

# NJ NATS STUDENT AUDITION HANDBOOK

## AND ADJUDICATION GUIDE

The Mission Statement of the National Association of Teachers of Singing Student Auditions Guidelines states that the NATS Student Auditions:

1. *Create a collegial and supportive atmosphere that encourages artistic singing excellence;*
2. *Provide constructive, written feedback from a panel of experienced and impartial professionals including, but not limited to NATS members in good standing;*
3. *Recognize and honor outstanding performances; and*
4. *Inspire and encourage students and teachers to continue their dedication to and growth in the art of singing.*

The Board and Membership of the New Jersey Chapter of NATS supports this mission through its own chapter-sponsored student audition.

### ELIGIBILITY

1. **Eligibility requirements** - Any student currently studying with an active member in good standing at the national and district or chapter level of NATS is eligible. All teachers sending students to the Auditions must be NATS members in good standing, and must belong to both the New Jersey state chapter and the national organization. Membership status will be checked prior to the Auditions. If your membership is not current on the national level, please contact [www.NATS.org](http://www.NATS.org) for information. Dues renewal at both the National and Chapter level is now available at [www.NATS.org](http://www.NATS.org).
2. If the student has been studying with the sponsoring teacher for less than eight months, acknowledgement must be made of the student's former vocal teacher on both the application and in any public announcements. The NATS Code of Ethics provides that *"It is unethical to claim as a pupil one having studied less than eight months with a teacher—except where there has been no previous training."*
3. **NATS members may only enter their own students.** Entering another teacher's students, for whatever reason, is unethical and will result in disqualification of all concerned. Teachers will not be asked to judge their own students or former students. At least three judges will be assigned to each classification whenever possible. Teachers who are not entering students are encouraged to attend and serve as judges.

### TEACHER RESPONSIBILITIES

1. NJ NATS member teachers entering students in these student auditions have a responsibility to:
  - Ensure that all requirements are met.
  - Serve as Adjudicators or act in other capacities as requested.
  - Guarantee that Students adhere to the NATS Policy on Copyright Issues.
2. **Application forms** - must be filled out completely and mailed with all fees to the auditions coordinator on or before the stated deadline. Teachers may also register online through

[www.natsauditions.com](http://www.natsauditions.com), but payment must be sent in to the auditions coordinator by the registration deadline. **TEACHERS SHOULD COLLECT THE STUDENT APPLICATION FORMS AND FEES AND MAIL THEM IN TOGETHER. Please use the enclosed payment form.**

3. **Accompanists** - All students should bring their own accompanists. If that is not possible, there will be a professional accompanist available for a \$35 fee. Because of the scheduling constraints, there will NOT be time for a rehearsal. Teachers may not accompany their own students.
4. **Adjudication and assistance** - All teachers who enter students must attend and be available to adjudicate or to assist in the Auditions. If unable to attend, the teacher must submit the "Request for Waiver" form and fee **as well as the Teacher Registration fee** for the support of the Auditions. *A waiver may be granted for no more than two consecutive years, after which time the teacher must attend in order to send students.*
5. **Awards and Recital** – At least one cash award will be given in each category as long as there are at least 3 entrants. Some categories may be combined to assure at least 3 entrants. First place winners will sing in the closing recital.

6. Fees

|  |                                    |
|--|------------------------------------|
| Student entry fee - \$16.00                | Teacher registration fee - \$15.00 |
| NJ NATS provided accompanist fee - \$35.00 | Teacher Waiver fee - \$50.00       |

**PHOTOCOPIES OF MUSIC WILL NOT BE PERMITTED.** The National Association of Teachers of Singing endorses a strict policy regarding copyright laws. The use of photocopied music is prohibited at all NATS sponsored events, from the national to the chapter level.

Exceptions are:

1. Music that is out of print, still under copyright law, with permission from a publisher.
2. Sheet music or books for which the copyright has expired, but available in CD format. (e.g., CD Sheet Music). Performers must be prepared to present proof of ownership upon request.
3. Sheet music purchased legally from an online vendor. Such music should have either a separate page proving the performer has purchased such or a copyright notice at the bottom of the music that includes the performer's name. Performers must be prepared to present proof of ownership upon request.
4. Music available from approved public domain websites. Performers should take particular care when accessing these sites as some do not guarantee that all works are indeed in the public domain. Current approved online public domain sites are: [www.imslp.org](http://www.imslp.org), [www.sheetmusicarchive.net](http://www.sheetmusicarchive.net).

## ADJUDICATION GUIDELINES

1. Greet singers cordially as they enter, verifying the Student Number and collecting the Adjudication Sheets. No names will be used during the audition.
2. The responsibility of the Adjudicator is to hear the performance, to write comments, and to score the students. Students should be awarded a score between 70 and 100, decimal points are encouraged. Adjudicators are not required to assign high ratings if, in their opinion, no student has earned them.
3. During the auditions there must be no consultation, spoken or written, between Adjudicators concerning the evaluation of students.
4. Write comments that will help guide the students to greater vocal artistry and technique in an atmosphere of mutual support and concern. Keep your comments clear and concise.
5. Favor general comments to very specific ones.
6. Try to “sandwich” a critique in between two positive comments.
7. Make an effort to phrase critiques in a positive manner, encouraging and offering guidance for improvement rather than simply listing faults or technical weakness.
8. Judge the students on the repertoire they present, rather than making suggestions for what you would have wanted them to sing.
9. Comments on presentation should be limited to dramatic and musical communication, rather than appearance.

## REPERTOIRE OR COPYRIGHT VIOLATIONS

If an adjudicator suspects a potential repertoire or copyright violation the following list of steps should be taken:

1. Nothing should be written on a comment sheet by adjudicators regarding any suspected violation. Please write a note on a separate sheet of paper.
2. Write comments and score the student as if there were no violation.
3. Rank or score the student as if there were no violation.
4. When the auditions are completed, all Adjudicators in that Division should consult the Auditions Chair and discuss the potential violation.
5. The Auditions Chair may need to research the issue or consult others before making a final ruling.
6. If it is determined that a violation exists, the Auditions Chair makes every effort to discuss the violation with the student’s teacher prior to notifying the student. This is to be done by the Auditions Chair and not the adjudicators.
7. Final scores are revised if, in fact, a violation has occurred.

## NJ NATS AUDITIONS CLASSIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

For the purpose of these auditions, the following categories have been established subject to sufficient registration. A minimum of three singers is required for each category:

**HIGH SCHOOL** (Divisions I through IV – *Doris Lenz Festival only*) – categories refer to age groups only, disregarding length of study.

**COLLEGE** (Divisions V through XII) - categories refer to a minimum/maximum number of semesters of collegiate study. STUDENTS SHOULD BE ENROLLED IN THE CATEGORY WHICH APPROPRIATELY REFLECTS THE AMOUNT OF STUDY THEY HAVE RECEIVED, REGARDLESS OF THEIR ACADEMIC CLASSIFICATION. This category includes all college students as well as those studying voice in private studios from one to four years beyond high school (generally, ages 18-23)

**ADVANCED** (Divisions XIII and XIV) - category is for advanced senior (more than 8 semesters of voice) and graduate students.

**ADULT NON-PROFESSIONAL** - category includes singers age 22 and beyond who are NOT FULL TIME COLLEGE STUDENTS.

**MUSIC THEATRE** (Division V/VI and IX/X) – college students primarily studying music theatre as a degree program or focus

FOR COMMENT ONLY - Any student may, with the teacher's permission, choose to sing for comment only. Students should be placed in the appropriate category and abide by the repertoire requirements and time limits listed below.

### NJ NATS FESTIVAL OF SINGING CLASSIFICATIONS AND REQUIREMENTS

| DIV#                         | Category                        | Age   | Repertoire Requirements  | Max. Time |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------|--|-----------|
| <b>HIGH SCHOOL DIVISIONS</b> |                                 |       |  |           |
| I-A                          | Music Theatre<br>HS Women Lower | 14-16 | Three contrasting selections.<br>1. Two musically and stylistically contrasting songs from Broadway, off-Broadway, or London (west-end) shows.<br>2. One song should be from a show that debuted before 1960, one from a show that debuted in 1960 or after.<br>3. One additional Broadway or classical song of your choosing from any era.<br><br><i>N.B. - the National Student Auditions require three Broadway selections.</i> | 8 Minutes |
| II-A                         | Music Theatre<br>HS Men Lower   | 14-16 |  |           |
| I-B                          | Music Theatre<br>HS Women Upper | 17-19 |  |           |
| II-B                         | Music Theatre<br>HS Men Upper   | 17-19 |  |           |
| III-A                        | HS Women Lower                  | 14-16 | Three contrasting selections.<br>1. A 17th-18th century English or Italian song.<br>2. One art song in English.<br>3. One additional song selected at the discretion of the teacher. At least one song should be in a language other than English.<br>4. Students can choose to sing ONE music theatre selection.<br><br><i>N.B. - the National Student Auditions permit no non-classical repertoire.</i>                          | 8 minutes |
| IV-A                         | HS Men Lower                    | 14-16 |  |           |
| III-B                        | HS Women Upper                  | 17-19 |  |           |
| IV-B                         | HS Men Upper                    | 17-19 |  |           |

| COLLEGE DIVISIONS                |                                       |                                 |  |               |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------------|--|---------------|
| DIV#                             | Category                              | Years Study/<br>Upper Age Limit | Repertoire Requirements  | Max. Time     |
| VII-A                            | Freshman Women                        | 1 yr post-HS/<br>20 yrs         | Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire.<br>1. A foreign language art song sung in the original language.<br>2. An art song composed in English.<br>3. A second foreign language art song or an appropriate aria sung in the original language or English translation.  | 10 Minutes    |
| VIII-A                           | Freshman Men                          | 1 yr post-HS/<br>20 yrs         |  |               |
| VII-B                            | Sophomore Women                       | 2 yrs post-HS/<br>22 yrs        |  |               |
| VIII-B                           | Sophomore Men                         | 2 yrs post-HS/<br>22 yrs        |  |               |
| XI-A                             | Junior Women                          | 3 yrs Undergrad/<br>23 yrs      | Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire.<br>1. A foreign language art song sung in the original language.<br>2. An art song composed in English<br>3. An appropriate aria sung in the original language. An advanced foreign language art song may be substituted for the aria.<br>4. Only 2 of 3 pieces may be in English.<br><br><i>N.B. - National Student Auditions require four selections in at least three languages.</i>  | 12 minutes    |
| XII-A                            | Junior Men                            | 3 yrs Undergrad/<br>23 yrs      |  |               |
| XI-B                             | Senior Women                          | 3-5 yrs Undergrad/<br>25 yrs    |  |               |
| XII-B                            | Senior Men                            | 3-5 yrs Undergrad/<br>25 yrs    |  |               |
| V/VI                             | Lower College Music Theater Women/Men | 0-2yrs Undergrad/<br>22 yrs     | Three songs total, including at least one ballad, one up tempo, representing Broadway pre- and post-1970. One song must be either a classical art song or an operetta aria.<br><br><i>N.B - National Student Auditions require four contrasting music theater selections from staged Broadway or Off-Broadway productions.</i>   | 12 minutes    |
| IX/X                             | Upper College Music Theater Women/Men | 3-5 yrs Undergrad /<br>25 yrs   |  |               |
| ADVANCED DIVISIONS               |                                       |                                 |  |               |
| XIII-A/<br>XIV-A                 | Advanced Lower Women/Men              | 5-7 yrs post HS/<br>26 yrs      | Four contrasting selections from classical repertoire<br>1. An opera aria in the original language OR an oratorio aria sung in the original language or an English translation.<br>2. Two art songs OR an aria and art song representing two languages.<br>3. An art song composed after 1950.<br>4. No more than 2 selections may be in English. One MUST be in English.<br><br><i>N.B. - National Student Auditions require five selections in at least three languages, must include an English art song.</i> | 15 minutes    |
| XIII-B/<br>XIV-B                 | Advanced Upper Women/Men              | 7+ yrs post HS/<br>30 yrs       |  |               |
| ADULT NON-PROFESSIONAL DIVISIONS |                                       |                                 |  |               |
|                                  | Adult                                 | No limit /<br>Over 22 yrs       | Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire.<br>1. One art song in English.<br>2. One art song in a foreign language.<br>3. One additional art song or aria.  | 10-12 minutes |

## Audition Terminology - NATS National Student Auditions Guidelines

|                                      |   |
|--------------------------------------|---|
| Aria                                 | An aria is a solo taken from an opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, operetta, or works titled "concert aria." Oxford Online definitions will be used for the purposes of this audition. For example, Purcell's selections from the semi-operas and masques are considered songs.  |
| 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias | The repertoire found in the 24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias collections may be counted as an aria or an art song in the high school and lower college classical categories. For the singers in the upper college categories and beyond, these pieces may count as an art song ONLY, regardless of origin. Any repertoire found outside of these collections will be considered only as the composer intended, as an art song OR aria.  |
| Memorization<br>Original Languages   | All repertoire, including oratorio, must be sung from memory. Selections should be sung in original language, or in translation if warranted by common performance practice.  |
| Transposition                        | All arias from opera, oratorio, mass, cantata, operetta, works titled "concert aria," or music theater selections must be sung in the original key or an alternate key based on common performance practice.  |
| Classical Repertoire/<br>Categories  | The word "classical" in this context refers to art songs and arias from the "classical" genre, not limited to the "Classical" period of Mozart and Haydn. In other words, no music theater, pop, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues, etc.. Folk song arrangements are widely accepted as a part of the classical genre and would be acceptable and appropriate audition repertoire for students in classical categories.  |
| Judicious Cuts                       | Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of opera arias and music theater selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.   |
| Music Theater<br>Selections          | All repertoire must be from staged Broadway and Off-Broadway productions. The production may be a musical, revue, or song cycle but MUST have been staged AND Broadway or Off-Broadway. Various online resources are available to confirm such status and teachers are encouraged to confirm them when selecting repertoire. Singers should ensure that contrasting selections represent the spectrum of their vocal and dramatic abilities. For example, this may be exhibited by selecting pieces of varying style periods (pop/rock, contemporary, Golden Age) and employing a variety of vocalism (belt, mix, legit). |
| Comment Only                         | Any student may register to sing for comments only and participate in the preliminary audition round.   |



## NATS Audition Rubric – Classical Categories

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

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

## NATS Audition Rubric – Music Theater Categories

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

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