

## National Student Auditions Categories for National, Region, District, and Chapter Auditions

The National Student Auditions begin at the region level and progress to the national preliminary, semifinal, and final rounds. Singers may only advance to the NSA National Preliminary Round from a region audition. Exceptions to this regulation must be approved by the NSA Coordinator, VP of Auditions, and NATS Executive Office staff. Winners of Chapter or District auditions may not be automatically advanced to the National Preliminary Round. When possible, regions should offer all of the categories listed on page 6 of this document.

### Audition Category Terminology

<b>CATEGORY</b>	Categories are defined by voice type. <b>Treble:</b> Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 1 <b>TBB:</b> Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
<b>CATEGORY NUMBERS</b>	Categories numbers also reflect the student's level of study. Children–Middle School <b>1 &amp; 2</b> , High School (HS) <b>3 &amp; 4</b> , Lower: one–two years post-HS <b>5 &amp; 6</b> , Upper: three–five years post-HS <b>7 &amp; 8</b> , Advanced: post-undergraduate <b>9 &amp; 10</b> , Other Adults <b>11 &amp; 12</b>
<b>LENGTH OF STUDY</b>	<b>Length of Study in Selection of Appropriate Category of Entry</b> Total voice study with a voice teacher (NATS Member or Non NATS Member) either in an independent studio or collegiate/conservatory program or in any combination of them is a determining factor in post-high school categories only. <b>Post-High School Study:</b> <b>Lower:</b> any one or two years of post-high school study; all as an undergraduate. <b>Upper:</b> any three to five years of post-high school study; all as an undergraduate.  Counting years of study begins with the first day of post-high school study—meaning the first year of study is in progress. For example, a student in an undergraduate program in their fifth semester of voice study is in their third year of study. Any reasonable portion of a year will be counted as one year—even if the singer stops taking weekly lessons during a portion of that year, excepting if the singer is ill and unable or forbidden to sing during that time for medical reasons.
<b>AGE LIMIT</b>	Age limits are determined at the time of registration for singers in NATS auditions. Singers above the age limit of a category may not compete in that category. If an appropriate category is not available for a singer above the age limit, the singer may sing in that category for comments only. The age and years of study for NSA categories are determined at the region audition and remain the same during that audition season.
<b>REPERTOIRE</b>	High school aged categories and younger in Chapter and District auditions may require two or three selections as best serves the needs and tradition of the Chapter or District. Region and National Auditions will require three selections in all High School Categories.
<b>AUDITIONING TEACHER-MEMBERS</b>	NATS teacher-members who meet the requirements of a student audition category in terms of their age and years of study—may enter student auditions through the NATS member with whom they are currently studying, but they may not enter themselves in the audition. If they enter their students in the audition, they must be available to adjudicate a category in addition to auditioning.

# NSA Annual Audition Categories

## Classical Audition Terminology

<b>Aria</b>	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 student auditions. For example, Purcell’s selections from the semi-operas and masques are considered songs.
<b>24/26/28 Italian Art Songs and Arias</b>	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 classical categories. 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.
<b>Memorization</b>	All repertoire must be performed from memory with the exception of Oratorio, Mass, Requiem, and Cantata Arias. Singers may hold music scores for these types of arias as is traditional performance practice.
<b>Original Languages</b>	All selections should be sung in original language or in translation, if warranted by common performance practice.
<b>Transposition</b>	Published transpositions 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.
<b>Art Song in English</b>	English must be the original language of the art song.
<b>Repertoire/Categories</b>	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. No musical theatre, pop, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues, <i>etc.</i> may be entered in the Classical Category. Published arrangements of folk songs, spirituals, and traditional hymn tunes in English are widely accepted as a part of the classical genre. Students in classical categories may present one selection of this type to fulfill the English art song requirement.
<b>Judicious Cuts</b>	Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of opera arias and musical theatre selections are allowed as is 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.
<b>Comments Only</b>	Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only.
<b>Double-Dipping</b>	Singers entering more than one category (Classical, Musical Theatre, Spiritual) in NATS auditions are allowed to sing the same selection in two categories provided that the repertoire requirements of both categories are met. If singers advance in NATS Auditions (chapter, region, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple final auditions. See specific examples in the MUTH Terminology.

# NSA Classical (CL) Categories

**TREBLE: Soprano, Mezzo- Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices**

**TBB: Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices**

CATEGORY		LENGTH OF STUDY	AGE LIMIT	TIME LIMIT	REPERTOIRE
CL 3	High School Classical Treble Voice	No limit	14–19	8 minutes	*Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 4	High School Classical TBB Voice	No limit	14–19	8 minutes	*Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 5	Lower Classical Treble Voice	0–2 years post-high school	22	10 minutes	Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One aria or art song. One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English.
CL 6	Lower Classical TBB Voice	0–2 years post-high school	22	10 minutes	Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One aria or art song. One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English.
CL 7	Upper Classical Treble Voice	3–5 years post-high school all as an undergraduate	25	12 minutes	Four contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One aria. One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English. One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 8	Upper Classical TBB Voice	3–5 years post-high school all as an undergraduate	25	12 minutes	Four contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One aria. One art song in English. * One art song in a language other than English. One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 9	Advanced Classical Treble Voice	4+ years post-high school	22–30	15 minutes	Five contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One operatic aria. One oratorio/cantata aria.† One art song in a language other than English. One art song in English.* One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 10	Advanced Classical TBB Voice	4+ years post-high school	22–30	15 minutes	Five contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One operatic aria. One oratorio/cantata aria.† One art song in a language other than English. One art song in English.* One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.

*\* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.*

*† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization rule.*

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Range   Limit	Time Limit
CL 3A	Lower High School Classical Treble Voice	No limit—all HS	14–16   9th or 10th Grade	8–10 minutes
CL 4A	Lower High School Classical TBB	No limit—all HS	14–16   9th or 10th Grade	8–10 minutes
CL 3B	Upper High School Classical Treble Voice	No limit—all HS	16–19   11th or 12th Grade	8–10 minutes
CL 4B	Upper High School Classical TBB	No limit—all HS	16–19   11th or 12th Grade	8–10 minutes
CL 5A	First Year Classical Treble Voice	1 year post HS	20	10 minutes
CL 6A	First Year Classical TBB	1 year post HS	20	10 minutes
CL 5B	Second Year Classical Treble Voice	2 years post HS	22	10 minutes
CL 6B	Second Year Classical TBB	2 years post HS	22	10 minutes
CL 7A	Third Year Classical Treble Voice	3 years post HS	23	12 minutes
CL 8A	Third Year Classical TBB	3 years post HS	23	12 minutes
CL 7B	Fourth/Fifth Year Classical Treble Voice	4-5 years Post HS (all as an undergraduate)	25	12 minutes
CL 8B	Fourth/Fifth Year Classical TBB	4-5 years Post HS (all as an undergraduate)	25	12 minutes
CL 9A	Lower Advanced Classical Treble Voice	4-7 years post high school	22–26	15 minutes
CL 10A	Lower Advanced Classical TBB	4-7 years post high school	22–26	15 minutes
CL 9B	Upper Advanced Classical Treble Voice	7+ years post high school	25–30	15 minutes
CL 10B	Upper Advanced Classical TBB	7+ post high school	25–30	15 minutes

Chapters, Districts, and Regions may subdivide the categories to accommodate a larger number of entries.

**Subdivided categories may be designated as CL 4A–1, CL 5A–2, for example.**

Repertoire requirements and time limits must remain the same among subdivisions of any category of auditions.

## NATS NSA Classical Subcategories

Repertoire requirements are the same as the number of the corresponding category above

### Musical Theatre Audition Terminology

<b>Musical Theatre Selections</b>	Repertoire is selected from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, and stand-alone musical theatre songs. Only <i>one</i> of the required selections may be an operetta aria or a stand-alone musical theatre song.
<b>Musical Theatre Styles</b>	The singer is expected to select musical theatre songs from varied styles of music including bluegrass, blues, calypso, country, electro-pop, folk, gospel, jazz, legit, operetta, pop, pop-opera, rap, rhythm and blues (R&B), rock, soul, <i>etc.</i> The selected repertoire will engage the singer's ability to access a variety of vocal colors to communicate character and story ( <i>see musical theatre rubric</i> ). The audition will showcase the full spectrum of each singer's vocal and dramatic abilities.
<b>Transpositions</b>	Published transpositions are permitted, but 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.
<b>Judicious Cuts</b>	As found in common professional performance practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and dance breaks in musical theatre selections are allowed.</li> <li>• In the case of numerous verses, some verses may be cut.</li> </ul>
<b>Original Languages</b>	Selections must be sung in the original language or in translation as warranted by common professional performance practice.
<b>Memorization</b>	All selections must be performed from memory.
<b>Comments Only</b>	Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate exclusively in a preliminary audition. Adjudicators will not score auditions entered for comments only.
<b>Double-Dipping</b>	Singers entering more than one category (Classical, Musical Theatre, Spiritual) in NATS auditions are allowed to sing the same piece in two categories provided that the repertoire requirements of both categories are met. Crossover repertoire in MUTH and classical categories can be used during the same audition—for example, "Lonely House" from <i>Street Scene</i> may be used as an aria in the classical and a selection in MUTH categories...or the same spiritual from Hall Johnson or American Negro Spiritual Categories can be used both as an art song in the classical and a selection in the spiritual categories. If a singer advances in NATS Auditions (chapter, region, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple finals.
<b>Authentic Performance</b>	A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation.

## NSA Musical Theatre Categories

CATEGORY		LENGTH OF STUDY	AGE LIMIT	TIME LIMIT	REPERTOIRE: all repertoire is performed from memory
MT 3	High School Musical Theatre Treble Voice	No limit	14–19	8 minutes	*Three contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 4	High School Musical Theatre TBB Voice	No limit	14–19	8 minutes	*Three contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 5	Lower Musical Theatre Treble Voice	0–2 years Post-high school	22	10 minutes	Three contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 6	Lower Musical Theatre TBB Voice	0–2 years post-high school	22	10 minutes	Three contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 7	Upper Musical Theatre Treble Voice	3–5 years post-high school all as an undergraduate	25	12 minutes	Four contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 8	Upper Musical Theatre TBB Voice	3–5 years post-high school all as an undergraduate	25	12 minutes	Four contrasting musical theatre selections from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.

## NATS NSA Musical Theatre (MT) Subcategories

Repertoire requirements are the same as the number of the corresponding category above

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Range   Limit	Time Limit
MT 3A	Lower High School Musical Theatre Treble Voice	No limit—all HS	14–16   9th or 10th Grade	8–10 minutes
MT 4A	Lower High School Musical Theatre TBB	No limit—all HS	14–16   9th or 10th Grade	8–10 minutes
MT 3B	Upper High School Musical Theatre Treble Voice	No limit—all HS	16–19   11th or 12th Grade	8–10 minutes
MT 4B	Upper High School Musical Theatre TBB	No limit—all HS	16–19   11th or 12th Grade	8–10 minutes
MT 5A	First Year Musical Theatre Treble Voice	1 year post HS	20	10 minutes
MT 6A	First Year Musical Theatre TBB	1 year post HS	20	10 minutes
MT 5B	Second Year Musical Theatre Treble Voice	2 years post HS	22	10 minutes
MT 6B	Second Year Musical Theatre TBB	2 years post HS	22	10 minutes
MT 7A	Third Year Musical Theatre Treble Voice	3 years post HS	23	12 minutes
MT 8A	Third Year Musical Theatre TBB	3 years post HS	23	12 minutes
MT 7B	Fourth/Fifth Year Musical Theatre Treble Voice	4-5 years Post HS (all as an undergraduate)	25	12 minutes
MT 8B	Fourth/Fifth Year Musical Theatre TBB	4-5 years Post HS (all as an undergraduate)	25	12 minutes

Chapters, Districts, and Regions may subdivide the categories to accommodate a larger number of entries.  
**Subdivided categories may be designated as MT 3A–1, MT 3A–2, for example.**  
 Repertoire requirements and time limits must remain the same among subdivisions of any category of auditions.

## CATEGORIES ADVANCING

1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup> Place Region Award Winners

### to the NSA National Preliminary Round

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Range   Limit	Time Limit
MT 3A	Lower High School Musical Theatre Treble Voices	No limit—all HS	14–16   9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
MT 4A	Lower High School Musical Theatre TBB Voices	No limit—all HS	14–16   9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
MT 3B	Upper High School Musical Theatre Treble Voices	No limit—all HS	16–19   11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
MT 4B	Upper High School Musical Theatre TBB Voices	No limit—all HS	16–19   11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
CL 3A	Lower High School Classical Treble Voices	No limit—all HS	14–16   9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
CL 4A	Lower High School Classical TBB Voices	No limit—all HS	14–16   9 <sup>th</sup> or 10 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
CL 3B	Upper High School Classical Treble Voices	No limit—all HS	16–19   11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
CL 4B	Upper High School Classical TBB Voices	No limit—all HS	16–19   11 <sup>th</sup> or 12 <sup>th</sup> Grade	8 minutes
MT 5	Lower Musical Theatre Treble Voices	0–2 years Post-HS	22	10 minutes
MT 6	Lower Musical Theatre TBB Voices	0–2 years Post-HS	22	10 minutes
CL 5	Lower Classical Treble Voices	0–2 years Post-HS	22	10 minutes
CL 6	Lower Classical TBB Voices	0–2 years Post-HS	22	10 minutes
MT 7	Upper Musical Theatre Treble Voices	3-5 years Post-HS (all as an under graduate)	25	12 minutes
MT 8	Upper Musical Theatre TBB Voices	3-5 years Post-HS (all as an under graduate)	25	12 minutes
CL 7	Upper Classical Treble Voices	3-5 years Post-HS (all as an under graduate)	25	12 minutes
CL 8	Upper Classical TBB Voices	3-5 years Post-HS (all as an under graduate)	25	12 minutes
CL 9	Advanced Classical Treble Voices	4 or more years Post-High School	22–30	15 minutes
CL 10	Advanced Classical TBB Voices	4 or more years Post-High School	22–30	15 minutes
<b>HJ alternating BIENNIALY with AS</b>				
HJ 7	Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition All Voice Types	Post-High School	17–23	10–12 minutes
AS 3	American Negro Spiritual Category All Voice Types	No limit	14–19	8 minutes
AS 7	American Negro Spiritual Category All Voice Types	0–3 years Post-High School	23	10 minutes
AS 9	American Negro Spiritual Category All Voice Types	4 or more years Post-High School	30	12 minutes

**Chapters, Districts, and Regions may subdivide the categories to accommodate a larger number of entries.  
Subdivided categories may be designated as CL 3A–1, CL 3A–2, for example.  
Repertoire requirements and time limits must remain the same among subdivisions of any category of auditions.**

# NSA Biennial Auditions

## Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

Due to the generosity of the Hall Johnson Estate, a \$2000 award will be given in each national conference year (even-numbered years) to the best performance of a Hall Johnson Spiritual for the conferences from 2016–2036. All interested performers will apply for this category as part of region student auditions with the top five singers from each region advancing to the NSA rounds, as with all other NSA categories. Chapters are also eligible and encouraged to add this competition to chapter auditions. Whenever applicable, chapter auditions may serve as qualifying rounds for advancement to region auditions.

## Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition

(National rounds in this category will be held in even-numbered years)

Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time Limit	Repertoire performed from memory
HJ 7 Hall Johnson	Post-High School Ages All voice types	17–23	10–12 minutes	Three contrasting selections from Approved Hall Johnson spiritual repertoire See approved spiritual repertoire below.

For more information about the Biennial Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition, visit:

[https://www.nats.org/Hall\\_Johnson\\_Spirituals\\_Competition.html](https://www.nats.org/Hall_Johnson_Spirituals_Competition.html)

### All approved Hall Johnson spiritual repertoire listed below is available in the following publications

- The Carl Fischer “Hall Johnson Collection” (CF)
- The Hal Leonard Digital Series, “Hall Johnson Concert Spirituals” (HL)
- The G. Schirmer “30 Spirituals” arranged by Hall Johnson (GS)

### ONLY REPERTOIRE SELECTED FROM THE FOLLOWING LIST MAY BE SUNG IN THIS CATEGORY

Other selections in the collections listed above are not eligible repertoire in this category.

Ain’t Got Time to Die - HL  
City Called Heaven - HL  
Crucifixion - CF  
Ev’ry Time I Feel de Spirit - HL, GS  
Fix Me, Jesus - HL  
Give Me Jesus - CF  
His Name So Sweet - CF  
Honor! Honor! - CF  
I Been in de Storm So Long - HL  
I Got To Lie Down - CF  
I’m Gon’ter Tell God All o’ my Troubles - CF  
Le’s Have a Union - HL  
My God is So High - HL  
My Good Lord Done Been Here - CF  
Oh, Glory! - CF  
Po’ Mo’ner Got a Home at Las’ - HL, GS  
Ride On, King Jesus!- CF, GS  
Roll Jerd’n, Roll - HL  
Take My Mother Home - CF  
Wade in de Water - HL  
Witness - CF

All selections listed above are annotated and analyzed in  
*The Concert Spirituals of Hall Johnson: An Annotated Guide to Interpretation and Performance*  
by Eugene Thamon Simpson.

## Other Audition Categories

### Categories Not Yet Advancing to National Student Auditions

Category Number Title	Length of Study	Age Limit	*Time Limit	Repertoire: all repertoire is sung from memory
<b>CL 1</b> Children	No limit	11 and Younger Below 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate selections from classical repertoire.
<b>MT 1</b> Children's Musical Theatre	No limit	11 and Younger Below 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate musical theatre selections from musicals (including film musicals), revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
<b>CL 2</b> Youth	No limit	11–14 6 <sup>th</sup> –8 <sup>th</sup> grades	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate selections from classical repertoire.
<b>MT 2</b> Youth Musical Theatre	No limit	11–14 6 <sup>th</sup> –8 <sup>th</sup> grades	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate musical theatre selections from musicals (including film musicals), revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
<b>CM 1</b>	No limit	11 Below 6 <sup>th</sup> grade	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate selections from commercial music repertoire.
<b>CM 2</b>	No limit	11–14 6 <sup>th</sup> –8 <sup>th</sup> grades	8 minutes	Two or three contrasting age-appropriate selections from commercial music repertoire.
<b>CL 11</b> *Adult Treble	No limit	22+	10–12 minutes	Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire. One art song in English. One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
<b>CL 12</b> *Adult TBB	No limit	22+	10–12 minutes	Three contrasting selections from classical repertoire. One art song in English. One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
<b>MT 11</b> *Adult Musical Theatre Treble	No limit	22+	10–12 minutes	Three contrasting age-appropriate musical theatre selections from musicals (including film musicals), revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
<b>MT 12</b> *Adult Musical Theatre TBB	No limit	22+	10–12 minutes	Three contrasting age-appropriate musical theatre selections from musicals (including film musicals), revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.

**\*Adult categories are intended for serious adult avocational musicians.**

**NATS Regions, Chapters, and Districts are encouraged to create additional categories that do not yet advance to the National Student Auditions to address the needs of their students.**



# COMMERCIAL MUSIC TERMINOLOGY

<b>Arrangements</b>	Original or published arrangements of songs created for Musical Theatre productions are not accepted in CM categories in NATS Student Auditions but may be entered in the Musical Theatre Categories.
<b>Commercial Music</b>	Commercial music includes all genres of vocal music performed by recording artists, not included in the classical and musical theatre NATS Student Auditions categories. Commercial music includes bluegrass, blues, contemporary Christian, country, folk, gospel, jazz, pop, rap, rock, rhythm and blues (R&B), soul, and all ethnic music, <i>etc.</i>
<b>Cover Song</b>	A cover song is a selection performed by someone other than the composer or original recording artist. Performing a cover does not imply an imitation of the original recording artist.
<b>Diva Microphone</b>	A smaller microphone attached to the singer's head.
<b>Microphone Technique</b>	When using a microphone, the singer needs to make intentional choices of the microphone's placement (handheld, on a stationary stand, diva microphone, off-camera), which influences interpretation. When choosing to use a handheld microphone, the singer will make intentional choices in the distance of the microphone from their mouth to create stylized effects.
<b>Rhythmic Groove</b>	An organic embodiment of the beat that goes beyond specific notation or time signature, often referred to as the feel of a song.
<b>Vocal Stylisms*</b>	<p>Commercial music's genre-specific elements of vocal interpretation. Vocal stylisms are often not notated in the music.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appropriate onsets vary among fry, slide, yodel, growl, breathy, cry, creak, flip, scream, <i>etc.</i></li> <li>• Appropriate releases vary among abrupt glottal stops, breathy, fall-off, fall-up, shadow vowels, fry, creaky, gaspy, <i>etc.</i></li> <li>• Appropriate nuances/embellishments including riffs/runs, licks, flip, pop-appoggiatura, yodel/register shifts, bends/scoops, <i>etc.</i></li> </ul> <p>Visit _____ to hear specific examples.</p>
<b>Memorization</b>	All selections must be performed from memory.
<b>Comments Only</b>	Any registered student may elect to sing for comments only and participate in the preliminary audition. The judges will not score auditions entered for comments only.
<b>Off-Camera</b>	Not visible on video, placed beyond the edge of the camera's frame.
<b>Full Song</b>	An entire song, no internal cuts. Intros and outros may be abbreviated to accommodate audition's time limits.
<b>Authentic Performance</b>	A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation.

\*Edrie Means Weekly coined the term Vocal Stylisms in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.

## Commerical Music Categories

(not yet advancing to national levels of NSA auditions)

Each audition may include one or more commercial music style(s).

### Microphone Requirements for All Commercial Music categories

Auditions are to be performed with amplification. In live auditions, all singers are required to use the amplification equipment provided. In video auditions, the use of a microphone off-camera or on-camera (on a stationary stand, diva microphone, and/or handheld microphone) is an artistic choice influencing interpretation.

### Accompaniment Requirements for All Commercial Music categories

Singers may perform with any or any combination of the following accompaniment options:

- a pre-recorded instrumental track without backing vocals
- a live collaborative pianist
- in a limited capacity (see below), accompany themselves on an acoustic instrument

## Commerical Music Categories

Category		Length of Study	Age Limit	Time Limit	Voice Type	Repertoire performed from memory with amplification
<b>CM 3</b>	High School Commercial Music	No limit	14–19	8 minutes	All	Two contrasting full songs: one ballad + one uptempo <i>Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist.</i>
<b>CM 5</b>	Lower Commercial Music	1–2 years Post-HS	22	10 minutes	All	Three contrasting full songs <i>Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist.</i>
<b>CM 7</b>	Upper Commercial Music	3-5 years Post-HS	25	12 minutes	All	Four contrasting full songs <i>Up to 2 songs may be original songs, instead of a cover. Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist.</i>

### Chapters, Districts, and Regions with a larger number of entries

may add categories to allow TREBLE & TBB VOICES separate categories as follows:

#### HIGH SCHOOL CM

**CM 3** would become for Treble voices  
adding **CM 4** for HS TBB voices

#### LOWER CM

**CM 5** would become for Treble voices  
adding **CM 6** for Lower TBB voices

#### UPPER CM

**CM 7** would become for Treble voices  
adding **CM 8** for Upper TBB voices

Repertoire requirements and time limits must remain the same in categories added to separate voice types.



## NATS Audition Rubric

# COMMERCIAL MUSIC CATEGORIES

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

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
<b>STONE</b> Singer shows mastery of the vocal demands of songs selected and makes subtle or dramatic adjustments appropriate to the style and emotional expression. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Each commercial style requires a variety of authentic vocal colors and sounds.</li> <li>• 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 born of raw emotion.</li> <li>• 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 <i>CM Terminology</i>)</li> <li>• All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection.</li> </ul>	The singer is beginning to show ability in meeting the demands of each song and to make some appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.	The singer shows advancing ability in meeting the demands of each song and is often able to make appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.	The singer is mastering the ability to meet the demands of each song and makes appropriate choices in keeping with the specific style of each song.
<b>BREATHING</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inhalation is efficient to the style and may be noisy or silent in response to raw emotion.</li> <li>• Exhalation provides stability and vocal energy. The appearance of effort may be intrinsic to style.</li> </ul>	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.
<b>LYRICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lyrics are articulated in the style appropriate to the selected style of commercial music.</li> <li>• Vocal tract shaping and diction enhance the individuality of the performance.</li> </ul>	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.
<b>VOCAL STYLISMS*</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The song's artistic interpretation includes expressive vocal stylisms characteristic of the selected style.</li> <li>• Vocal stylisms may include varied vocal onsets, releases, nuances, and embellishments such as fry, riffs, cry, growl, etc. (See <i>CM Terminology</i>)</li> </ul>	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.
<b>MUSICIANSHIP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Performance is in tune.</li> <li>• Rhythmic groove enhances the performance.</li> <li>• Memorization is secure and accurate.</li> </ul>	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.
<b>ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The performance is authentic.</li> <li>• The performance offers a unique, stylized interpretation of the music.</li> <li>• The performance is specific to the selected style of commercial music.</li> </ul>	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.
<b>ENSEMBLE (comments only)</b> The singer coordinates with the accompaniment effectively to accomplish artistic goals.	The singer needs to coordinate more effectively with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.	The singer is advancing in the ability to coordinate with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.	The singer is mastering effective coordination with the accompaniment to accomplish artistic goals.

\*Edrie Means Weekly coined the term vocal stylism in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.