

# An NSA Resource



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National Association of Teachers of Singing

## Musical Theatre NSA Category Resources

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# MT Categories Advancing to NSA National Rounds of Auditions

## ALL AUDITION SELECTIONS TO BE PERFORMED FROM MEMORY

**MT 1 Children's Voices** ages 11 or younger in 5th grade or below, a 6-minute audition, performing 2 contrasting, age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature.

**MT 2 Youth Voices** ages 11–14 in 6th–8th grades, a 6-minute audition, performing 2 contrasting, age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature.

**MT 3 High School Treble Voices** ages 14–19, an 8-minute audition, performing 3 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature.

**MT 4 High School Tenor, Baritone & Bass Voices** ages 14–19, an 8-minute audition, performing 3 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature.

**MT 5 Lower Post-HS Treble Voices** ages 22 or younger in their 1st or 2nd year of voice training post-High School, a 10-minute audition, performing 3 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature.

**MT 6 Lower Tenor, Baritone & Bass Voices** ages 22 or younger in their 1st or 2nd year of voice training post-High School, a 10-minute audition, performing 3 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature.

**MT 7 Upper Treble Voices** ages 25 or younger in their 3rd–5th year of voice training post-High School, a 12-minute audition, performing 4 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature. This MT category is for students who have not yet enrolled in a graduate degree program.

**MT 8 Upper Tenor, Baritone & Bass Voices** ages 25 or younger in their 3rd–5th year of voice training post-High School, a 12-minute audition, performing 4 contrasting age-appropriate selections performed from musicals. Only one selection may be chosen from an operetta **or** musical theatre song literature. This MT category is for students who have not yet enrolled in a graduate degree program.

**Advanced Musical Theatre Performing Artists** ages 20 to 28 years old are encouraged to enter [NATS National Musical Theatre Competition](#).

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**ADDITIONAL Musical Theatre Categories in NSA** may be designed by any Chapter, District, or Region of NATS to meet the diverse needs of their membership; however, any additional MT categories will not advance to the national levels of NSA at this time.

**NOTE:** According to the number of participants, Chapters, Districts, and Regions may choose to sub-divide the NSA categories listed above. For example: if MT 2 has a large number of entries, MT 2 could be subdivided into MT 2A for ages 11 and 12 with MT 2B for ages 13 and 14.

## Defining NSA-Eligible Musical Theatre Repertoire

In NSA, selections from Musical  
may include solos from

- Staged Musical
- Animated Musical
- Musical Film
- Televised Musical
- Internet Musical
- Book Musical
- Musical Revue
- Juke Box Musical
- Cruise Ship Musical
- Theatrical Song Cycle

Only **ONE** NSA Musical Theatre Selection

**MAY** be a solo from

- An Operetta

**OR**

- Musical Theatre's Song Literature

*(songs written by an established composer of musicals that may have been cut from or not included in a musical or written to be performed by a specific performing artist, etc.)*

## NATS National Student Audition Categories of Entry in NSA Regions, Districts, and Chapters

The National Student Auditions begin at the region-level and progress to the national preliminary, semifinal, and final rounds. If meeting the level of study and age requirements, student-singers may enter multiple genre categories. Region auditions should offer all yellow-highlighted categories contained in the “Categories of Entry” section of this document on page 8. Student-singers may only advance to the National Student Auditions by placing 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> in a region’s NSA. Students placing in Chapter or District auditions will not be automatically advanced to the National Student Auditions.

## Terminology applying to ALL NSA Categories

<b>CATEGORY</b>	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
<b>CATEGORY NUMBERS</b>	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 Avocational Adults 11 & 12 Nontraditional Students 13 & 14
<b>LENGTH OF STUDY</b>	Length of voice study & 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. <b>POST- HIGH SCHOOL STUDY</b> <b>Lower:</b> students 22 or younger, in their 1 <sup>st</sup> or 2 <sup>nd</sup> year of post-high school voice study <b>Upper:</b> students 25 or younger, in their 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 4 <sup>th</sup> , or 5 <sup>th</sup> year of post-high school voice study and not enrolled in a graduate voice program <b>Advanced:</b> post-baccalaureate students aged 30 years or younger in their 4 <sup>th</sup> 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.
<b>AGE LIMIT</b>	Age limits are determined by the age of the entered student on <b>September 1<sup>st</sup></b> , 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.
<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. Regional and National Auditions will require three selections in all High School Categories.
<b>AUDITIONING MEMBER-TEACHERS</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.
<b>OFFENSIVE LANGUAGE IN AUDITIONS</b>	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.

# Musical Theatre MT Audition Terminology

<b>Musical Theatre Selections</b>	Repertoire is selected from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, theatrical song cycles, and musical theatre song literature. Only <i>one</i> of the required selections may be an operetta aria <i>or</i> from musical theatre song literature.
<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>• Judicious 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 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 <a href="#">NSA FAQ</a> for additional information.
<b>Authentic Performance</b>	A genuine tone unique to each singer for the purpose of sincere communication with no elements of vocal impersonation.



# 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.

Hear [audio examples](#) of varied Musical Theatre mixes

STANDARDS	DEVELOPING 70 – 79	ADVANCING 80 – 89	MASTERING 90 – 100
<b>TONE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The singer shows mastery of the vocal techniques required for the repertoire selected. (<i>See above</i>)</li> <li>The singer makes subtle or dramatic vocal adjustments appropriate to the style and character.</li> <li>The singer produces a wide variety of vocal colors throughout the song in the service of character, story, and style.</li> <li>Resonance is speech-like; intelligibility is a priority.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>BREATH &amp; ALIGNMENT</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Inhalation is easy, full, and efficient.</li> <li>Exhalation provides stability, support, and vocal energy.</li> <li>Alignment is dynamic and free to express the physical life of the character.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>LANGUAGE &amp; DICTION</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The lyrics are sung with accurate pronunciation and effective articulation in the style <i>and</i> vernacular appropriate to the character.</li> <li>The singer embodies a thorough understanding and communication of the lyrics.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>MUSICIANSHIP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pitches and rhythms are accurate.</li> <li>The markings of the composer are observed and performed in idiomatic style.</li> <li>Memorization is organic and accurate.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>ARTISTRY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The performance synthesizes vocal and physical communication to embody a specific character and story.</li> <li>The listeners are engaged in an honest and believable performance.</li> </ul>	<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>
<b>ENSEMBLE (comments only)</b> 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>

# Finding Musical Theatre Solos for Auditions

## Reliable Websites for Researching Musical Theatre

1. Well-maintained by The Broadway League, [the Internet Broadway Database \(IBDB\)](#) is as reliable as you can get in researching songs and shows that have played on Broadway. Wanting to know if a song has been on Broadway or the name of a Broadway musical in which a song was performed, this is the website to use.
2. Well-maintained as a program of the Lucille Lortel Theatre Foundation, [the Internet Off-Broadway Database \(IOBDB\)](#), has a wonderful database to research the many aspects of Off-Broadway shows including links to the musical's websites for info on cast recordings, synopses, and more.
3. [Playbill's the Vault](#) boasts of being the largest Broadway database online. If you want to see the most details about a musical a musical produced in NYC including articles, promotional videos, digital playbills to see creative credits and song lists of Broadway Musicals, this is the website to visit.
4. The privately managed and newly revised [Broadway Musical Home](#)'s "RIGHTS" navigation tab lists a complete list of companies holding performance rights to musicals, where more specifics on the musicals may be found. This site's "MUSICALS" navigation tab offers 21 types of musicals to explore (based on operas, based on films, based on real life characters, based on cartoons, written by a Black artist, *etc.*) This site's database is large, but not complete. For the musicals that do have in the database the offer synopses, link to site of company holding production rights, list of cast members & creative team, songs, video excerpts when available, links to sheet music, and a list of awards won and sometimes reviews of the show. and sometimes excerpts from the musicals. Those who manage the site have been erratic in updating this site, but this site's level of quality and quantity seems to be improving.
5. [Wikipedia](#) and its external links and references make it a great starting point for researching a musical, composer, or lyricist.
6. YouTube is now unrivaled in offering musical theatre cast recordings to hear without charge, but students will also find shockingly poor performances by novices there as well. There is no quality control here.
7. Using your internet browser to search a musical theatre composer's name will often lead you to that composer's personal website and direct you to where their sheet music may be purchased on their website or link you to a webstore where their sheet music or anthologies are sold.

## Choosing a Musical Theatre Solo for an Audition

1. Does the song meet the requirements of the audition?
2. Does something happen in the song? Does the character have a journey through an experience during the song and will that story still make sense, if performed outside the musical's context?
3. Does the song fit comfortably within the vocal skills and range of the singer?
4. Is the singer visually and vocally believable delivering the lyrics?
5. Does the singer have the life experience to portray the character and tell the song's story?
6. Is the singer able to make enough technical and artistic choices with their voice AND in their acting to give a convincing performance?
7. Does the singer know the synopsis of the plot, who the character is, and where that character's solo fits in the musical's larger story?
8. Does the singer understand that no song is belted from beginning to end in current professional practice? Varied mixes of Mode I and Mode II are used to reveal the singer's reaction to the truth in the lyric. Watch and hear the dramatically motivated shifts in modes of singing in a 1-minute excerpt of this [musical theatre solo](#).
9. Is the singer performing the song in a style of music that matches the style or music heard in the musical?
10. Does the singer understand that acting is reacting to the character's internal world (thoughts and feelings) and the character's external world taken in through the imagined 5 senses of the character? Any other approach can become presentational, insincere communication.

# Websites for Purchasing Musical Theatre

*(in no particular order)*

1. A Musical Theatre Composer's personal website
2. [Music Notes](#), which offers transposition services and search by song title, composer, or musical title with immediate downloads
3. [Sheet Music Direct](#), which offers interactive or standard pdf versions of sheet music for download
4. [Sheet Music Plus](#), which offers the worst search engine, but does show both digital downloads and physical books available for order.
5. [Hal Leonard's](#) Online Music Store, which will show you which books include the song you are seeking and some digital downloads in addition to books to order.
6. [Alfred's](#) Online Music Store, which offers approx. 50 musicals and musical theatre anthologies not available from other publishers
7. [New Musical Theatre](#), which offers strictly musical theatre sheet music for download
8. [Repertwa](#), which offers instantly downloadable new musical theatre sheet music, recordings, and backing tracks by lesser-known composers & lyricists.
9. [Concord Theatricals Music Shop](#), which sells some music not available elsewhere and some that is available on other sites.
10. [Musical Theatre Songs](#) a subscription-based website for strictly musical theatre songs with many search options to find the song you need in their over 11,000 song library. The search on this site also allows you to search by character's age.
11. [Musical Theatre Resources](#) is more of a repertoire guide for musical theatre performers as seen through the lens of its creator Kevin Michael Jones. In his rep guides, he does give a link to where to purchase the sheet music for songs.
12. Musical Theatre Repertoire Coaches abound and recommend repertoire appropriate for singers' ages, physical type, and voice type.
13. [Musicals101](#) offers their guide to finding music, recordings, and scripts of musicals as well as information on performers, musical, composers, and more.

## Preparing to Perform a Musical Theatre Solo

Thoroughly preparing a musical theatre solo for an audition or public performance requires both technical and artistic attention to many musical and theatrical variables. For the most compelling performance, the clues are in the score and libretto/script of the musical. The character and their experiences are why the music exists as it does. The greater your attention to detail is, the greater the chance you will engage the audience in your story.

- **Break the song down into structural sections** (intro, verse, chorus, interlude, bridge, outro, etc.). A shift in compositional structure is often marked in the score with two thin bar lines. Make sure each structural section of the song serves the character with a different dramatic purpose. Dance breaks should be cut in NSA auditions.
- **Consider all markings in the score as clues to the story and character:**
  - If accompaniment patterns, textures, or tessituras change; the singing actor must change. Accompaniment patterns can reflect panic, relief, drive, doubt, fear, pensiveness, hesitation, effusive joy, and so many more specifics.
  - Remember in theatre music: sustain a **fermata** only as long as you have something to experience or communicate, a // (**caesura**) means something must happen before you may continue singing, a **bell tone** (a *higher tessitura, open octave sounded in the accompaniment*) means the character has had a new thought or remembered something in that moment, which changes the following lyric. Any momentary change in the

music like the three listed here are clues to changes the character is experiencing. To ignore musical moments of change is to ignore an integral part of the story.

- Make dynamic markings specific energies (tender, passionate, pleading, surprising, *etc.*) rather than just volumes.
  - An accidental in the melody (a moment) or key change (a section) indicates something has shifted in your character's perspective on what is happening in the story and/or inside themselves.
  - Any change in tempo means that something has shifted in your character's motivation. Loving, arguing, remembering, becoming excited, discovering, cherishing, longing, *etc.*—can all be supported by tempo.
- **Never try to act an emotion or emote when singing**, instead engage your vivid imagination in the character's world to see, hear, smell, or physically feel something and respond naturally. Balance responses to the imagined external world of the character with responses to the character's thoughts and internal feelings. Never act/mime the meaning of the words, except to create comedy, instead respond with how the truth of the lyric matters to the character. The audience wants to know the character; we don't need the character to serve as our dictionary for understanding the lyrics.

## MT Resources for Teachers & Students

### Books on Musical Theatre Performance

*(in no particular order)*

*So You Want to Sing Musical Theatre: A Guide for Professionals (Expanded & Updated Edition)* by Amanda Flynn

*Acting in Musical Theatre: A Comprehensive Course, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition* by Joe Deer and Rocco Dal Vera

*Musical Theatre Song: A Comprehensive Course in Selection, Preparation, and Presentation for the Modern Performer* by Stephen Purdy

*Acting the Song: Performance Skills for the Musical Theatre* by Tracey Moore and Allison Bergman

*Rock the Audition* by Sheri Sanders

*Vocal Athlete* by Wendy LeBorgne and Marci Rosenberg

*Popular Singing and Style* by Donna Soto-Morettini

*Sing Anything: Mastering Vocal Styles* by Lisa Popeil and Gina Latimerlo

*Training Contemporary Commercial Singers* by Elizabeth Ann Benson

*So You Want to Sing Gospel* by Dr. Trineice Robinson-Martin

*Singing in Musical Theatre* by Joan Melton

*Zen of Scream DVD series* by Melissa Cross

*Improvisation for the Theater: A Handbook of Teaching and Directing Techniques (Drama and Performance Studies)* by Viola Spolin

*Vocal Yoga: The Joy of Breathing, Singing and Sounding* by Heather Lyle

*One Voice* by Joan Melton

*Broadway Swings* by J. Austin Eyer and Lyndy Franklin Smith

*Creating Musical Theatre* by Lyn Cramer

*Singing In Musical Theatre: The Training of Singers and Actors* by Joan Melton



## Links to Additional Online NATS Resources for Musical Theatre

The NSA Musical Theatre Rubric begins: “All vowels in MUSICAL THEATRE are some form of a MIX of Mode I (Chest/TA) and Mode II (Head/CT).” [Hear audio examples](#) of professionals demonstrating the sound of numerous mixes as performed by different voice types.

[Video examples](#) of different modes, mixes, and styles of singing, links to vocal exercises on video and more as discussed in *So You Want to Sing Musical Theatre (Expanded and Updated Edition)* by Amanda Flynn

[Free Online Resources on Vocal Production](#) from *So You Want to Sing Music Theater, 1<sup>st</sup> Edition* by Karen Hall.

[Tips for Adjudicating Musical Theatre Categories](#) in NSA is a video by Dr. Matt Edwards, who addresses the NSA Musical Theatre Rubric’s Standards of Performance as applied to the varied styles of music in Musical Theatre.

[44 links to Articles published in the Journal of Singing](#) about the many different aspects of singing, repertoire, styles, and performance in Musical Theatre.

[21 Live Learning Center links](#) to videos of NATS presentations or workshops about the different aspects of Musical Theatre as reflected in the titles of each video, plus a search engine to find more videos on specific topics within Musical Theatre.

A [List of Links to Podcasts](#) that discuss all topics on singing, including podcasts about musical theatre.

## Musical Theatre’s Styles & Stylisms

Musicals exist in an array of eras, styles of music, and ever-evolving trends in how musical theatre is expected to be performed. Part of the performance of any solo from musical theatre involves elements of vocal styling, which may include the use of varied vocal colors, modes of singing, vocal register shifts, stylized vocal onsets/offsets, and even some planned or improvisatory vocal embellishing of the melody.

A list of musical theatre solos organized by style of music offers examples you can find on the musical’s cast recordings available on YouTube. Listen to the specific stylisms used by these professional musical theatre artists.

**REMEMBER** in singing MUSICAL THEATRE all vocal styling is dictated by the style of music being performed and motivated by the intentions of the character being portrayed. No added styling is appropriate without an intention to communicate *more*—prompting a need for *more* than what may be notated on the page. Adding stylisms without dramatic intention to communicate can be self-ingratiating and not stage worthy.

### When watching and listening to the examples on the following pages, notice the artistic use of...

**Primal Sounds:** growls, moans, cries, calls, grunts, *etc.*

**Personal Nuances in Melody:** neighbor tone, licks, riffs, runs, flips, pitch-slides, yodel/register shifts, bending pitches, scooping to pitch, pop-appoggiaturas, vocal ornamentation born in the style of music and performed to express the character’s reactions to their character’s internal and external worlds, *etc.*

**Vocal Onsets:** vocal fry, slide to pitch, yodel, growl, raspy, breathy, cry, creak, flip, scream, shout, squall, *etc.*

**Vocal Offsets or Releases:** abrupt glottal stop, breathy, fall-off, fall-up, shadow vowel, fry, creaky, gassy, *etc.*

**Vocalization of Lyrics:** onomatopoeia, renewing vowels within a single syllable, shadow vowels,

**Mixes and Modes of Singing:** lighter speech mixes, lower speech mixes, twang, belt, lighter or heavier belt mixes, variations of chest mixes from raspy/edgy to clear, gritty mixes, *etc.*

**Styles of inhalation:** shallow, gasps, deep, physically lifting on inhalations, *etc.*

**Physical Alignment and Posture:** all postures are in service of the character

## Examples of Musical Theatre Solos in Varied Music & Vocal Styles

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singing Actor
Pop	I Can't Stand Still	Footloose	Tom Snow/Dean Pitchford	Jeremy Kushnier
Pop	Holding Out for a Hero	Footloose	Jim Steinman	Jennifer Laura Thompson
Pop	Mama Who Bore Me	Spring Awakening	Duncan Sheik/Steven Sater	Lea Michele
Pop	Conga	On Your Feet	Enrique Garcia	Ana Villafañe
Pop	Love is My Legs	Dirty Rotten Scoundrils	David Yazbek	Norbert Leo Butz
Pop	Easy to Be Hard	Hair	Galt MacDermot	Caissie Levy
Pop	When Someone Comes into Your Life	On Your Feet	Gloria Estefan	Eliseo Román
Pop	She Used to Be Mine	Waitress	Sara Bareilles	Jessie Mueller
Pop	I Know the Truth	Aida	Elton John	Sherie René Scott
Pop	Pleasant Valley Sunday	Beautiful	Carole King	Sara King
Pop	I'm Not That Girl	Wicked	Stephen Schwartz	Idina Menzel
Pop	So Far Away	Beautiful	Carole King	Jessie Mueller
Pop	The Past is Another Land	Aida	Elton John	Heather Headley
Pop	I Miss the Mountains	Next to Normal	Tom Kitt	Alice Ripley
Pop	Get Down	Six	Lucy Moss & Toby Marlow	Genesis Lynea

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Rock	Jesus of Suburbia	American Idiot	Green Day	John Gallagher Jr.
Rock	Sugar Daddy	Hedwig and the Angry Inch	Stephen Trask	Neil Patrick Harris
Rock	The Long Grift	Hedwig and the Angry Inch	Stephen Trask	Lena Hall
Rock	What About Love	American Idiot	Green Day	Milissa McGhee
Rock	I'm Free / Pinball Wizard	The Who's Tommy	Pete Townshend	Michael Cerveris
Rock	St. Jimmy	American Idiot	Green Day	Tony Vincent
Rock	I Wanna Rock	Rock of Ages	Daniel Dee Snider	Constantine Maroulis
Rock	Gethsemane (I Only Want to Say)	Jesus Christ Superstar	Andrew Lloyd Webber	Ian Gillan
Rock	Judas' Death	Jesus Christ Superstar	Andrew Lloyd Webber	Murray Head

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
R & B	I Meant You No Harm	Dream Girls	Henry Krieger	Eddie Murphy
R & B	And I Am Telling You	Dream Girls	Henry Krieger	Jennifer Holliday
R & B	Fools Fall in Love	Smokey Joe's Cafe	Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller	B.J. Crosby
R & B	Let it Sing	Violet	Jeanine Tesori	Joshua Henry
R & B	Hold Me in your Heart	Kinky Boots	Cyndi Lauper	Billy Porter
R & B	I'm Here	Color Purple	A. Willis/B. Russell/S. Bray	Cynthia Erivo
R & B	Forever	Shrek	Tesori & Lindsay-Abaire	Carrie Compere
R & B	Twenty-four Hours of Lovin'	Best Little Whorehouse	Carol Hall	Delores Hall
R & B	Memphis Lives in Me	Memphis	David Bryan	Chad Kimball

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Gospel	Walk Him Up	Purlee	Gary Geld, Peter Udell	Linda Hopkins
Gospel	Raise Me Up	Violet	Jeanine Tesori	Rema Webb
Gospel	Do the Sacred Mass	Sister Act	Alan Menken	Patina Miller
Gospel	Can't Stop Praising His Name	Black Nativity	R. Grundy & H.Netter	Forest Whitaker & GospelDelic Choir
Gospel	How Blest We Are—Solo portion	Big River	Roger Miller	Jennifer Leigh Warren

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
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Rap	Alexander Hamilton	Hamilton	Lin-Manuel Miranda	Leslie Odom, Jr., et al
Rap	Witches Rap	Into the Woods	Stephen Sondheim	Bernadette Peters
Rap	Jimmy's Rap	Dream Girls	Henry Krieger	Eddie Murphy
Rap	Great Big Stuff	Dirty Rotten Scoundrels	David Yazbek	Norbert Leo Butz
Rap	Satisfied	Hamilton	Lin-Manuel Miranda	Renée Elise Goldsberry
Rap	En Washington Heights	In The Heights	Lin-Manuel Miranda	Lin-Manuel Miranda

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Country	Let's Make Believe We're in Love	Footloose	Tom Snow	Robin Baxter
Country	State Road 21	The Bridges of Madison Co.	Jason Robert Brown	Katie Klaus
Country	Folsom Prison	Million Dollar Quartet	Johnny Cash	Lance Guest
Country	You're Going Back to Jail	Bonnie and Clyde	Frank Wildhorn & Don Black	Melissa van der Schyff
Country	Backwoods Barbie	9 to 5	Dolly Parton	Megan Hilty
Country	Through the Mountain	Floyd Collins	Adam Guettel	Robyn North
Country	It All Fades Away	Bridges of Madison County	Jason Robert Brown	Steven Pasquale

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Bluegrass	If You Knew My Story	Bright Star	Steve Martin & Edie Brickell	Carmen Cusack
Bluegrass	Pickle Pear Bloom	The Robber Bridegroom	Alfred Uhry & R. Waldman	Barbara Lang
Bluegrass	Heartbreaker	Bright Star	Steve Martin & Edie Brickell	A.J. Shively
Bluegrass	Way Back in the Day	Bright Star	Steve Martin & Edie Brickell	Carmen Cusack
Bluegrass	I Huckleberry Me	Big River	Roger Miller	Daniel Jenkins

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Blues	How 'Bout a Dance	Bonnie & Clyde	Frank Wildhorn & Don Black	Laura Osnes
Blues	Supper Time	As Thousands Cheer	Irving Berlin	Ethel Waters
Blues	Mean to Me	Ain't Misbehavin'	Roy Turk & Fred Ahlert	Frenchie Davis
Blues	Gotta Right to Sing the Blues	Blues in the Night	Harold Arlen	Eileen Farrell
Blues	Blues in the Night	Blues in the Night	Harold Arlen	Ann Hampton Callaway
Blues	Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me	Bullets Over Broadway	McCarron, Morgan, Swanstone & Kelly	Betsy Wolfe
Blues	Hell No	The Color Purple	B. Russell / A.Willis & S. Bray	Felicia P. Fields
Blues	Fools Fall in Love	Smokey Joe's Cafe	Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller	B.J. Crosby
Blues	You're The Boss	Smokey Joe's Cafe	Jerry Leiber & Mike Stoller	Frederick Owens, Brenda Braxton

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Jazz	All I Care About	Chicago	John Kander & Fred Ebb	
Jazz	Too Darn Hot	Kiss Me Kate	Cole Porter	Stanley Wayne Mathis
Jazz	Cornet Man	Funny Girl	Jule Styne & Bob Merrill	Barbra Streisand
Jazz	That's How You Jazz	Jelly's Last Jam	Susan Birkenhead & Jelly Roll Morton	Gregory Hines
Jazz	Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness if I Do	Bullets Over Broadway	Porter Grainger & Everett Robbins	Nick Cordero
Jazz	I Can Cook, Too	On The Town	Leonard Bernstein, Comden & Green	Alysha Umphress
Jazz	Back On Base	Closer Than Ever	Richard Maltby, Jr. & David Shire	Sally Mayes

Style of Music	Song	Musical	Composer/Lyricist	Singer
Legit	Voices of Angels	Amazing Grace	Christopher Smith	Erin Mackey
Legit	Greatest Star of All	Sunset Boulevard	Andrew Lloyd Webber, Black & Hampton	George Hearn
Legit	Her Face	Carnival	Bob Merrill	Jerry Orbach

Legit	The Beauty Is	The Light in the Piazza	Adam Guettel	Kelli O'Hara
Legit	Fable	The Light in the Piazza	Adam Guettel	Victoria Clark
Legit	Il Mondo Era Vuoto	The Light in the Piazza	Adam Guettel	Matthew Morrison
Legit	I've Decided to Marry You	A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder	Steven Lutvak	Lauren Worsham, Bryce Pinkham
Legit	Easy To Love	Anything Goes	Cole Porter	Howard McGillin
Legit	A Lovely Night	Cinderella	Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II	Laura Osnes
Legit	If I Loved You	Carousel	Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II	Kelli O'Hara
Legit	Poor Monty	A Gentleman's Guide to Love and Murder	Steven Lutvak	Lisa O'Hare
Legit	Soliloquy	Carousel	Richard Rodgers & Oscar Hammerstein II	Joshua Henry
Legit	This Is the Life	Love Life	Kurt Weill & Alan Jay Lerner	Michael Scarborough