

NSA Commercial Music Auditions Rubric

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

- Singers may choose to sing all their selections in one CM style or vary their selections in multiple CM styles.
- 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
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION • The performance is authentic. • The performance offers a unique, stylized interpretation of the music. • The performance is specific to the selected style of commercial music.	The singer needs an increased understanding of the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation lacks authenticity and is not unique to the singer.	The singer is advancing in the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation has moments of authenticity unique to the singer.	The singer is mastering the ability to communicate the stylistic elements of each selection. The interpretation is authentic and unique to the singer.
LYRIC COMMUNICATION • The lyrics are articulated in the style appropriate to the selected style of commercial music. • Vocal tract shaping and diction enhance the individuality of the performance.	Articulation is incompatible with the style of the song. The singer is beginning to engage the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.	Articulation is often compatible with the style of each song. The singer is often engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.	Articulation is compatible with the style of each song. The singer is consistently engaging the lyrics to embody the essence of each style.
VOCAL STYLE • The song's artistic interpretation includes expressive vocal stylisms characteristic of the selected style. • Interpretive vocal stylisms may include varied vocal onsets, releases, nuances, and embellishments, which stylistically color the vocal tone with fry, cry, growl, breathiness, etc. (See CM Terminology)	Vocal interpretations lack the vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer is beginning to develop a facility with vocal stylisms.	Vocal interpretations include some vocal stylisms characteristic of each selection's style. The singer is developing a facility with artistic vocal stylisms.	Vocal interpretations include vocal stylisms characteristic of each genre. The singer has proficient facility with artistically effective vocal stylisms.

NSA Commercial Music Auditions Rubric, cont

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STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70-79 points	ADVANCING 80-89 points	MASTERING 90-100 points
MUSICIANSHIP - Performance is in tune. - Rhythmic groove enhances the performance. - Memorization is secure and accurate.	Pitches need to be more accurate. The style and rhythmic groove require further study. Memorization is incomplete.	Most pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove are developing. Memorization is organic and mostly accurate.	All pitches are accurate. The style and rhythmic groove enhance the performance. Memorization is organic and accurate.
VOCAL PRODUCTION - Each commercial style requires a variety of authentic vocal colors and sounds culturally viable for the chosen style of music performed. - Vocal tone may include some form of a mix of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT) as well as varied organic, primal sounds borne of raw emotion. - All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection/production.	The singer is beginning to show ability in meeting the vocal demands of each song, is able to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style and emotion of each song.	The singer shows advancing ability in meeting the vocal demands of each song and is often able to make appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style and emotion of each song.	The singer is mastering the ability to meet the vocal demands of each song and makes appropriate choices (subtle or dramatic) in keeping with the specific style and emotional expression of each song.
BREATH MANAGEMENT - Inhalation is efficient to the style and may be noisy or silent in response to raw emotion. - Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. The appearance of effort may be intrinsic to style.	The singer is beginning to inhale efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation needs to provide more stability and vocal energy.	The singer inconsistently inhales efficiently to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation inconsistently provides stability and vocal energy.	The singer is mastering efficient inhalation to meet the demands of each style. Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy.
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.

Sample Comments for Commercial Music

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
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION - The performance is authentic. - The performance offers a unique, stylized interpretation of the music. - The performance is specific to the selected style of commercial music.	- You have a sincere performance, but the style could be more clearly defined. - Continue exploring how the text and groove influence your interpretation. - The performance would benefit from stronger stylistic choices unique to this genre.	- You communicate the style effectively in many moments. - Consider making even more individual artistic choices that reflect your identity as an artist. - The performance shows growing authenticity and connection to the style.	- Your interpretation feels authentic, personal, and stylistically informed. - You communicate the emotional and musical intent with confidence and individuality. - Excellent connection between your artistic choices and the genre's performance practice.
LYRIC COMMUNICATION - The lyrics are articulated in the style appropriate to the selected style of commercial music. - Vocal tract shaping and diction enhance the individuality of the performance.	- Some words are difficult to understand. - Continue working toward clearer communication of the text - The story and message could be more apparent to the listener.	- Most lyrics are clear and expressive. - Consider highlighting key words and phrases to deepen communication. - The text is engaging, though some moments could carry greater intention.	- Excellent clarity and communication of the text. - Your diction supports both the style and emotional impact of the song. - The lyrics feel conversational, personal, meaningful, and fully embodied.
VOCAL STYLE - The song's artistic interpretation includes expressive vocal stylisms characteristic of the selected style. - Interpretive vocal stylisms may include varied vocal onsets, releases, nuances, and embellishments, which stylistically color the vocal tone with fry, cry, growl, breathiness, etc. (See CM Terminology)	- Continue developing stylistic tools appropriate to this genre. - Experiment with vocal colors and expressive devices that support the text. - The style would benefit from greater consistency throughout the performance.	- You demonstrate a growing command of stylistic vocal choices. - The use of stylistic elements enhances the performance in many moments. - Continue refining stylistic consistency across your range and dynamics.	- Your vocal stylisms are artistically effective and genre appropriate. - The stylistic choices feel natural, expressive, and fully integrated. - Excellent command of stylistically appropriate vocal colors. - Your stylistic choices enhance the performance without feeling imitated or exaggerated.
MUSICIANSHIP - Performance is in tune. - Rhythmic groove enhances the performance. - Memorization is secure and accurate.	- Continue working toward greater pitch accuracy and rhythmic consistency. - The groove and style need stronger internalization. - Memorization appears incomplete in places.	- Pitch and rhythm are generally secure. - You maintain the groove effectively through most of the performance. - Continue refining rhythmic precision and stylistic timing.	- Excellent pitch accuracy and rhythmic integrity. - Your rhythmic feel and groove are natural and stylistically authentic. - Memorization is secure and allows for confident artistic communication.

Sample Comments for Commercial Music, cont

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VOCAL PRODUCTION - Each commercial style requires a variety of authentic vocal colors and sounds culturally viable for the chosen style of music performed. - Vocal tone may include some form of a mix of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT) as well as varied organic, primal sounds borne of raw emotion. - All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection/production.	- Continue exploring vocal colors that better match the style of the song. - Some passages would benefit from greater consistency in tone production. - The vocal demands of the selection occasionally interfere with stylistic communication.	- You are developing strong stylistic vocal colors. - The tone generally supports the genre and emotional intent of the piece. - Continue refining consistency across registers and dynamic levels.	- Your vocal tone is stylistically appropriate, flexible, and expressive. - You demonstrate excellent command of the vocal style and demands of the repertoire. - The vocal colors enhance both the style and emotional impact of the performance.
BREATH MANAGEMENT - Inhalation is efficient to the style and may be noisy or silent in response to raw emotion. - Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. The appearance of effort may be intrinsic to style.	- 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. - Consider maintaining breath energy through longer phrases. - Increased consistency will further enhance vocal freedom and expression.	- Excellent breath management throughout the performance. - Breath energy supports both stylistic expression and vocal stability. - Your breathing contributes naturally to phrasing, groove, and communication.
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	- Continue listening actively to the accompaniment or track. - Greater coordination with the track or collaborative musician will strengthen the performance. - More attention to ensemble details will support your artistic goals.	- You work well with the accompaniment or track in most moments. - Consider responding more actively to musical details from the accompaniment. - The collaboration supports the performance effectively.	- Excellent collaboration with the accompaniment or track. - You demonstrate strong awareness of ensemble balance, timing, and communication. - The partnership with the accompaniment enhances the overall artistic impact.