



SERNATS Frequently Asked Question List (FAQ) updated November 2009

Below are common questions and answers about the Southeastern Regional NATS Student Auditions. Please note that guidelines for District or Chapter Auditions within the Region may vary; consult local guidelines for those events. If you have a question not answered below, ask the Event Registrar for assistance.

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GENERAL INFORMATION

Who may sing at the Auditions?

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You may sing if you are a current SERNATS member or a student of a current SERNATS member, as long as the teacher is serving as an adjudicator at the event. See the Auditions Guidelines for more information.

Who may adjudicate at the Auditions?

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If you are a current member of SERNATS sending students to the Auditions, you are required to adjudicate at the Auditions, or to arrange for an approved substitute. Other members of SERNATS are encouraged to adjudicate at the Auditions, and any active member of NATS may serve as an adjudicator at this event.

How are the Auditions adjudicated?

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You’ll be singing for a panel of adjudicators, who will give you written feedback, and (in all but Cat. 19) give you a score that may qualify you for run-offs or finals. Categories with a large number of singers participating are split, and run-offs may occur to determine finalists in these categories, between the preliminary rounds and the finals. At the finals, all adjudicators present at the event vote to determine the winners in each category. See the SERNATS Adjudication Overview for additional details and a sample adjudication sheet.

Do I need a formal outfit for any part of the Auditions?

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No. Dress nicely, as you would for a singing audition. We recommend wearing something dressier than jeans and flipflops, but less dressy than gowns and tuxes. Theater singers: there is no need to wear all black, unless you wish to; this is a good chance to show your personal style. There is no need for props or costumes in any category. There is no need to change wardrobe should you be called for finals; day-audition attire is still expected. If in doubt, think conservative. You are encouraged to check your outfit with your teacher before the date of the event, especially if you have any questions about what is appropriate.

Are there any money prizes?

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At the Auditions, the main focus is on singing for adjudication, to get comments and feedback, and to share your singing with others in attendance. Certificates are awarded, along with small cash awards, to finalists in all categories except the one designated *for comments only*.

I'm a young artist, semi-professional singer, aspiring professional singer, or professional teacher-singer; are there opportunities for me at these Auditions, or at other NATS events?

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Yes! At the Auditions, Category 20 is specifically for advanced singers and teacher-singers. A separate event for Young Artists, the NATS Artist Awards Competition (NATSAA) may also be of interest; see <http://www.nats.org> under "Competitions" for more information.

Are there any on-campus accommodations available?

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We do not offer on-campus accommodations; a list of hotels in the area will be provided to event participants. Please pay close attention to the date after which any special NATS rates will be discontinued. We recommend reserving area accommodations in well in advance to assure your having space during this event.

Where are venue maps and other information?

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Maps, lodging information and other details are posted when available at the SERNATS website, <http://www.sernats.org>

APPLICATION QUESTIONS

When the guidelines refer to "year" do they mean my year in school, or how long I've studied voice?

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How long you've studied, during high school for the high school categories, or beyond high school for the other categories. You must also meet the age requirements for a category. Ex. If you're a junior male in high school but are in your first year of high school voice training, you're in Cat. 2. If you're a female senior in college or private training past high school, and in your first year of college/private voice studies (high school is not counted here) you're in Cat. 5 as long as you're 22 years of age or younger; if you're 23 or older you'd be in Cat.15.

How is age determined for the Auditions?

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It's the age the singer will be on the date of the first day of the Auditions.

I'm a high school student who has studied voice prior to high school; should I count that time in my experience level?

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No, for these Auditions just count the number of years you have studied voice during high school.

I've studied with more than one teacher; do I need to list both, or count my training time with both? [▲ top](#)

It's important to NATS members that recent previous teachers be acknowledged (from the NATS Code of Ethics: "Members will disclose at NATS events the name of a student's previous voice teacher if the student has studied with the current teacher for less than eight months"). Students who have not studied with their current teacher for eight months may only participate in Category 19 *except* when the student has studied with a NATS teacher in the past 6 months, and gives credit to both teachers by listing them both on the registration forms and, if applicable, in the introductions at the conclusion of the Final Round. If you have studied in the past eight months with a second teacher who is not a member of NATS, or you're not sure if they are a member, list and count them as if they are a member.

When calculating voice studies, do I count time studying music theater separately from classical studies? [▲ top](#)

No, count the total time you've studied voice in general, as requested for your classification.

Is it possible to sing in both the music theater and a classical category? [▲ top](#)

Absolutely. Send in a separate application sheet for each category, and pay the fees for registration (and for staff accompanist if desired) for each category.

REPERTOIRE: All Genres

May I sing pieces I've sung at previous SERNATS events? [▲ top](#)

It's expected (but not required) that students will repeat repertoire from local and district Auditions at the Regional event. Repeating songs sung at previous Regional events is discouraged, as one of the purposes of this event is to encourage the learning of new repertoire.

May I change repertoire after I've sent in my application forms? [▲ top](#)

With a reasonable amount of notice, yes. **Teachers**, not students should request any changes, and alert the Registrar to the requested changes. Please make these requests prior to one week before the adjudications.

What does "All music should be scored for voice and keyboard" mean? [▲ top](#)

All works at this event are accompanied by piano. If you have a score that is written for voice and piano, or harpsichord, or organ, or similar, that's fine. If a piece has an obbligato for flute or clarinet, or any other instrument, that doesn't ban it from the Auditions; just don't expect to hear that part (and don't bring a flutist or any other instrumentalist other than a pianist.) If you have something out of the ordinary that you'd like to present at the Auditions, you must get permission from the Event Registrar to do so.

I have an early Italian “aria” that I want to sing; will it count as an Italian “art song?” [▲ top](#)

In categories 1-6, please check to make sure your aria is on the list of Cat 1-6 Approved Arias, posted at sernats.org. In all other categories, an early Italian aria or song may serve as an Italian art song.

May I borrow or share music for the Auditions? [▲ top](#)

While there is no rule against borrowing a score or sharing a score with another singer during the Auditions, problems can arise if you arrive and find out your teacher forgot the book, or brought the wrong key, or you’re singing at the same time as your friend, or you’re singing in separate locations. Owning and bringing your own original scores will eliminate these problems, and help you build your own singing library. For this event, you only need one original score for each song you perform.

REPERTOIRE: Music Theater

What is meant by “extensive belting”? [▲ top](#)

First, belting is “non-legit” singing in theater terms, or “chest-register or thyro-arytenoid dominant” singing in scientific terms. Thus belting is a singing technique, as opposed to a specific song or list of songs. Singers in the music theater categories may demonstrate both legit/crico-thyroid dominant and non-legit/ thyro-arytenoid dominant singing, according to the dramatic choices and the abilities of the singer. In the younger SERNATS categories [Cat 21-28] singers and teachers are asked to limit the amount of belting, and to be especially mindful of the technical ability level of the singer and the maturity of the instrument when choosing to belt. In no category is belting required or prohibited.

What is a *ballad* vs. an *up-tempo* song? [▲ top](#)

It is common for music theater Auditions to ask a singer to prepare an up-tempo and a ballad song, to demonstrate contrast in tempo and mood. The ballad is a slower, often more lyrical piece, while an up-tempo is faster and lively. Patter songs, like “I am the very model of a modern Major-General” from *Pirates of Penzance*, also fall into the up-tempo category. An example of a ballad would be “If I Loved You” from *Carousel*, while “Not for the Life of Me” from *Thoroughly Modern Millie* is an up-tempo. Some pieces can fall into a grey area, depending on how fast or what style you intend to sing them in. If you’re in doubt as to whether a piece is an up-tempo or a ballad, focus on presenting pieces that contrast in tempo and mood, so you can show a range of abilities and music to the adjudicators.

May I sing an unpublished key, or a transposed key for my theater song(s)? [▲ top](#)

In general, you should sing pieces that are published in the show-key, or any key available in a printed anthology or purchased sheets. Some composers or publishers offer music printed in your choice of keys; you may use these if you wish. Do not bring a Sibelius or Finale or similar score (in any key) unless you have written permission from the composer or publisher to alter the original score in this manner.

May I use music printed from online sources like musicnotes.com or others? [▲ top](#)

Yes, purchased music from these sources are welcome. Make sure that they either have a publisher's mark or purchase statement printed on the score, or a Festival Use letter like the one available with sources like CD-Sheet Music.

May I use lead-sheets, chord-sheets, fake-book, real-book, etc. during the Auditions? [▲ top](#)

For consistency, and for the sake of accompanists, we ask that you use regular piano-vocal scores, with the complete accompaniment written out.

I want to sing a work that is out-of-print; may I use a copy of the score? [▲ top](#)

Out-of-print does not necessarily mean the work is out of copyright, and copyright is strictly enforced at all NATS events. If the work is in the public domain you may use any version of that score; if it is still in copyright but out-of-print, you must have written permission from the publisher or copyright owner to use a copy of the score.

May I sing Gilbert and Sullivan, or other "crossover" repertoire in the theater categories? [▲ top](#)

Some shows, like the G&S rep and works like *Candide* are performed by both classical and theater singers; songs from these types of works are fine for the theater categories. Keep in mind that adjudicators in these categories may expect to hear these songs performed in a theater (as opposed to an overtly classical) style.

What if I can't find the premiere date of a show? [▲ top](#)

We ask for the premiere date because it's usually easy to find; often it's listed in the notes in your anthology, or is a quick internet search away. The Internet Broadway Database (www.ibdb.com) is an excellent resource. If you cannot find a premiere date, you may use by the copyright date on your music. If there are multiple premiere dates listed for a show, use the earliest.

REPERTOIRE: Classical

What is an English song/aria? [▲ top](#)

The requirements for 20th/21st century English song by North American or United Kingdom composers stem from NATS' commitment to support newer English-language works. Usually this refers to songs originally written in English, and to composers born in the regions above. Occasionally this can be confusing, especially when a composer changed citizenship, or when a song is commonly sung in English as well as other languages. If in doubt, please clear your selection with the Event Registrar before applying for the Auditions.

Are there restrictions about which languages arias must be sung in? [▲ top](#)

For most arias, you are expected to sing the original language. In some cases, like "Mein Herr Marquis /My Dear Marquis", where the aria is commonly sung in professional productions in either language, you may sing in whichever language you prefer, as long that that choice still fits any language requirements for the category.

May I sing an unpublished key, or a transposed key for my classical song(s)? [▲ top](#)

In general, you should only perform these works in original key, or in alternate keys readily available in printed anthologies or sheets. Some composers or publishers offer music printed in your choice of keys; you may use these if you wish. Do not bring a Sibelius or Finale or similar score unless you have written permission from the composer or publisher to alter the original score in this manner. Arias should only be sung in concert key(s). If you have any concerns, please consult an event Auditions Repertoire Consultant.

May I use music printed from CDROM sheet music, or online sources like Schubertline.com, musicnotes.com or others? [▲ top](#)

Yes, purchased music from these sources are welcome. Make sure that they either have a publisher's mark printed on the score, or a notice like "For the exclusive use of..." or bring the Festival Use letter available with sources like CD-Sheet Music.

May I sing Gilbert and Sullivan, or other "crossover" repertoire in the classical categories? [▲ top](#)

Some shows, like the G&S repertoire and works like *Candide* are performed by both classical and theater singers; songs from these types of works are fine for the classical categories (as long as they otherwise meet the repertoire requirements for the category.) Keep in mind that adjudicators in these categories may expect to hear these songs performed in a classical (as opposed to an overtly music theater) style.

ACCOMPANIST-RELATED QUESTIONS

I'd like to serve as a staff accompanist. What should I do? [▲ top](#)

Applications for Staff Accompanists are always welcome; please contact the Event Registrar and indicate what styles (classical, theater) and singer levels you are comfortable with.

How can I find an accompanist for the Auditions, and how much should they be paid? [▲ top](#)

For the Regional Auditions, you are expected to bring an accompanist, or hire someone in the area of the audition, or else to request a Staff Accompanist for the event. Note: this may be different from your District or Chapter Auditions. Staff Accompanists' fees are set by SERNATS, and must be paid at the time of registration; for any other accompanists you may negotiate the fees with them.

I've requested a Staff Accompanist; now what should I do? [▲ top](#)

It is your responsibility to contact the Staff Accompanist as soon as you receive their contact information from the Auditions Registrar, to let them know what you'll be singing, and to make arrangements to meet with them at the Auditions.

I am bringing an accompanist who can play for some additional students. What should I do? [▲ top](#)

Please let the Event Registrar know that this accompanist is available and willing to play for additional students. Since there are limits as to how many students an accompanist may play for, please include the total number of students the accompanist is already engaged to accompany.

FOR OUR TEACHERS...

Why should I attend this event? [▲ top](#)

Both for your students' experience and for your own, in terms of the Auditions themselves. The preliminary and final rounds offer not only the chance for you and your students to participate in Auditions, but also to hear new repertoire and a wide range of singers, from beginning through advanced singers. The SERNATS audition weekend also includes business and social meetings for teachers, and by attending these you can not only network, but also be represented in the function and running of the Region.

I am a teacher who wants to send students but cannot attend the Auditions. What should I do? [▲ top](#)

You need to find someone to serve as a Substitute Adjudicator. Substitutes must be current NATS members but cannot be members who will have any of their own students participating in the Auditions. Contact the Event Registrar if you cannot attend and need to arrange for a substitute; it is not the Registrar's responsibility to find a substitute but he or she may be aware of someone who is available.

Does a substitute adjudicator need to be a member of SERNATS? [▲ top](#)

Yes. A local member is preferred, but any member of NATS may serve as an adjudicator.

I have located a substitute adjudicator. Is it my responsibility to pay any of the substitute's expenses? [▲ top](#)

It is expected that you will at least pay the registration fees for your substitute, and if they would not have been attending otherwise, it would be courteous to also pay or at least offset their additional travel and/or lodging expenses. You should work this out with your substitute prior to the Auditions.

Are adjudicators paid to serve at the Auditions? [▲ top](#)

In general, no. From the Adjudication Overview: "Since advancement of Student Auditions is regarded as a professional duty for NATS members, normally no fees will be paid for judges. However, when teachers from outside the chapter or region are asked to assist, or when travel costs are excessive or require equalization, or when services rendered are out of the ordinary, certain expenses may be reimbursed by the Auditions Chair out of registration fee funds." Another exception is for members serving as substitutes for other members; see above.

I have some students who are younger than high-school age; may they sing at the Auditions?

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Singers of any age are welcome to sing in the comments-only category 19; they must register and pay fees the same as for any other category.