

SPOTLIGHT NON-CLASSICAL VOICE RULES

WHAT'S REQUIRED OF ME FOR MY NON-CLASSICAL VOICE PRELIMINARY 1 VIDEO AUDITION?

All students begin with a Preliminary 1 video audition by submitting one song. Those scoring highest will advance to Preliminary 2 live auditions in January 2026. If selected to advance to Preliminary 2, you will sing 2 songs for your live audition. Those scoring highest after Preliminary 2 will advance to the Semifinals.

- Please memorize and sing 1 song not to exceed 3 minutes. This may require eliminating repeats. The fact that you do not sing a piece in its entirety will not be held against you in judging
- Your song may be in the style of pop, jazz, country, gospel, musical theater, or songs other than English
- Operettas are not allowed in this category
- Select songs that are appropriate for your age and vocal ability
- If selected to advance to Preliminary 2, you will sing 2 songs of your choice for your live audition. One of them can be the same song you sang for your Preliminary 1 video audition.

ACCOMPANIMENT REQUIREMENTS

- Accompaniment is limited to piano (live or pre-recorded), guitar or pre-recorded backing track without any other vocals
- You may accompany yourself (piano, guitar, etc.) keeping in mind only the vocals are being adjudicated
- Make sure the level of your accompaniment does not overpower the sound of your voice in the recording
- Any lengthy piano introductions should be abridged
- Please do not sing a cappella. There are wonderful online resources for piano or karaoke tracks

GUIDELINES FOR RECORDING YOUR AUDITION

- Your recording device can be a cell phone, tablet, camera, etc. You do NOT have to rent fancy recording equipment. We will refer to the recording devices as "cameras"
- Your song should contain the following introduction: My song is (title) from (Musical) by (composer). OR: My song is (title) by (composer). Your introduction is **not** part of your 3-minute song time limit
- Your introduction may be uploaded separately
- Dress appropriately as you would for a live audition. Please refrain from wearing excessive jewelry or glasses if possible
- Use a fixed point of view for your camera. Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location
- Please be sure your image is clear. The panel must be able to see your facial expressions to properly adjudicate your work
- No sound manipulation, editing or enhancement (e.g. reverberation, auto-tune, frequency equalization, microphones external to video recorder, etc.) are allowed. Sound edits will be grounds for disqualification
- When recording with a tablet or cellphone, use the landscape/horizontal mode for best results
- Do not edit within the song

Before recording your song, film a test. Perform the first few lines of your song, then watch and listen to it on playback. Check the following important things:

Sound: Make sure the acoustics in the room are suitable for a recording. Practice your piece in the space. Please ensure the balance between accompaniment and voice is appropriate. If possible, don't sing in a room with wall-to-wall carpet as it might affect the sound. Make sure there is no noise coming from other rooms near you as you record

Lighting: Make sure the space is well-lit, but not too bright. Judges should be able to see your face clearly. Too little light and judges cannot see you. Too much light will leave you overexposed, and judges cannot see your expressions

Framing: The camera should be set at a distance to frame your face and body clearly. Camera image should be no closer than waist up. If judges only see your face and shoulders, it's too close. If judges can see the entire stage but your facial expressions cannot be seen clearly, it's too far away

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR AUDITION VIDEO

- After you have recorded your song, watch it in playback to make sure you can be seen, and the music heard
- When uploading, verify that the image is upright (not sideways) and plays smoothly
- Save and name your file and upload it into the application

WHAT JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

Tone Production - the ability to achieve a quality of sound appropriate to the type of voice and to the style of the music

Technique - the degree to which the performer has acquired control of the voice

Diction - accurate pronunciation and clear articulation

Intonation - singing in tune

Interpretation - the ability to accurately express the piece performed with a clear understanding of its meaning

Phrasing - sensitivity to the need for phrasing and the ability to execute it

We want to see your unique personality and character!

Please be sure you follow all requirements related to your application. Failure to comply with any of the requirements may result in disqualification during the review process and/or make your application ineligible for an award.

For **guidelines or requirement** questions, email us at spotlight@musiccenter.org.

For **technical issues** please visit the **Acceptd Help Desk** at support@getacceptd.com.

To **start or complete your Spotlight application**, go to: <https://app.getacceptd.com/musiccenter>. If your application is already open, simply click on the Acceptd tab on your computer to return to it.