

NSA Musical Theatre Auditions Rubric

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

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

- **Speech Mix:** Based on the closed vowels of vernacular speech. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant quality.
- **Belt Mix:** An acoustic strategy. A Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant call between G4 and D5. Resonance is achieved on American open vowels as in "hat," "met," and "shot." Above D5 in Mode I (Chest/TA) dominant resonance, high belt is achieved on American closed vowels as in "hoot" and "feet." A belt is used to express moments of soaring emotion. Belt is dynamically balanced with energized airflow. It may be vibrant or retain a straight tone.
- **Legit Mix:** An acoustic strategy. Mode II (Head/CT) dominant. Legit refers to a more spacious resonance similar to classical singing but retains speech-like articulation.

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
STONE • The singer shows mastery of the vocal techniques required for the repertoire selected. (See above) • The singer makes subtle or dramatic vocal adjustments appropriate to the style and character. • The singer produces a wide variety of vocal colors throughout the song in the service of character, story, and style. • Resonance is speech-like; intelligibility is a priority.	The singer is beginning to show ability in vocal techniques and is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer needs to explore more control of registration/ resonance shifts and adjustments to serve character, story, and style.	The singer shows advancing skill in vocal techniques and is making some appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. The singer shows some control of registration/ resonance shifts and makes some adjustments to serve character, story, and style.	The singer is mastering vocal techniques and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the character, story, and style. Singer shows intentional control of registration/ resonance shifts and makes adjustments to serve character, story, and style.
BREATH & ALIGNMENT • Inhalation is easy, full, and efficient. • Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. • Alignment is dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.	The singer is beginning to show easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation needs to provide more stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath needs to flow more evenly without being pressed. Alignment needs to become more dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.	The singer shows easy, full, and efficient inhalation with increasing consistency. Exhalation often provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath often flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is often dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.	The singer is mastering easy, full, and efficient inhalation. Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy. Breath flows evenly without being pressed. Alignment is consistently dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.
LANGUAGE & DICTION • The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. • The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.	The singer needs more accurate pronunciation and more effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer needs to understand and communicate the lyrics more effectively.	The singer is often using accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer often embodies an understanding and communication of the lyrics.	The singer is mastering accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style and vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.

NSA Musical Theatre Auditions Rubric, cont.

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

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
MUSICIANSHIP - Pitches and rhythms are accurate. - The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. - Memorization is organic and accurate	Pitches and rhythms need to be more accurate. More markings of the composer need to be observed. The style requires further study. Memorization is incomplete.	Most pitches and rhythms are accurate. Most of the markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate.	All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate.
ARTISTRY - The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. - The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance.	The synthesis of vocal and physical communication needs to embody the character and story more clearly. Performance skills and artistry are emerging. The performance is superficial or artificial.	The singer is advancing in the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is mostly honest and believable.	The singer is mastering the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is honest and believable.
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized. The artistic goals of the performance were unclear.	The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	The singer and pianist are consistently coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.

Musical Theatre Sample Comments

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

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

Musical Theatre Sample Comments, cont

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

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