

SPOTLIGHT CONTEMPORARY INSTRUMENTAL RULES

The Contemporary Instrumental category has replaced the Jazz Instrumental Category. Jazz Instrumental will become one of two subcategories:

Jazz Instrumental and **Popular & Rock Instrumental**. The subcategory of Popular/Rock Instrumental includes Popular, Rock, Folk Rock, R&B/Urban, and Latin/Salsa/Samba.

You may apply in only one of these subcategories: Jazz Instrumental **or** Popular/Rock Instrumental. You may **not** apply to both. In other words, you must choose between Jazz and Popular/Rock.

You can apply with more than one instrument in the subcategory that you choose. In other words, if you want to apply to Jazz and you play Sax and Piano, you can apply twice to this subcategory with separate applications. If you want to apply to Popular/Rock, and play more than one instrument, you can apply with both instruments to this subcategory.

If you advance to Semifinals, the judges will determine which instrument you advance with.

WHAT'S REQUIRED OF ME FOR MY CONTEMPORARY INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC (CIM) PRELIMINARY 1 VIDEO AUDITION

All students begin with a Preliminary 1 video audition. You will be required to play one piece of music. Those scoring highest will advance to Preliminary 2 live auditions in December 2025. If selected to advance to Preliminary 2, you will play 2 selections for your live audition. Those scoring highest after Preliminary 2 will advance to the Semifinals. **Pieces must be limited to approximately 3 minutes**

Subcategory One

JAZZ INSTRUMENTAL:

- Jazz Instrumental **MUST** include improvisation in performance This is the ability to create new motifs, melodies, and rhythms that are suggested by the harmonic structure (chord progression) of the composition
- The instrument to be judged should predominate
- Song form should consist of: melody, 2 choruses of improvised solo, melody
- Drummers should play 1-2 choruses of trading as well as 1-2 choruses of unaccompanied solo over the form of the tune
- Backing tracks, such as the Aebersold tracks, are permitted, as are recorded tracks
- All rhythm section instrumentalists should demonstrate at least 1 chorus of accompaniment/walking
- Up to 3 accompanists are allowed

Choose one Jazz song from the list below to play for your video submission:

1. All The Things You Are
2. Body & Soul
3. I Got Rhythm (or contrafact)
4. I'll Remember April (for Bass - 4 total choruses: melody, solo, walking, melody)
5. Straight, No Chaser (Monk) (three or four choruses on this piece, blues)

6. Nica's Dream (Silver)
7. Con Alma (Gillespie)
8. Stablemates (Golson)

Subcategory Two

POPULAR & ROCK INSTRUMENTAL:

- This subcategory includes Contemporary, Popular/Rock, Folk Rock, R&B/Urban, or Latin/Salsa/Samba
- Selections may be original songs or chosen from existing popular music repertoire
- Students may perform unaccompanied
- Up to 3 accompanists are allowed
- Backing tracks or recorded tracks are allowed
- The instrument to be judged should predominate
- Vocals are allowed but you will be evaluated solely on the instrumental performance
- Improv is not required

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"
- Before you begin to play, please say: "My name is _____, and I'll be playing _____."
- Your introduction may be uploaded separately
- Use a fixed point of view for your camera with you being the main focus. Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Do not pan or move the camera. Camera should be no closer than waist up
- Hands and fingers must be visible
- Ensure recording captures good quality image
- Ensure recording equipment can capture good sound quality. Check for good balance and blend
- Make sure there is 1-3 seconds of silence before the beginning of the piece
- No sound enhancements are allowed
- When recording with a tablet or cellphone, use the landscape/horizontal mode for best results
- Do not edit within a piece; no effects or post performance alterations are allowed

HOW TO SUBMIT YOUR AUDITION VIDEO

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

WHAT THE JUDGES ARE LOOKING FOR

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

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

Rhythm - the ability to establish, maintain, and project rhythms with a wide range of complexity

Intonation - proper tuning of the instrument and in tune playing

Interpretation - the ability to project a convincing conception of the selection

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

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.