











## NSA Biennial Auditions

# American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

Nationally, the American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NATS summer workshop years and the Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is offered in NATS conference years (national finals in odd-numbered years). The 3 American Negro Spiritual Categories are offered in each region's NSA with singers placing 1<sup>st</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> advancing to the national preliminaries. Chapters are also encouraged to add these categories to chapter auditions. Where applicable, chapter auditions may serve as qualify students to advance to their region's auditions.

## American Negro Spiritual Audition Terminology

<b>Spiritual Definition</b>	Arrangements in classical style of the North American Negro Spirituals by composers similar in style to the spirituals of Hall Johnson, R. Nathaniel Dett, Florence Price, Moses Hogan, Edward Boatner, Undine Smith Moore, James Weldon and J. Rosamond Johnson, Margaret Bonds and others. The classical style excludes Gospel, Blues and Jazz music. See below for a link to more information available online.
<b>Memorization</b>	All audition selections must be performed from memory.
<b>Diction</b>	Because of the idiomatic nature of the spiritual, diction restrictions will be relaxed. Standard English pronunciations may be observed, <i>i.e.</i> "de" or "duh" may be replaced with "the." For more advanced students, the scholarly study of diction in spirituals is equivalent to studying the lyric diction of other languages.
<b>Transposition</b>	Published transpositions consistent with the NATS Copyright Policy are allowed.
<b>Spirituals in English</b>	English must be the original language of the selection.
<b>Spiritual Classical Performance Style</b>	The word "classical" in this context refers to singing spirituals in the classical style with only mild deviations and interpolation to what is written in the music and without musical theatre, pop, gospel, contemporary Christian, soul, jazz, rhythm and blues expressions or vocal technique. See the NATS FAQ-Student Auditions for the difference between Spirituals and Gospel Songs
<b>Judicious Cuts</b>	Piano introductions, piano interludes, piano music after the vocal solo is completed, and internal cuts of spiritual selections are allowed as in common performance practice. Cuts of a verse or verses of selections are not allowed. In the case of strophic pieces, all verses should remain that are traditionally included.
<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.

[Additional information](#) about the Biennial American Negro Spiritual NSA Categories

**Spirituals not found  
in the [Approved Spirituals Repertoire](#) online**  
may be vetted and approved by contacting one of the following NATS members:

Alexis Davis-Hazell [adavishazell@ua.edu](mailto:adavishazell@ua.edu)  
Barbara Hill-Moore [bhmoore@mail.smu.edu](mailto:bhmoore@mail.smu.edu)  
Everett McCorvey [everett.mccorvey@uky.edu](mailto:everett.mccorvey@uky.edu)  
Marcia Porter [MPorter@admin.fsu.edu](mailto:MPorter@admin.fsu.edu)











# UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL CATEGORIES

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
<b>CATEGORIES 7 &amp; 8 — UPPER POST HIGH SCHOOL</b>					
MT 7	Upper Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <b>one</b> selection may be chosen from an operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 8	Upper Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CL 7	Upper Classical—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One aria. One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 8	Upper Classical—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CM 7	Upper Commercial Music—Treble Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	FOUR contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Up to 2 songs may be original songs, instead of a cover. Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist.
CM 8	Upper Commercial Music—TBB Voices	3–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
AS 7†	1 <sup>st</sup> –3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Post HS American Negro Spiritual—All Voices (4 <sup>th</sup> yr. or more post HS students enter the AS 9 advanced category) <i>Not Active in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i>	1–3 yrs. post HS	23	10 minutes	THREE American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on (g,p)□
<b>Subdivided Categories 7 &amp; 8 — Upper Post High School</b>					
MT 7A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
MT 8A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
CL 7A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Classical—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
CL 8A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Classical—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
CM 7A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
CM 8A	3 <sup>rd</sup> yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	3 yrs. post HS	23	12 minutes	
MT 7B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
MT 8B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CL 7B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Classical—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
CL 8B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Classical—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	
CM 7B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	<i>Same as above</i>
CM 8B	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yr. Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4–5 yrs. post HS not in a grad prog	25	12 minutes	

# Biennial HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
<b>HALL JOHNSON SPIRITUALS COMPETITION</b>					
HJ 7	Hall Johnson—All Voices	post HS undergraduate students only	17–23	1□ minutes	THREE contrasting selections from approved Hall Johnson spirituals repertoire. See approved spirituals repertoire on (g,p)□

\*PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.  
The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.

\* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

# ADVANCED CATEGORIES

## Post-Baccalaureate Students

Number	Category	Length of Study	Age Limit	Time	Repertoire Requirements
<b>CATEGORIES 9 &amp; 10 — ADVANCED</b>					
MT 9	Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FOUR contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles, or musical theatre song literature. Only <u>one</u> selection may be chosen from an operetta <u>or</u> musical theatre song literature.
MT 10	Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices <i>Consider NATS National Musical Theatre Competition</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 9	Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FIVE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in a language other than English. One operatic aria. One oratorio/cantata aria.†† One additional selection from the classical repertoire. At least three languages must be represented.
CL 10	Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 9	Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	FIVE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Up to 3 songs may be original songs, instead of a cover. Up to 2 songs may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or a live collaborative instrumentalist.
CM 10	Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
AS 9 <sup>+</sup>	4 <sup>th</sup> & 5 <sup>th</sup> yrs. Post HS & Advanced American Negro Spiritual—All Voices <i>Not Active in the 2023/24 Audition Cycle</i>	4+ yrs. post HS	30	12 minutes	FOUR American Negro Spirituals contrasting by composer, tempo, and text. See approved spirituals repertoire on page 6.
<b>Subdivided Categories 9 &amp; 10 — Advanced</b>					
MT 9A	Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
MT 10A	Lower Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
MT 9B	Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
MT 10B	Upper Advanced Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 9A	Lower Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
CL 10A	Lower Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
CL 9B	Upper Advanced Classical—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CL 10B	Upper Advanced Classical—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 9A	Lower Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	Same as above
CM 10A	Lower Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	4–7 yrs. post HS	26	15 minutes	
CM 9B	Upper Advanced Commercial Music—Treble Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	
CM 10B	Upper Advanced Commercial Music—TBB Voices	7+ yrs. post HS	30	15 minutes	

**†PLEASE NOTE: The Hall Johnson Spirituals Competition is held only in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national conference.**

**The American Negro Spiritual Category is offered in NSA audition cycles culminating at the NATS national summer workshop.**

\* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

†† Singers may hold the music score for oratorio/cantata aria, in exception to the memorization requirement.

# ADULT AVOCATIONAL CATEGORIES

Students neither pursuing nor holding a degree in music and not working as professional musicians

Number	Category	Length of Study	Ages	Time	Repertoire Requirements
<b>CATEGORIES 11 &amp; 12 — ADULT AVOCATIONAL</b>					
MT 11	Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 12	Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	
CL 11	Adult Classical—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 12	Adult Classical—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	
CM 11	Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist.
CM 12	Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No Limit	18 +	10–12 minutes	

\* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

# NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT CATEGORIES

Students pursuing or holding degrees in music and whose age or level of study falls outside the limits of other categories

Number	Category	Length of Study	Ages	Time	Repertoire Requirements
<b>CATEGORIES 13 &amp; 14 — NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENTS</b>					
MT 13	Adult Musical Theatre—Treble Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting musical theatre selections: from musicals including film musicals, revues, operettas, musical theatre song cycles or musical theatre song literature. Only one selection may be chosen from operetta or musical theatre song literature.
MT 14	Adult Musical Theatre—TBB Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	
CL 13	Adult Classical—Treble Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting selections from classical repertoire: One art song in English.* One art song in language other than English. One additional art song or aria.
CL 14	Adult Classical—TBB Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	
CM 13	Adult Commercial Music—Treble Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	THREE contrasting full songs performed in a CM style(s): Only one song may be an original song, instead of a cover. Only one song may be self-accompanied on an acoustic instrument, instead of performing with an instrumental track or live collaborative pianist.
CM 14	Adult Commercial Music—TBB Voices	No Limit	18+	10–12 minutes	

\* English must be the original language of the required one art song in English.

**PLEASE NOTE:** NATS encourages chapters and regions to create additional categories to address the inclusivity and diversity of all students and repertoire. Additional categories should be created to meet the needs of that entity's membership. Currently, any additional chapter or region categories cannot advance to the national levels of our NSA.