THE NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF TEACHERS OF SINGING

2026-2027
NATIONAL STUDENT AUDITIONS
CLASSICAL CATEGORY GUIDE

AMERICAN NEGRO SPIRITUALS CATEGORIES | CLASSICAL CATEGORIES

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 NATS 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?

sing 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 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

National Student Auditions
National Association of Teachers of Singing

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 Student Auditions Qualifying 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 Qualifying 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

Rule of 90 to Advance | One Region Per Student Entry | Deadlines Are Final

What's New in CL 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)

The Art Song in English

For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country. (page 14)

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 15)

When does my time begin?

The time for ALL NSA auditions begins when the singer begins their slate. (page 33)

Teachers enter singers in the NSA Qualifying Round

Teachers will now be responsible for entering their singers in the NSA Rounds using AuditionNow. (page 46)

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 or composition. It may include a new accompaniment, changes to melody, rhythm, harmony, or form, or even a different musical style. Arrangements that omit verses of repertoire regardless of publication are not permitted. In the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition and American Spirituals categories, settings of anonymous spirituals must credit the arranger. Arrangements obtained from 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. Any reasonable portion of a year will count as a year of study. • 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.
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 Qualifying 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.
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.

NSA Classical (CL) Regulations

24/26/28 ITALIAN ART SONGS AND ARIAS	The repertoire found in the 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias collections may be counted as an aria or an art song in the high school (CL 3, CL 4) and lower classical categories (CL 5, CL 6). For the singers in the upper and advanced categories, these pieces may ONLY count as an art song, regardless of origin. Any repertoire found outside of these collections will be considered only as the composer intended as an art song OR aria.
ACCOMPANIMENT	A live collaborative pianist is required for in person CL auditions. A piano-only accompaniment track is allowed only for video auditions in CL.
ADDITIONAL AWARDS	Named and Sponsored NSA Awards are available to NSA's National Semifinalists and Finalists, who in their region's NSA event, enter the prescribed repertoire to be eligible for the significant sponsored award, prize, or scholarship.
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.
ARIA	An aria is a solo from an opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, zarzuela, operetta, or works titled "concert aria." Oxford Online definitions will be used for the purposes of NATS singer auditions. For example, Purcell's selections from the semi-operas and masques are considered songs.
ART SONG IN ENGLISH REQUIREMENT	English must be the original language set by the composer to meet the Art Song in English requirement. For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA Classical (CL) Regulations

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 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 or Hall Johnson Category.
JUDICIOUS CUTS	Full, complete selections are required; however, judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano postludes as well as internal cuts within arias are allowed as is common professional performance practice. Cuts of verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.
MEMORIZATION	All repertoire must be performed from memory with the exception of Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, and Cantata Arias. Singers may hold legal copies of music scores for these types of arias as is traditional performance practice.
ORIGINAL LANGUAGE	All selections should be sung in original language or in a published translation that is recognized as an accepted standard in professional performance practice.
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.

NSA Classical 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: CL 1, CL 2, CL 3, CL 4, CL 5, CL 6, CL 7, CL 8, CL 9, CL 10 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–Augs), 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 18-28 in the Classical Music Category Guide.

NSA Classical Repertoire Prizes

Special Awards

Students advancing to the National Student Auditions are eligible to compete for additional repertoire prizes when choosing programming for Named and Sponsored NSA Awards.

The Roberta Stephen Memorial Scholarship

The Roberta M. Stephen Memorial Scholarship* is awarded at the National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) National Student Auditions (NSAs) for an outstanding performance of a Canadian art song in the post-high school classical categories CL 5 - CL10. (*This scholarship prize will be awarded to one individual who is chosen from across the six post-high school classical categories.)

The Gerald Ginsburg Repertoire Prize

The Gerald Ginsburg Repertoire Prize, in honor of composer Gerald Ginsburg, will award $1,000 to a singer in the Post High School Classical categories who performs at least one of Ginsburg's compositions in the YouTube preliminary, semifinal, or final rounds in the NATS National Student Auditions. The award is made possible through a $25,000 contribution from the Ginsburg Foundation to endow the prize, ensuring its continuation for years to come.

An art song composed by Ginsburg may fulfill the English Language Art Song requirement and/or may fulfill the fourth additional selection requirement in the CL 7-8, and the fifth additional selections in the CL 9-10 categories.

NSA CL Children & Youth Requirements

Category CL 1 - Children Classical - 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 classical repertoire
    - Repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
  - CL 1A - Age Limit: 9 years. Grades: PK - 3rd Grade
  - CL 1B - Age Limit: 11 years. Grades: 4th - 5th Grades

Category CL 2 - Youth Classical - 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 classical repertoire
    - Repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
  - CL 2A - Age Limit: 12 years. Grades: 6th and 7th Grades
  - CL 2B - Age Limit: 14 years. Grade: 8th Grade

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL High School Requirements

Category CL 3 - High School Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
  - CL 3A - Age Limit: 16 years. Grades: 9th - 10th Grades
  - CL 3B - Age Limit: 19 years. Grades: 11th - 12th Grades

Category CL 4 - High School Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
  - CL 4A - Age Limit: 16 years. Grades: 9th - 10th Grades
  - CL 4B - Age Limit: 19 years. Grades: 11th - 12th Grades

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL Lower Post-High School Requirements

Category CL 5 - Lower Post-HS Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 5A - Age Limit: 20 years. Length of Study: 1 year Post-HS
  - CL 5B - Age Limit: 22 years. Length of Study: 2 years Post-HS

Category CL 6 - Lower Post-HS Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 6A - Age Limit: 20 years. Length of Study: 1 year Post-HS
  - CL 6B - Age Limit: 22 years. Length of Study: 2 years Post-HS

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL Upper Post-High School Requirements

Category CL 7 - Upper Post-HS Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One aria.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
  - Three languages required.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 7A - Age Limit: 23 years. Length of Study: 3 years Post-HS
  - CL 7B - Age Limit: 25 years. Length of Study: 4-5 years Post-HS not in grad program

Category CL 8 - Upper Post-HS Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One aria
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
  - Three languages required.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 8A - Age Limit: 23 years. Length of Study: 3 years Post-HS
  - CL 8B - Age Limit: 25 years. Length of Study: 4-5 years Post-HS not in a grad program

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL Advanced Requirements

Category CL 9 - Advanced Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One opera aria.
  - One aria from an oratorio or cantata - selection does not need to be memorized
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
  - Three languages required.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 9A - Age Limit: 26 years. Length of Study: 4-7 years Post-HS
  - CL 9B - Age Limit: 30 years. Length of Study: 7+ years Post-HS

Category CL 10 - Advanced Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One opera aria.
  - One aria from an oratorio or cantata - selection does not need to be memorized
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
  - Three languages required.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Length of Study limits apply:
  - CL 10A - Age Limit: 26 years. Length of Study: 4-7 years Post-HS
  - CL 10B - Age Limit: 30 years. Length of Study: 7+ years Post-HS

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL Adult Avocational Requirements

Category CL 11 - Adult Avocational Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition Qualifying, Semifinal and Final rounds.

Category CL 12 - Adult Avocational Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

NSA CL Adult Non-Traditional Requirements

Category CL 13 - Adult Non-Traditional Classical - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition Qualifying, Semifinal and Final rounds.

Category CL 14 - Adult Non-Traditional - 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)
  - One art song in English (original language must be English)*
  - One art song in a language other than English.
  - One additional art song or aria.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- This category does not currently advance to the National Student Audition YouTube, Semifinal and Final rounds.

*For singers in the International Region from countries where English is NOT the primary language, any requirement for an English-language art song may be fulfilled by an art song in any official language of their country.

BIENNIAL NSA CATEGORIES

American Negro Spirituals Categories

National levels of the American Negro Spirituals Category are held in seasons that conclude in July of an odd-numbered year. The three American Negro Spirituals Categories are offered in each region's NSA event with singers who place 1st – 5th with an eligible score then advancing to the national preliminaries. Chapters are encouraged to add these categories to their auditions. Where applicable, chapter auditions may serve as qualifying singers to advance to their region's auditions. These spirituals may appropriately be performed by all races of singers sincerely performing in a classical style.

American Negro Spirituals (AS) Regulations

CLASSICAL STYLE	The word "classical" in this context refers to singing spirituals in the classical style with only mild deviations and interpolation to what is written in the music and without musical theatre, pop, gospel, contemporary Christian, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues expressions or vocal technique. See the NSA Spiritual Adjudicator Training Video for the differences between Spirituals and Gospel Songs and more details on performing Spirituals in NSA.
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.
DICTION	Because of the idiomatic nature of the spiritual, diction restrictions will be relaxed. Standard English pronunciations may be observed, e.g., "de" or "duh" may be replaced with "the." For more advanced singers, the scholarly study of diction in spirituals is equivalent to studying the lyric diction of other languages.
JUDICIOUS CUTS	Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of spiritual selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of a verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.
MEMORIZATION	All audition selections must be performed from memory.
SPIRITUALS	Arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by composers similar in style to the spirituals of Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, Moses Hogan, Edward Boatner, Undine Smith Moore, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, Margaret Bonds and others listed on the AS Authorized Reperoire page of the documents.The classical style excludes Gospel, Blues and Jazz music. See below for a link to more information available online.
SPRITUALS IN ENGLISH	English must be the original language of the selection.
TRANSPOSITION	Copyright-compliant, purchased transpositions are allowed.

NSA American Negro Spirituals Categories

Category AS 3 - High School American Negro Spirituals - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 19 years
- Length of Study: No limit
- Grades: 9th Grade, 10th Grade, 11th Grade, 12th Grade
- Audition Length: 8 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
  - Three contrasting American Negro Spirituals from the approved repertoire options list on pp. 27-28.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.
- Categories may be subdivided in chapter and region auditions. When subdivided, the following Age and Grade limits apply:
  - AS 3A - Age Limit: 16 years. Grades: 9th - 10th Grades
  - AS 3B - Age Limit: 19 years. Grades: 11th - 12th Grades

Category AS 7 - 1st - 3rd years Post HS American Negro Spirituals - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 23 years
- Length of Study: 1-3 years post-high school
- Audition Length: 12 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
  - Three contrasting American Negro Spirituals from the approved repertoire options list on pp. 27-28.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.

Category AS 9 - 4th and 5th years Post HS American Negro Spirituals - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 30 years
- Length of Study: 4+ years post-high school
- Audition Length: 15 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (FOUR Songs)
  - Four contrasting American Negro Spirituals from the approved repertoire options list on pp. 27-28.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by composer, tempo, and text.

NSA AS Authorized Repertoire

Singers must perform arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by these composers for AS Categories

- Edward Hammond Boatner
- Margaret Bonds
- Uzee Brown Jr.
- Lawrence Brown, arr
- Harry T. Burleigh
- John (Daniels) Carter
- Roland M. Carter
- R. Nathaniel Dett
- Adolphus Hailstork
- Jacqueline B. Hairston
- Robert A. Harris
- Roland Hays
- Lori C. Hicks
- Moses Hogan
- Hall Johnson
- John Rosamond Johnson
- James Weldon Johnson
- Betty Jackson King
- James C. Lee III
- Lena McLin
- Robert Owens
- Florence Price
- Evelyn Simpson-Curenton
- Undine Smith Moore
- William Grant Still
- Howard Swanson
- Clarence White
- John W. Work, III

Approved Repertoire Collections for Purchase

Alfred Music
- Album of Negro Spirituals (Low Voice) — Burleigh, Harry T., arr.
- The Spirituals of Harry T. Burleigh — Burleigh, Harry T., arr.

Amazon
- The Books of the American Negro Spirituals — Johnson, J. Rosamond and Brown, Lawrence, arrangers

Carl Fischer
- The Green Pastures Spirituals — Johnson, Hall, arr.
- The Hall Johnson Collection: Over 50 Classic Favorites for Voice and Piano — Johnson, Hall, arr.

ClarNan Editions
- 44 Art Songs and Spirituals — Price, Florence B., arr.; Heard, Richard, ed.

Classical Vocal Reprints
- 40 Negro Spirituals — White, Clarence, arr.
- Cantata — Carter, John (Daniels)
- Mary and Her Baby Chile — Hairston, Jacqueline B., arr.
- My Favorite Spirituals — Hayes, Roland, arr.
- Six Negro Spirituals for Bass — Owens, Robert, arr.

Classical Vocal Reprints, continued
- Songs and Spirituals by Jacqueline Hairston — Hairston, Jacqueline B., arr.
- Spirituals: Five Negro Songs — Brown, Lawrence, arr.
- Sweetest Sound I Ever Heard: Spiritual Art Songs for High Voice and Piano — Carter, Roland Marvin, composer/arr.

Edward B. Marks Music Company
- Album of Negro Spirituals — Johnson, John Rosamond, arr.

Hal Leonard
- 25 Spirituals Arranged by Harry T. Burleigh — Burleigh, Harry T., arr.
- 30 Spirituals (for High Voice and Piano) — Johnson, Hall, arr.
- The Deep River Collection — Hogan, Moses, arr.

Handy Bros. Music Company
- Twelve Negro Spirituals — Still, William Grant, arr.

Hildegard Publishing Company
- Art Songs and Spirituals by African-American Women Composers — Taylor, Vivian, ed.

J.W. Pepper
- Redeemed!: A Set of African American Spirituals for Medium-High Voice and Piano — Brown, Jr., Uzee, arr.
- Tryin' To Make Heaven My Home — Brown, Jr., Uzee, arr.

Kjos Publisher/Presto Music
- Songs for Voice & Piano: Medium High Voice — McLin, Lena, arr.

Mar-Vel Music
- God Is God!: Six Negro Spirituals for Voice and Piano — Carter, Roland M.; Betty Jackson King; Wendell Whalum, arrs.

Sheet Music Plus
- Album of Negro Spirituals (Low Voice) — Burleigh, Harry T., arr.
- In His Hand: Seven Spirituals for Voice and Piano — Bonds, Margaret, arr.
- Redeemed!: A Set of African American Spirituals for Medium-High Voice and Piano — Brown, Jr., Uzee, arr.

Videmus
- The New Negro Spirituals Collection — Patterson, Willis C., ed.

Spirituals not found in the Approved Spirituals Repertoire online may be vetted and approved by contacting one of the following NATS members:

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

NSA AS Authorized Repertoire

Approved Solo Repertoire

“Is There Anybody Who Loves My Jesus.” Roland Carter, arr. Mar-Vel Music.	“Oh, What a Beautiful City.” (high voice solo). Edward Boatner, arr. G. Schirmer. Available in Joan Boytim’s First Book of Soprano Solos	“On Ma Journey.” Edward Boatner, arr. Ricordi. Library copy at Angelo State University/Eldon Black Sheet Music Collection

Out of Print Collections

Boatner, Edward Hammond • A Heritage of Spirituals. Galaxy Music Corporation. Boatner, Edward Hammond • The Story of the Spirituals: 30 Spirituals and Their Origins: Voice and Piano/Guitar. McAfee Music, 1973. Assigned to Alfred 1985. • Only Library copies available	Brown, Lawrence • Six Negro Folk Songs. Associated Music Publishers, Inc. • Negro Folk Songs. London: Schott, 1930. 5 songs as sung by Paul Robeson. Fisher, William Arms • Seventy Negro Spirituals; For Low Voice or High Voice. Oliver Ditson Company, Boston, 1926.	Hayes, Roland • Songs. McClelland and Stewart Limited. Jessye, Eva. • My Spirituals. New York: Robbins-Engel, 1927.

History of the American Negro Spiritual

The American Negro Spirituals are folk songs created by enslaved Africans in North America between 1619 and 1860. Although slavery officially ended with the Emancipation Proclamation on January 1, 1863, many enslaved people in Texas did not learn of their freedom until June 19, 1865, now celebrated as Juneteenth.

Created and sung by enslaved women, men, and children, these songs tell stories of faith, hope, suffering, freedom, and survival. Passed down orally through generations in fields, churches, and camp meetings, they are now performed on concert and recital stages worldwide.

NATS uses the term American Negro Spirituals to acknowledge the history, suffering, hope, and resilience embodied in these songs. As Dr. Everett McCorvey explains, the term connects the music to the people who created it and preserves an important chapter of American history. While some language may be updated in performance, the melodies, stories, and cultural significance of these spirituals remain unchanged. Whether called American Negro Spirituals, Negro Spirituals, or simply Spirituals, these songs continue to be celebrated and shared by singers around the world.

~ Dr. Everett McCorvey

BIENNIAL NSA CATEGORIES

Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

Due to the generosity of the Hall Johnson Estate, a $2000 award will be given in each NATS National Conference year in seasons that conclude in July of an even-numbered year to the best performance of a Hall Johnson Spiritual at NATS biennial conferences from 2016–2036. Additional national 2nd and 3rd places prizes are awarded by NATS in this competition. All interested students will apply for this category as part of their region's NSA. Singers placing 1st–5th with an eligible score in the region's NSA event will advance to national preliminaries, as with all other NSA categories. NATS Chapters are encouraged to add this competition to their auditions. Whenever applicable, Chapter Auditions may serve to qualify student-singers to advance to their region's NSA.

Hall Johnson Spirituals (HJ) Regulations

Classical Style	The word "classical" in this context refers to singing spirituals in the classical style with only mild deviations and interpolation to what is written in the music and without musical theatre, pop, gospel, contemporary Christian, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues expressions or vocal technique. See the NSA Spiritual Adjudicator Training Video for the differences between Spirituals and Gospel Songs and more details on performing Spirituals in NSA.
Diction	Because of the idiomatic nature of the spiritual, diction restrictions will be relaxed. Standard English pronunciations may be observed, e.g., "de" or "duh" may be replaced with "the." For more advanced singers, the scholarly study of diction in spirituals is equivalent to studying the lyric diction of other languages.
Judicious Cuts	Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of spiritual selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of a verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.
Memorization	All audition selections must be performed from memory.
Spirituals	Arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by composers similar in style to the spirituals of Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, Moses Hogan, Edward Boatner, Undine Smith Moore, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, MargaretBonds and others.The classical style excludes Gospel, Blues and Jazz music. See below for a link to more information available online.
Spirituals in English	English must be the original language of the selection.
Transposition	Copyright-compliant, purchased transpositions are allowed.

NSA Hall Johnson Spirituals Category

Category HJ 7 - Post-High School Undergraduate Students - All Voices

- Voice Type: All Voices
- Age Limit: 17-23 years
- Length of Study: No limit
- Audition Length: 8 minutes
- Repertoire Requirements (THREE Songs)
  - Three contrasting Hall Johnson Spirituals from the approved repertoire list outlined below.
    - The repertoire must be contrasting by tempo, and text.

Approved Repertoire for Hall Johnson

ONLY REPERTOIRE SELECTED FROM THE LIST BELOW MAY BE ENTERED IN THIS CATEGORY

Hall Johnson scholar Eugene Simpson's respected and researched opinion states that the eligible repertoire listed below constitutes the spiritual arrangements that are verified as composed by Hall Johnson. These spirituals may appropriately be performed by all races of singers sincerely performing in a classical style. All approved Hall Johnson Spirituals eligible to be entered in this competition are listed below by the following publishers.

The Carl Fisched "Hall Johnson Collection"

- Crucifixion
- Give Me Jesus
- His Name So Sweet
- Honor! Honor!
- I Got To Lie Down
- I'm Gon'ter Tell God All o' my Troubles
- My Good Lord Done Been Here
- Oh, Glory!
- Ride On, King Jesus!
- Take My Mother Home
- Witness

Additional selections included in this collection ARE NOT eligible for this competition.

The Hal Leonard Digital Series, "Hall Johnson Concert Spirituals"

- Ain't Got Time to Die
- City Called Heaven
- Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit
- Fix Me Jesus
- I Been in de Storm So Long
- Let's Have a Union
- My God So High
- Po' Mo'ner Got a Home at Las'
- Roll Jerd'n, Roll
- Wade in de Water

Each selection is available in two keys. NATS and the Hall Johnson Estate are grateful for the assistance of Richard Walters and Hal Leonard Corp. for making available these previously inaccessible works.

The G. Schirmer "30 Spirituals" arranged by Hall Johnson

- Ev'ry Time I Feel de Spirit
- Po' Mo'ner Got a Home at Las'
- Ride On, King Jesus!

A collection of previously published spirituals in one volume in high or low keys.

NSA Hall Johnson Spirituals Category

HALL JOHNSON SPIRITULS CATEGORY AWARDS

First Prize: $2,000

Additional cash prizes for Second and Third Prize

The first and second prize winners also receive full tuition grants for the American Spirituals Intensive Program at the Bay View Music Festival in northern Michigan. The American Spirituals Intensive is a 10-day program to study and perform repertoire from the American negro spiritual genre.

The intensive residency is led by Dr. Everett McCorvey, Director of The American Spiritual Ensemble, Director of Opera at University of Kentucky, and Artistic Director of the National Chorale of New York. Highlights include coaching and preparation with Dr. McCorvey, rehearsals and performances of a concert focused on the American Negro Spiritual, and community outreach performances.

Past Winners of the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

2024
- First Place, Deterrius Johnson, Southern Region Student of Richard Hobson
- Second Place, James Wright, Southern Region Student of Claire Vangelisti
- Third Place, Monica Malas, Texoma Region Student of Mark Diamond

2022
- First Place, Franklin Espinosa, Student of Lynn Eustis
- Second Place (Tie), Matthew Merritt, Student of Barbara Hill Moore
- Second Place (Tie) , Safiatou Souare, Student of Jessie Wright Martin

2020
- First Place, Amber Merritt, Student of Louise Toppin
- Second Place, Austin Henry, Student of Jamie Van Eyck
- Third Place Tyrese Byrd, Student of Grant Knox

2018
- First Place: Tres McMichael (Mid-Atlantic Region, student of Polly Cornelius)
- Second Place: Jalen Smith (Southeastern Region, student of Toni Anderson)
- Third Place: Kayla Linquist (Northwestern Region, student of Erin Guinup)

2016
- First Place: Corinthia Sims (Mid-Atlantic Region, student of Lori Hicks)
- Second Place: Prentiss Mouton (Southern Region, student of Loraine Sims)
- Third Place: Stephan Wilson (Great Lakes Region, student of LaToya Lain)

NSA Classical 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 Classical Division Elements

- All-in-One 2026-2027 CLASSICAL CATEGORY GUIDE
- NSA Regulations - All Categories
- NSA Classical Regulations, Rubrics and Sample Comments

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 (if needed), Semifinal (if needed), and Final.
- Larger categories may be divided into multiple preliminary groups.

Preliminary and Quarterfinal Auditions

- An audition beings 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 audition
- 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 CL 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 44)
- 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 render the singer Ineligible To Advance in NSA auditions. Ineligible 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 Classical Auditions Rubric

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
TONE • Resonance and timbre are appropriate to the style with balanced chiaroscuro and ring throughout range. • Transitions through passaggi are smooth and efficient. • Onsets and offsets are clean, clear, and balanced allowing for uniform vibrancy and clarity. • Dynamic flexibility is present. The singer engages the ability to make subtle changes in timbre appropriate to the style and character of the selection.	The singer is beginning to develop vocal resonance and balanced chiaroscuro timbre. Onsets and offsets delay or press the tone and cause extra noise or air. Transitions through passaggi are difficult or uneven. Dynamic flexibility is missing in much of the performance. Vocal colors do not enhance the style and character of the selection.	The singer is advancing in resonance and balanced chiaroscuro through some of the range. Onsets and offsets are mostly immediate, but some pressing or breathiness is present. Passaggi transitions are inconsistent. Dynamic flexibility is evident much of the time. Vocal colors mostly enhance the style and character of the selection.	The singer is mastering resonance. A balanced chiaroscuro tone rings throughout range. Onsets and offsets are immediate and promote clarity. Passaggi transitions are smooth and efficient. Dynamic flexibility is consistently evident in the performance. Vocal colors consistently enhance the style and character of the selection.
BREATH & ALIGNMENT • Inhalation is easy, full, silent, and efficient. • Exhalation provides stability, support, vibrancy, buoyancy, loft, and vocal energy. The alignment, coordination, and release of the head, neck, larynx, jaw, ribs, back, abdomen, legs, and feet assist a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.	The singer is developing appropriate respiration. Inhalation is often noisy or insufficient. During exhalation, the singer tenses or collapses requiring extra breaths to complete phrases. Buoyancy and loft are inconsistent. The lack of coordination and alignment of the body hinders a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.	The singer is advancing toward appropriate respiration. Inhalation is mostly easy and sufficient. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy with some collapsing and tension. Buoyancy and loft are often present. The coordination and alignment of the body are mostly assisting a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.	The singer is mastering respiration. Inhalation is easy and sufficient. Exhalation provides support, balanced stability, and energy. Buoyancy and loft are consistently present. The coordination and alignment of the body consistently assists a dynamic engagement of the vocal instrument.
TEXT & DICTION • Languages are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation with idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics. • The singer displays a thorough understanding in communicating the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language.	The singer is developing some language proficiency but is often inaccurate in pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are not present. The meaning of the text is ambiguous and poorly communicated. Phrasing and flow do not respect the nuance of each language.	The singer is advancing in language proficiency with accurate pronunciation and articulation. Idiomatic characteristics of the language are inconsistently present. The singer often communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow respect the nuance of each language inconsistently.	The singer is mastering languages with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation. Idiomatic inflection beyond basic phonetics is consistently present. The singer understands and communicates the meaning of the text. Phrasing and flow consistently respect the nuance of each language.

NSA Classical 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. • Tuning is accurate throughout range. • The markings of the composer, editor, or arranger are observed and present in the performance. Selections are accurately performed from memory.	The singer's musicianship is beginning to develop with many accurate pitches and rhythms. Some errors are present. Tuning is often problematic. The markings in the score are rarely observed or present in the performance. Memorization is incomplete.	The singer's musicianship is advancing with pitch and rhythmic accuracy most of the time. Tuning is mostly accurate and complete with some errors. Many of the markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is mostly complete.	The singer's musicianship is refined. All pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is consistently accurate. The markings in thescore are observedand present in the performance. Memorization is accurate.
ARTISTRY • The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody and express the character and story/poetry. • The performance embodies clear musical intent and embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The listeners are engaged in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance.	The singer's performance does not embody a thorough understanding of the text and music. Physical, musical, and vocal choices are not contributing to effective communication. The performance is self-conscious and insecure.	Physical, musical, and vocal choices coordinate to create believable moments. An authenticity that embraces the uniqueness of the singer is emerging. The singer is inconsistent in engaging the listeners in a fulfilling aesthetic performance.	Physical, musical, and vocal choices allow the singer to communicate effectively. An authentic performance embraces the uniqueness of the singer. The singer consistently engages the listeners in a believable and fulfilling aesthetic performance.
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 effortstoward 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.

NSA VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

NATS VIDEO AUDITION CHECKLIST

RECORD IT. SHARE IT. OWN THE STAGE.

National Student Auditions
National Association of Teachers of Singing

DO THIS
RECORD HORIZONTALLY
(Landscape)

GIVES JUDGES THE BEST VIEW!

VS.

NOT THIS
RECORD VERTICALLY
(Portrait)

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!	NOPE!
Face is visible	Dark or backlit
Full or upper body in the frame	Half your body off screen
Good lighting	Camera pointed too high or low
Expression & storytelling are easy to see	Face hidden behind music stand

SOUND CHECK

DO	DON'T
Make sure judges can hear YOU	AutoTune
Balance singer & track	Audio filters
Watch your video before uploading	AI voice enhancement
Are you using an amplified mic in CM?	Audio editing

ONE TAKE ONLY

DO

REC → ♫ → ■

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:

- 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)
- All video auditions must be recorded on or after September 1 of the current NSA competition year.
- 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 YouTube 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, unless performing Oratorio or Cantata arias where you can hold an original score as is standard performance practice.
- Participants in ALL NSA Categories must perform complete songs or arias. Performing from 16-bar, 32-bar, student versions, audition cuts, etc., are not accepted and will result in ITA.
- YouTube channel background, banner, titles, logos, and iImages must NOT reveal teacher, school, location, NATS chapter, region, studio names, or affiliations of the teacher or the student auditioning.

NSA Collaborative Musicians in CL and AS Categories

- Perform with a live collaborative 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 Your 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 Qualiyfing 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
  - 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 Spirituals 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?

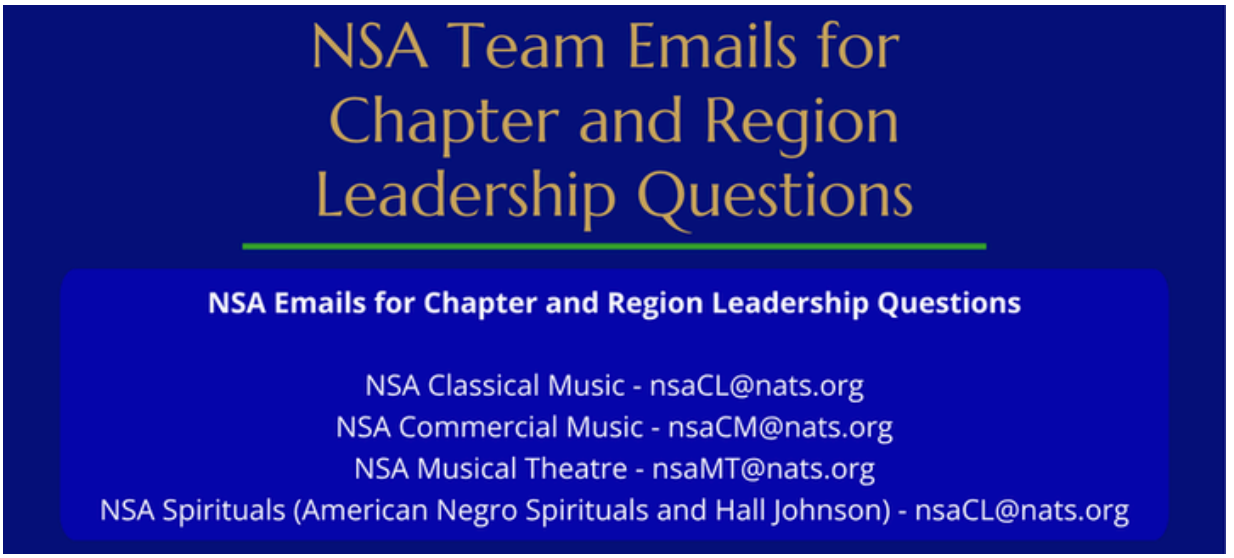
Need help?

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, District, Region, or National auditions. As always, thank you in advance for extending grace to the volunteers that are organzing, 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.



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 Talamentes - 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

ASCA Advisory Panel

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