and Melanie Williams developed a national model for Student Auditions based on NSA Guidelines. The model established greater consistency across chapters and regions while creating a pathway for singers to progress from local auditions to national audition. Today, more than 10,000 NSA auditions are heard annually.

In 2022, the NATS Executive Board expanded NSA opportunities by adding 16 new categories, including Commercial Music divisions and additional Classical, Musical Theatre, and Commercial Music categories for children and youth. Introduced during the 2023–2024 audition cycle, these additions increased the annual NSA offerings to 34 categories, in addition to the biennial American Negro Spiritual categories and the alternating Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition.

National Student Audition Regulations continue to be reviewed and revised regularly by the NSA Regulations Committee with input from NSA Auditions Chairs and NATS members.

Have Questions?

Need help?

If you have questions about the NATS Student Auditions process, your first point of contact should always be the Auditions Team for the event in which you are entering students—your chapter, region, and finally the NSA team. As always, thank you in advance for extending grace to the volunteers that are organizing, preparing, and running your auditions.

These teams are trained to support participants with registration, repertoire requirements, scheduling, and event-specific procedures. Beginning with your local auditions team ensures that questions are answered quickly and consistently, using the policies and procedures that apply to your event.

If additional guidance is needed, the Auditions Team will consult with the National Student Auditions (NSA) Team on your behalf to obtain clarification or resolve complex questions. This process promotes consistent interpretation of the regulations while allowing the NSA Team to focus on policy matters that require national review.

Please begin all audition-related questions with your event's Auditions Team. They are your primary resource and will coordinate with the NSA Team whenever additional assistance is required.

NSA Team Emails for Chapter and Region Leadership Questions

NSA Emails for Chapter and Region Leadership Questions

NSA Classical Music - nsaCL@nats.org

NSA Commercial Music - nsaCM@nats.org

NSA Musical Theatre - nsaMT@nats.org

NSA Spirituals (American Negro Spirituals and Hall Johnson) - nsaCL@nats.org

NATS Competitions & NSA Leadership

Emily Sinclair - NSA American Negro Spirituals, Classical, and Hall Johnson Coordinator

Ellie Seligmann - NSA Commercial Music Coordinator, CM Advisory Panel Chair

Autumn West - NSA Musical Theatre Coordinator, MT Advisory Panel Chair

Marcía Porter - American Negro Spirituals Advisory Chair

Lori Laitman - Art Song Composition Award Coordinator

Barbara Hill Moore - Barbara Hill Moore Emerging Teaching Artist Award Chair

Dana Lentini - Children & Youth Advisory Panel Chair

Danielle Talamantes - NATS Artist Award Chair

Frank Ragsdale - NATS National Musical Theatre Committee Coordinator

Diana Allan - Past Vice President of Auditions

Alexis Davis-Hazell - NATS Past-President

Randall Umstead - NATS President

Melissa Greenblatt - NATS Executive Director

Casey L. Carter - NATS Vice President of Auditions

NSA Regulations Committee

Diana Allan, Casey L. Carter (chair), Melissa Foster, Alexis Davis-Hazell, Allison Houston, Dan Johnson-Wilmot, Katherine Jolly, Dana Lentini, Sandra Oberoi, Holly Palmer, Marcía Porter, Ellie Seligmann, Emily Sinclair, Autumn West, Randall Umstead

ANS Advisory Panel

Casey L. Carter, Alexis Davis-Hazell, Everett McCorvey, Barbara Hill Moore, Marcía Porter (chair), Michael Preacely, Randall Umstead, Rosalyn Wright Floyd

Art Song Competition Award

Casey L. Carter (chair), Lori Laitman (coordinator), Randall Umstead

CM Advisory Panel

Casey L. Carter, Alexis Davis-Hazell, Melissa Foster, Susan Hanlon-Ferrer, Lyndia Johnson, Holly Palmer, Zipporah Peddle, Ellie Seligmann (chair), Noel Smith, Justin T. Swain, Randall Umstead

C&Y Advisory Panel

Beverly Blouin, Karen Brunssen, Casey L. Carter, Eva Kendrick, Dana Lentini (chair), Nikki Loney, Randall Umstead

METAA Advisory Panel

Casey L. Carter, Bronwen Forbay, Melissa Greenblatt, Jen Jimenez, Barbara Hill Moore, Jeanai LeVita, Randall Umstead

MT Advisory Panel

Susan Boddie, Casey L. Carter, Ronald Land, Joshua May, Paul Patinka, Caroline Schiller, Randall Umstead, Autumn West (chair), Deirdre Welborn

NATSAA Advisory Panel

Casey L. Carter, Andrew Garland, Melissa Greenblatt, Jen Jimenez, Emily Siar, Danielle Talamantes (chair), Randall Umstead

NMTC Advisory Panel

Tiffani Borelli, Casey L. Carter, Kelly Gabrielle Murphy, Jen Jimenez, Sue Matsuki (chair), Catherine McDaniel, Cassie Okenka, Frank Ragsdale (coordinator), Matt Redmond, Katie Travis, Randall Umstead