

# MD/DC NATS

## National Association Teachers *Of* Singing



*Maryland / D.C. Chapter*

# Handbook

### MISSION STATEMENT

To encourage the highest standards of the vocal art and of ethical principles in the teaching of singing; and to promote vocal education and research at all levels, both for the enrichment of the general public and for the professional advancement of the talented.

## Welcome!

You have joined with a community of friends and colleagues who are all seeking the same goal: excellence in teaching and singing, both for themselves and their students. You are a part of the largest association of teachers of singing in the world, with members in more than twenty-five countries.

- **Education:** Members have access to lifelong learning experiences such as master classes, workshops, and conferences, held at the district, regional, and national levels.
- **Journal of Singing:** NATS members receive the *Journal of Singing* as a benefit of membership. Published five times annually, this scholarly journal features articles on all aspects of singing and the teaching of singing, written by distinguished scholars from around the world.
- **Student Auditions:** One of the benefits widely enjoyed by NATS members is the privilege of taking students to annual chapter and regional auditions, where they sing for a panel of teachers and receive positive comments and feedback on their work as singers and performers.
- **Employment Opportunities:** Members have access to an online database of positions currently available at colleges and universities across the United States and Canada. In addition, members may place their contact information on the Find a Teacher database, accessed regularly by students seeking private voice teachers in their areas.
- **Networking:** NATS has over 7,000 members, many of whom are faculty at colleges and universities worldwide. Most NATS teachers are active in performance as well, and have invaluable contacts in the professional worlds of both singing and teaching. Members may access contact information for any other members through the online directory.

**Support for Young/New Teachers of Singing:** NATS recognizes an ongoing commitment to support and encourage the development of teachers of singing who are beginning their careers with programs such as:

NATS Intern Program  
EMERGING LEADER AWARD  
INDEPENDENT TEACHER FELLOWSHIP

For more information on these and other programs and benefits, see [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org)

MD-DC NATS is the Maryland/District of Columbia chapter of NATS and includes choral and opera directors, composers, private studio and schoolteachers, university and college professors, researchers, journalists, and voice care professionals.

The MD-DC Chapter is part of the Mid-Atlantic Region of the national organization, which also includes Virginia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. Member teachers encourage the highest standards of singing through excellence in teaching and the promotion of vocal education and research. Our goals include the development of singers with both professional and avocational aspirations.

We also encourage, conduct and stimulate effective cooperation among voice teachers for our mutual welfare and advancement and meet regularly for workshops and resource programs and to enjoy the professional enrichment provided by our fellow colleagues.

The largest event of the year is the Student Auditions. Participation from schools and studios across the district has continued to increase over the past several years, with over 300 auditions scheduled at recent district-wide events.

*As a new member, you are encouraged to take advantage of all of the opportunities that the National Association and the MD/DC Chapter afford. Participate in meetings and training sessions. Attend concerts and performances that feature our members and their students. Network with others to learn about institutions, programs, and competitions that will benefit your studio clients. Attend Regional and National meetings, workshops, and conventions.*

For more information on programs and activities,  
see [www.mddcnats.org](http://www.mddcnats.org)

Follow the LOG IN procedure to navigate easily through the site.

## **KNOW YOUR OFFICERS:**

The website provides a listing of the officers and directors who volunteer their time to serve the organization. Their contact information, along with the membership directory, is also available.

## **PAY YOUR DUES:**

Membership in the national organization is required prior to local chapter membership.

NATS (national) will send you notification of your annual membership dues for both of the national and chapter organizations. You must be current with BOTH payments to be participate in the chapter activities.

Members MUST pay both national and local dues online at the national website [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org).

You must be paid-in-full on both accounts to participate in activities, including the MD/DC STUDENT AUDITIONS. Failure to do so will result in your students' inability to participate in the auditions.

Please be aware of DEADLINES for dues payments, to keep your memberships active and current. Your dues should be paid BY January 1<sup>st</sup> for that upcoming calendar year.

## DISTRICT STUDENT AUDITIONS

*"At the heart of our student adjudications is "the idea of constructive criticism along with encouragement.... Perhaps one of the greatest ties that binds us together as NATS members is the care we have for the students of our colleagues, as demonstrated at our student auditions."*

-Roy Delp, past President of NATS

Each year NATS' chapters and regions host Student Auditions, an exciting experience where singers perform and receive written feedback about their performances. At these events singers meet and hear other singers, NATS teachers get to know their colleagues better, and everyone has the chance to hear a variety of songs. An Honors Recital at the culmination of the Auditions showcases the outstanding performer in each category.

With the majority of member studios participating and hundreds of students performing in over 30 categories, the Auditions is a monumental undertaking. The team of volunteers, under the direction of the Vice President, works hard to provide students and teachers with the best event possible.

**YOUR cooperation and adherence to the deadlines, rules, and policies will do much to make the Auditions a successful experience for everyone.**

The MD-DC website provides all of the information that you need:

- Date and location
- Category numbers, descriptions, literature requirements
- Fees and payment information
- On-line Registration procedure

## **PERSONNEL, GUIDELINES, AND POLICIES**

### **AUDITIONS CHAIRPERSON**

The responsibilities of the Auditions Chairperson include scheduling the auditions, assigning teachers and staff, and fairly enforcing the rules and regulations as set forth by the Board of Directors. The Auditions Chair is the final authority regarding the implementation of the rules, policies, and regulations.

### **MEMBERS WITH PARTICIPATING STUDENTS**

Must be in good standing at the national and chapter levels of NATS. Failure to do so will result in their students' inability to participate in the auditions.

Complete and submit required applications forms in a timely manner. TRIPLE check entries for any errors.

Ensure that all requirements are met.

Serve as Adjudicators.

Guarantee that students adhere to the NATS Policy on Copyright Issues. NO photocopies of works are allowed. NO Exceptions.

Acknowledge a former teacher, if a student has been studying with a sponsoring teacher for less than eight (8) months. The registration application requires this information; compliance is part of our Code of Ethics.

### **ADJUDICATORS**

The responsibility of the Adjudicator is to hear the performance, to write comments, and to rank or score. During the auditions there must be no consultation, spoken or written, between Adjudicators concerning the evaluation of students.

It is imperative that the Adjudicator remembers the introductory statement: "constructive criticism along with encouragement" that demonstrates respect and care for students and fellow teachers. Avoid unconstructive or harsh remarks and uncommonly low scores. Write comments that support a motivating spirit that is one of cooperation in the pursuit of vocal artistry and technique through hearing and being heard, judging, and being judged, in a climate of mutual support and concern.

Write legibly, in pencil. Sign your name legibly. You may indicate your institution, but do not include contact numbers or sites.

Take into consideration the category. Beginning high school students should not be on the same scoring scale as senior college.

## **ADJUDICATOR – ROOM CAPTAIN**

- The Auditions Chairperson will assign a captain from the team of adjudicators in each room.
- Fill out the packet cover sheet with judge's names and cell phone numbers.
- Check and verify music legitimacy. NO photocopies.
- Assign a timekeeper. STAY on TIME.
- Balance the scores after three (3) performers. Teachers should total their three scores – the combined totals should be within a range of ten (10) points. No teacher should be required to change a score, however; the Chairperson can exercise the right to disregard scores that are not in line with the other judges or the category.
- Monitor extraneous or inappropriate comments by judging panel.
- Note any policy or rule infraction; however do NOT mention it to the student. Evaluate and score. Bring any concerns to the Tally Room.
- At the end of your schedule, collate sheets by singer. Check for signatures and scores.
- Return folder with cover sheet and score sheets, to the Tally Room.

## **ADJUDICATOR SUBSTITUTION**

- Teachers who submit students are required to attend and participate in the Student Auditions.
- If extenuating circumstances prohibit participation at Auditions, Teachers are required to provide a NATS member in good standing as a substitute.
- There is no fee (in lieu of providing a substitute adjudicator) at the District level Auditions. There is a fee, however, that is imposed at the Regional level.

Members should not abuse this policy; teachers who repeatedly miss Auditions (two or more years) may be prohibited from submitting students.

## **COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS**

- Teachers may **not** accompany their own students. Because of adjudication assignments, teachers should not accompany students of another teacher.
- Each student is responsible for bringing his/her own collaborative pianist.
- A collaborative pianist may play for a maximum of (8) eight category auditions. One student performing in two categories counts as two auditions.
- On-site collaborative pianists will be available to perform at the Honors Recital for a reasonable fee, to accommodate students who are unable to have their own pianist. A pianist's availability may prevent the opportunity for rehearsal.
- Collaborative Pianists must play only from original music or approved digital copies, in accordance with the NATS Copyright Policy.

## **GUIDELINES** – a Timetable for Successful Participation

**Obtain and Communicate** the Audition date and location to your students as soon as possible. Check the website for information.

**Determine Repertoire** for the student. Category Requirements are posted on the website. Be aware of category restrictions, student age and experience, and time allotment.

- NO changes will be allowed after repertoire deadline.
- Students performing repertoire not listed may be disqualified

**Obtain Piano Collaborators.** Whether you do this yourself, or have students procure their own, you will need the pianists' names and phone numbers to register. Collaborators may play for a maximum of EIGHT (8) auditions.

**Register Students** individually on the On-line Registration form. The flexible form allows you to input student data, save it, and return to edit the information before you submit it.

- Submit pianists' information carefully, spelling the names *exactly* the same on each entry. The Audition schedule is coordinated around this information – accuracy is vital.

**Send Payment** to the Treasurer

- ONE check or PayPal payment for ALL entries.
- Include a list of students / categories that the check covers
- PayPal provides a memo block for your student/category list.

**Meet Deadlines** for registration, repertoire changes, and payment.

**Communicate** the schedule to your students. The finalized schedule is available on-line approximately two weeks before the Auditions.

**Require professionalism** from your students.

- Student should arrive to check in, find their audition room, coordinate with their accompanist, and warm up at least 45 minutes prior to their assigned time.
- Student should report to their audition room at least 10 minutes prior to their audition, as their schedule allows.
- Student should assure that their collaborator has originals of all music selections.
- Student should be dressed appropriately and use polished stage presentation to introduce themselves and their selections.
- If the student wins their category, the student should:
  - Initial the category sheet if they will sing on the Honors Recital.
  - Choose one selection that is less than three minutes.

- Prepare to make an introduction, announcing their name, teacher, accompanist, piece, and composer.
- Confirm their own pianist, OR
- Report to the Registration Desk to
  - Obtain an on-site Collaborative Pianist,
  - Pay their required fee,
  - Provide original music,
  - Rehearse

**Participate Responsibly** as NATS members and Adjudicators

- Be on time and prepared
- Be professional in your dealings with students and teachers
- Be respectful in reviewing the outcomes of categories.

**Attend the Honors Recital**, collecting your score sheets afterward.

**Prepare for Regional Auditions.** Any student achieving a qualifying score is eligible to participate in the Regional Adjudications. There is no additional fee for Regional Auditions.

- Check the website for additional information.
- Your student will have approximately ONE week to confirm participation.
- Students may receive a travel compensation for participating, depending on Board decision. This check is presented at the Regional event.

**Express your observations**, reactions, and opinions about the Auditions to the Chairperson or a Board Member at an appropriate time. A polite email or letter or a prepared comment at a NATS Workshop or meeting will be well-received and carefully taken into consideration.

Student Auditions provide a great performance venue for every student in your studio, a training experience for each teacher to sharpen evaluation skills, and an opportunity to gain new insights for your teaching practices from seasoned professional educators.