

An NSA Resource



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National Association of Teachers of Singing

Children & Youth NSA Category Resources

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National Association of Teachers of Singing

Welcoming Children & Youth in your chapter or region's NSA

NSA Children & Youth (C&Y) Goals

- Support the teaching and mentoring of our youngest singers in a nurturing and safe environment.
- Encourage all NATS chapters to offer children and youth categories in their NSA events.
- All NATS regions are to include children and youth categories in their NSA events qualifying students for national auditions in these categories, new in the 2023-24 audition cycle.
- Welcome all voice teachers working with student singers aged 14 and younger, not previously included in national levels of the NSA.
- Standardize the Children & Youth NATS student auditions for national levels of NSA. Many thanks to the chapters and regions that inspired this change by offering categories for younger students in their NATS auditions in years past.

Community Outreach

At the chapter level voice teachers and music educators in the schools working with children's voices will likely need your personal introduction to NATS Student Audition new categories for Children & Youth in Classical, Musical Theatre, and all genres of Commercial Music. Reach out to them. Welcome, encourage, and invite them to join NATS and enter their students in NSA. Adjudicators for these categories need to have some experience and expertise working with young voices. You may need to engage qualified adjudicators who are not yet NATS members and/or reside outside your chapter or region. Video auditions allow for a greater range of potential adjudicators.

Online Resources for the 6 New Children & Youth Categories

NATS requires every NSA adjudicator to have reviewed the rubrics, terminology, and to have watched the new genre specific adjudicator training video available in fall 2023 online. Teachers are encouraged to review all NATS Children and Youth resources online at www.nats.org, where you will find lists of anthologies of repertoire for children, books and articles about teaching children to sing, all genre-specific rubrics, interpreting rubrics for parents and children, and more.

Live versus Virtual NSA Auditions

Please see all NSA information on the unique audio and accompanying requirements in CM categories, which apply to all CM categories. We encourage chapters and regions to consider holding their CM and possibly all C&Y preliminary auditions online. This will limit the number of rooms needed and lower your CM equipment costs. With audio equipment required for all CM auditions, in live auditions we recommend having a single room reserved for the CM semifinal and final auditions leveling any audio equipment-based advantages or disadvantages. If logistics are challenging, all levels of C&Y Auditions may be conducted virtually; however convenient, this option removes the many benefits of performing live. Each chapter and region are encouraged to choose the best path forward in offering these CM categories to meet the needs of their membership.

Legal Minors participating and attending live NSA Events

Each student under legal age, must be accompanied by a chaperone at all live NATS and NATS NSA events. A parent or legal guardian will have to complete and sign a form appointing a chaperone, who bears all legal, health, and safety liabilities for the minor-aged student. This form will be included in the online registration. NATS Teachers cannot serve as a student's chaperone.

NATS Diversity and Inclusion Statement

We are dedicated to ensuring that all voices are valued and heard in an inclusive environment with equitable treatment for all. NATS takes the equitable treatment for all within our organization very seriously.

C&Y Categories Advancing to NSA National Rounds of Auditions

ALL AUDITION SELECTIONS TO BE PERFORMED FROM MEMORY

CL 1 Children's Voices ages 11 or younger in 5th grade or below, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate, solo selections from the classical repertoire.

MT 1 Children's Voices ages 11 or younger in 5th grade or below, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate musical theatre solo 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 or musical theatre song literature.

CM 1 Children's Voices ages 11 or younger in 5th grade or below, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate selections from any genre or genres of commercial music repertoire.

CL 2 Youth Voices ages 11–14 in 6th–8th grades, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate selections from the classical repertoire.

MT 2 Youth Voices ages 11–14 in 6th–8th grades, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate musical theatre solo 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 or musical theatre song literature.

CM 2 Youth Voices ages 11–14 in 6th–8th grades, a 6-minute audition, performing **2** contrasting, age-appropriate selections from any genre or genres of commercial music repertoire.

NOTE: According to the number of participants, chapters & regions **may sub-divide these categories** into younger and older sub-categories, *i.e.*, CL 2A for ages 11-12 and CL 2B for ages 13-14.

Age-Appropriate Repertoire

All repertoire selected for performance in the NSA C&Y Categories must be age-appropriate. To clarify, in C&Y Categories, the following rep is recommended. Published transpositions of solos are accepted. Songs performed by children attempting to sound like adults are not welcomed in these new categories. Recommended anthologies for younger voices are included in the C&Y resources on NATS.org on the NSA Resources webpage.

- **Classical Repertoire** for younger singers may include selected art songs, hymns, carols, arias, or folk songs. Arias from operas, operettas, or oratorios are not recommended for auditions in the C&Y categories.
- **Musical Theatre Repertoire** for younger singers may include songs sung by younger characters in staged musicals, television musicals, or movie musicals including animated musicals. Musical theatre repertoire may also include one solo from an operetta, stand-alone musical theatre cabaret song, trunk song, or song cut from a musical. Theme Songs from films or televised/radio broadcast/streamed programming are not accepted in MT categories. Judiciously, some songs sung by adult characters in musicals may be sung by younger singers, when the music-challenges, character, and lyrics are all age-appropriate. In MT categories the student performs as a theatrical character.
- **Commercial Music Repertoire** for younger singers may include theme songs or individual songs from films or televised/radio broadcast/streamed programming, musical theatre songs sung in a commercial music style that differs from the originating musical or revival of that musical, songs professionally recorded by younger singers in any commercial genre. Judiciously, some songs sung by adult singers may be sung by younger singers, when the music-challenges and lyrics are all age-appropriate. Songs arranged specifically for younger voices are also welcomed in the C&Y Categories. In CM categories the students perform as themselves.

If you have questions pertaining to the NSA, please consult the NSA Regulations and other information available online at NATS.org. If your question remains unanswered or needs clarification, please email vpauditions@nats.org.

The Vice President for Auditions will consult with the NSA Coordinators and NATS Competitions and Auditions Coordinator, before responding with your answer.

You are invited to listen to the [Full Voice](#) Music Podcast introducing the new NSA C&Y Categories. You are also invited to listen to the [Vocal Fry Podcast](#) discussing the new NSA C&Y Categories.

Terminology applying to ALL NSA Categories

CATEGORY	Categories are defined by voice type. Treble: Soprano, Mezzo-Soprano, Contralto, Countertenor Voices 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13 TBB: Tenor, Baritone, Bass Voices 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12, 14
CATEGORY NUMBERS	Categories numbers also reflect the student's level of study. Children–Middle School Youth 1 & 2, High School (HS) 3 & 4, Lower: one–two years post-HS 5 & 6, Upper: three–five years post-HS 7 & 8, Advanced: post-undergraduate 9 & 10, Other Adults 11 & 12 Nontraditional Students 13 & 14
LENGTH OF STUDY	Length of voice study U age determine the selection of an appropriate Category of Entry. Total voice study with a voice teacher (NATS Member or Non-NATS Member) either in an independent studio or collegiate/conservatory program or with any number of voice teachers is a determining factor in NSA's post-high school categories only. Length of voice study is counted in years, not in semesters. POST- HIGH SCHOOL STUDY Lower: students 22 or younger, in their 1 st or 2 nd year of post-high school voice study Upper: students 25 or younger, in their 3 rd , 4 th , or 5 th year of post-high school voice study and not enrolled in a graduate voice program Advanced: post-baccalaureate students aged 30 years or younger in their 4 th or higher year of post-High School voice study Counting years of study begins with the first day of post-high school study—meaning the first year of voice study is in progress. For example, a student in their fifth undergraduate 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.
AGE LIMIT	Age limits are determined by the age of the entered student on September 1 st , the first day of each NSA audition cycle. Singers above the age limit of a category may not compete in that category. When a singer is above or below the age limits for their level of study, that student may enter their level of study category for comments only OR enter any available Non-Traditional student category, which does not advance to national levels of NSA. A student will not change their level of category(s) of entry or entered repertoire in an audition cycle.
REPERTOIRE	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. Regional and National Auditions will require three selections in all High School Categories.
AUDITIONING MEMBER-TEACHERS	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.
OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN AUDITIONS	The National Association of Teachers of Singing requests that NATS members guide their students in selecting NSA audition repertoire that embraces our mission to be a welcoming and supportive community of members and students who celebrate the unique identities, varied backgrounds, and experiences of all individuals. NATS asks teachers to remain mindful of lyric/text content that respects the wide range of ages and identities of those participating in our NSA as well as those present in our audiences at NATS events. To honor the music's copyright owners, no lyric substitutions of offensive lyrics are allowed unless a clean version is published or legal permission for a change is obtained.
DOUBLE DIPPING REPERTOIRE	Singers entered in more than one NSA category (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) are allowed to enter the same selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards in each genre category are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. If a singer advances in NATS Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple final auditions. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information.

Classical CL Audition Terminology

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 student auditions. 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 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.
Memorization	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.
Original Languages	All selections should be sung in original language or in translation, if warranted by common performance practice.
Transposition	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.
Art Song in English	English must be the original language of the art song.
Repertoire/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. 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.
Judicious Cuts	Judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed as well as internal cuts of opera arias 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.
Comments Only	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.
Double-Dipping	Singers entering more than one NSA category (Classical, Commercial Music, Musical Theatre, and/or Spirituals) are allowed to enter the same selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards in each genre category are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. In exception, the Spiritual Categories and CL Categories are adjudicated by the same rubric of classical performance standards. If a singer advances in NATS Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple final auditions. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information.

Musical Theatre MT Audition Terminology

Musical Theatre Selections	Repertoire is selected from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, theatrical song cycles, and musical theatre's song literature. Only <i>one</i> of the required selections may be an operetta aria <i>or</i> from musical theatre's song literature.
Musical Theatre Styles	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.
Transpositions	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.
Judicious Cuts	As found in common professional performance practice: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicious cuts in piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and dance breaks in musical theatre selections are allowed. • In the case of numerous verses, some verses may be cut.
Original Languages	Selections must be sung in the original language or in translation as warranted by common professional performance practice.
Memorization	All selections must be performed from memory.
Comments Only	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.
Double-Dipping	Singers entering an MT category plus CL and/or CM categories are allowed to enter the same selection in more than one category provided the repertoire requirements of each category are met. Crossover repertoire may be judiciously entered in MT and additional categories. For example, "Lonely House" from <i>Street Scene</i> may be entered as a selection in an MT category and as an aria in a CL category. Similarly, "If I loved you" from <i>Carousel</i> may be entered in both MT and CM categories, but in the CM category, the song must be performed in a specific CM style different from the musical's original style of music. Teachers and students are reminded that the standards in these genre categories are different. A successful audition in one category will not necessarily produce success in a second category—unless the performance is altered to address the different standards of performance. Standards are defined in each NSA adjudication rubric. If a singer advances in NATS Student Auditions (chapter, regional, national rounds) in more than one category, they may not sing the same selection in multiple finals. Please see the NSA FAQ for additional information.
Authentic Performance	A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation.

COMMERCIAL MUSIC CM AUDITION TERMINOLOGY

Accompaniment Options	Singers may perform with any or any combination of the following accompaniment options: 1. a pre-recorded instrumental track without backing vocals, 2. a live collaborative instrumentalist, or 3. in a limited capacity (<i>see CM categories of entry in Appendix A</i>), accompany themselves on an acoustic instrument.
Arrangements	Original or published arrangements of musical theatre selections are accepted in CM categories in NATS Student Auditions, ONLY when performed in a distinct commercial music style different from the musical or subsequent revival of the musical in which the song originated.
Commercial Music	Each CM audition may include one or more commercial music style(s). 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>
Cover Song	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.
Diva Microphone	A smaller microphone worn on the singer's head.
Microphone Technique	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. When using a microphone, the singer needs to make intentional choices of the microphone's placement (whether handheld, using a stationary mic stand, or diva microphone). 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.
Rhythmic Groove	An organic embodiment of the beat that goes beyond specific notation or time signature, often referred to as the rhythmic feel of a song.
Vocal Stylisms*	In Commercial Music's genre-specific elements of vocal interpretation, vocal stylisms are often not notated in the music. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate ONSETS vary among fry, slide, yodel, growl, breathy, cry, creak, flip, scream, <i>etc.</i> • Appropriate RELEASES vary among abrupt glottal stops, breathy, fall-off, fall-up, shadow vowels, fry, creaky, gaspy, <i>etc.</i> • Appropriate NUANCES/EMBELLISHMENTS vary among riffs/runs, licks, flips, pitch slides, pop-appoggiatura, yodel/register shifts, pitch bends/scoops, <i>etc.</i> Visit NSA resources online at www.nats.org to hear specific examples.
Memorization	All selections must be performed from memory including self-accompaniments played.
Comments Only	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.
Off-Camera	Not visible on video, placed beyond the edge of the camera's frame.
Full Song	An entire song. No internal cuts of vocals; intros and outros may be abbreviated to accommodate audition's time limits; instrumental breaks as well as repeat and fade tags may be cut, abbreviated, or kept to accommodate the audition's time limits.
Authentic Performance	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.*

What Are Rubrics?

Answers for Parents and Younger Student-Singers

In NATS Student Auditions, rubrics are used to keep the auditions fair for all singers. The rubrics are specific to the type of music you are singing — classical, musical theatre, or commercial music. The rubric lists the standards defined below as the areas the panel of three adjudicators will discuss in your comments. How well you meet the standards tells the adjudicator what score you should receive for your auditions. Standards are what we care about hearing and seeing when you perform your audition.

Discuss your adjudicators' comments with your voice teacher. Your voice teacher will help you understand the compliments, opinions, and suggestions for improvements the adjudicators offer in their comments. Remember the adjudicators can only comment on what they see and hear in your 6-minute audition time limit. The adjudicators do not know you or know that how you performed in your audition was not your best or the best you have ever performed or somewhere in between! Your goal is to perform your best in that moment, practice, listen to your teacher, and then perform even better next time!

NSA Standards

What is meant by Tone?

Tone is the actual sound of your voice. You are able to make sounds that are breathy, strong, raspy, hooty, and so many more. We are listening for a voice that is clear and easy. Try to sound like yourself instead of a favorite recording or your teacher or anyone else. Your voice is beautiful and unique, and we want to hear it!

What is meant by Breath & Alignment?

Breath is what makes your voice work! Adjudicators observe how you use your breath to create sounds. They check to see that you are taking efficient breaths, while keeping your body alignment optimal for the intake of air and the release of breath for singing. This can really change the sound of your singing.

What is Diction and Text?

Text is another word for lyrics. Diction is accurately and clearly pronouncing the words. Attention to consonants, vowels, and inflection helps your audience understand your words. Whether you are singing in your own language or in a different language, it is important to communicate the meaning of the words.

What is Musicianship?

Musicianship reflects accurate preparation including pitches, rhythms, dynamics, phrasing, articulations, and tempo markings. Adjudicators also listen for confident memorization of your music.

What is Artistry?

The journey from first learning a song to performing that song is an artistic journey. First make sure your musicianship is solid and you sing the notes, rhythms, and words the composer and lyricist wrote. Then explore vocal colors, registration, and textures that add your unique vocal sounds. Your musical interpretation allows the song to sound like you are honest in what you are singing. As you prepare to perform your song, additional artistry *may* include facial expressions, physical gestures, and movements to communicate the music.

What is Ensemble?

Although you will not be scored on ensemble, the singer and pianist or other accompanying instrument(s), must work together and agree on tempo (speed), phrasing (including where you breathe), dynamics (soft, louder, loud), and interpretation. This brings all the elements of your song together for your performance.



NATS Audition Rubric

CLASSICAL CATEGORIES

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

STANDARD	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
STONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
TEXT & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The singer's musicianship is refined. All pitches and rhythms are accurate. Tuning is consistently accurate. The markings in the score are observed and present in the performance. Memorization is accurate.</p>
ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.	<p>The singer and pianist seem unsynchronized. The artistic goals of the performance were unclear.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are consistently coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in the entire performance.</p>



NATS Audition Rubric

MUSICAL THEATRE CATEGORIES

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.

To hear examples of varied mixes, visit <https://www.nats.org/nsaresources.html#audio-examples>

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
TONE <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
BREATH & ALIGNMENT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
LANGUAGE & DICTION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics. 	<p>The singer needs more accurate pronunciation and more effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer needs to understand and communicate the lyrics more effectively.</p>	<p>The singer is often using accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character. The singer often embodies an understanding and communication of the lyrics.</p>	<p>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.</p>
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>All pitches and rhythms are accurate. The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style. Memorization is organic and accurate.</p>
ARTISTRY <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story. The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance. 	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>The singer is mastering the ability to synthesize vocal and physical communication to embody the character and story. The performance is honest and believable.</p>
ENSEMBLE (comments only) The singer and pianist coordinate their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.	<p>The singer and pianist need to coordinate toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are often coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>	<p>The singer and pianist are fully coordinated in their efforts toward the same artistic goals in performance.</p>



National Association of Teachers of Singing

NATS Audition Rubric

COMMERCIAL MUSIC CATEGORIES

- Students 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.

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
ARTISTIC INTERPRETATION <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
LYRICS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 STYLISMS* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 <i>CM Terminology</i>) 	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.
MUSICIANSHIP <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
TONE <p>Singer shows mastery of the vocal demands of songs selected and makes subtle or dramatic adjustments appropriate to the style and emotional expression of each selection.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 born of raw emotion. • All CM styles are reliant on amplification. The microphone is used dynamically to facilitate vocal stylisms as well as projection. 	The singer is beginning to show ability in meeting the demands of each song and is able 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.
BREATHING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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) <p>The singer coordinates with the accompaniment effectively to accomplish artistic goals.</p>	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 this term in her teaching of Commercial Music and Musical Theatre.

Songbooks and Anthologies for Younger Voices



A RANDOM visual SAMPLER of the many songbooks published specifically for kids, younger singers, and teens.

ONLINE REPERTOIRE RESOURCES

Hal Leonard has many more options of these songbooks

[Songbooks for Children's Voices](#)

and

[Songbooks for Teen Voices](#)

Hal Leonard also has a [Children's Songfinder](#) and [Teen Songfinder](#)

OR...a simple google search to find additional publishers of vocal solos for children, kids, or teens.

Additional Anthologies/Repertoire Collections

[Singing Kids' Songbook Level 1](#), compiled by Dana Lentini, Hal Leonard publishing
[Royal Conservatory Vocal Series](#)

[Solo Songs for Young Singers](#), Andy Beck composer, Alfred Publishing

[Anthologies by Composer Lin Marsh](#), including

- Show Us a Song! Lin Marsh composer, Faber Publishing
- Songscape Assembly, Lin Marsh composer, Faber Publishing
- Junior Songscape, Lin Marsh composer, Faber Publishing

[Songs by Composer Glyn Lehmann](#), a website of individual songs

[Songs by Composer Donna Rhodenizer](#), a website of individual songs

[Full Voice Music Publishing](#), a website with sheet music downloads

[Feierabend Resources](#), John Feierabend is considered one of the leading authorities on music and movement development. GIA publishes his works.

[Leslie Music for Young Singers](#), available on the Music from Canada website

[Books and Resources for Teaching Singing to Children](#) by Nikki Loney

[Series of themed solos by Luigi Zaninelli](#) published by Shawnee Press

Obviously, a google or amazon search in books: "Songbooks for Children's Voices" or Teen Voices will also produce many options each including anthologies of musical theatre, classical, pop, rock, etc.

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ADDITIONAL RESOURCES from JOURNAL OF SINGING

*These articles represent research and thoughts from 1946 to the present
and are available to NATS members on the NATS website*

<https://www.nats.org/cgi/page.cgi/journal-of-singing-index.html>

Beginning Singing with Young Children

Welch, Graham F.

1988 Nov/Dec (volume: 45 issue: 2 start page: 12)

Starting on Page Number: 12

Vocal Exercises for Children of All Ages

Edwin, Robert

2001 Mar/Apr (volume: 57 issue: 4 start page: 49)

Starting on Page Number: 49

Some tried and true vocal exercises that will help young singers develop, with a minimum of whining, are suggested.

Teaching Children to Sing

American Academy of Teachers of Singing

2003 May/June (volume: 59 issue: 5 start page: 377)

Starting on Page Number: 377

Opera from the Playground: Benjamin Britten's Roles for Children's Voices

Zakresky, Kevin

2012 May/June (volume: 68 issue: 5 start page: 511)

Starting on Page Number: 511

The Independent Teacher: Developing Healthy Children's Voices in a Noisy World

Novie Greene

2014 May (volume: 70 issue: 5 start page: 591)

Starting on Page Number: 591

Independent studio voice teacher and coach Novie Greene discusses the many ways singing can be beneficial to children. They are, however, likely to incorporate the noise and loud volume into the singing that they hear on recordings and television. The studio engineered vocal resonances of adult voices that they cannot easily produce with their young voices may cause them to strain their own undeveloped voices. She notes the types of students that usually come to her studio, and how she goes about working with them. Included are some beginning vocal exercises and suggestions for appropriate children's songs. Various volumes, with publisher and/or web site information, are cited. She also shares YouTube examples that might be helpful for young singers who have limited knowledge of good solo singing by children. A selected biography of vocal music appropriate for children is included.

Laryngeal Tension in Adolescent Choral Singing

Smith-Vaughn, Beverly J.; Hooper, Celia; Hodges, Donald A.

2013 Mar/Apr (volume: 69 issue: 4 start page: 403)

Starting on Page Number: 403

Remarks on the Adolescent Male Voice

Bartholomew, Marshall

1946 May/June (volume: 2 issue: 4 start page: 1)

Starting on Page Number: 1

It is essential for voice teachers and choral directors to avoid classifying with any degree of finality if the student is less than twenty-two years old.

The Young Male with a Changing Voice

Swanson, Frederick

1981 Sep/Oct (volume: 38 issue: 1 start page: 32)

Starting on Page Number: 32

Beautiful Swansongs and English Cathedral Music: Adolescence and the Boy “Treble” Voice

Martin Ashley

2018 November (volume: 75 issue: 2 start page: 141)

Starting on Page Number: 141

Vocal Parenting

Edwin, Robert

1995 Jan/Feb (volume: 51 issue: 3 start page: 53)

Starting on Page Number: 53

The author suggests that in teaching children and adolescents how to sing, the teacher becomes a “vocal parent.”

Popular Song and Music Theater: Vocal Parenting Revisited

Robert Edwin

2014 January-February (volume: 70 issue: 3 start page: 341)

Starting on Page Number: 341

NATS master teacher Robert Edwin discusses the benefits of teaching voice to children before they develop harmful habits. He elaborates on his process, which begins with an attitude of “serious play:” the students’ attitudes and how they affect outcomes disciplines the mind and body simultaneously. He describes how a storyteller’s approach can positively affect technique, particularly at a young age, by engaging the young students’ minds.

Singing Exercises That Develop and Liberate the Child's Voice

Sallstrom, Gunvar M.

1973 Feb/Mar (volume: 29 issue: 3 start page: 22)

Starting on Page Number: 22

Skelton: The Child’s Voice: A closer look at pedagogy and science, 63(5) 537-544

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES IN NATS LIVE LEARNING CENTER

These [video recordings](#) are available for purchase on [NATS.org](#)

“Vocal Literature for Children in a Changing Society”: Dana Lentini, Michael Ching, July 2022

Careers in the Children and Family Performance Spacer with Red Grammar, Jazzy Ash, Justin Roberts, and Tim Ferrin

“Children Will Listen”: Teaching the Child Singer in the Private Studio, Dana Lentini and Jenevora Williams, June 2020

Teaching Young Singers Acting

From Boys to Men: Keep Boys Singing into Adulthood – A Panel Discussion 2014

Building Musical Foundations for the Young Singer: Vocal Pedagogy for Singers 5 - 15

Teaching Children 2010

Talented Kids 2012

Starting the Journey 2013

Children Sing, Part 1 2013 Barbara Wilson Arboleda

Children Sing, Part 2 2013 Barbara Wilson Arboleda

Children Sing Part 3 2013 Barbara Wilson Arboleda

Children Sing Part 4 2013 Barbara Wilson Arboleda
Keep Them Singing Part 1 2013 Patrick Freer
Keep Them Singing Part 2 2013 Patrick Freer
Keep Them Singing Part 3 2013 Patrick Freer
Inspire Success Part 1 2013 Robert Loewen
Inspire Success Part 2 2013 Robert Loewen
Inspire Success Part 3 2013 Robert Loewen
Inspire Success Part 4 2013 Robert Loewen
From Boys to Men: Keeping boys singing into Adulthood – a Panel Discussion 2014 Patrick Freer, Joseph Stillitano, Lynn Shane, Murray Kidd, Rollo Dillworth, Aaron Humble
Cross Training in the Private Studio: Developing Successful Vocal Strategies for Adolescent Singers 2012 Novie Greene
Keeping Music in the Schools: Advocating for the Arts as Core Curriculum: AATS Panel 2012
Teaching Children, 2010 Robert Edwin
Boys' Changing Voices: The Research Evidence - What Does This Mean in Practice? 2020 Jenevora Williams
A Development Look at SINGING: It's Never Too Late or Too Early! Danielle McRoy, Jeanne Goffi-Fynn
Talented Kids 2012 Leslie Curda
Using the Carnegie Hall Royal Conservatory Achievement Program in Your Studio, 2012, Allen Henderson, Lori McCann, Sarah Hoover, Robert Loewen, Jennifer Snow