



# VSNATS

**National Association of Teachers of Singing**

**Valley of the Sun Chapter**

**Member Handbook**



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## 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.

## 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.

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP

- **Education:** Members have access to lifelong learning experiences such as master classes, workshops, and conferences, held at 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 state 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 FELLOWSHIPFor more information on these and other programs and benefits, see [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org)

**Members are encouraged to take advantage of all of the opportunities that the National Association and the Local Chapter afford. Participate in meetings and training sessions. Attend concerts and performances that feature our members and their students. Enjoy full access to our local chapter web site, including member forum discussion, and access to protected documents (meeting minutes, officer reports, archival forms, shared teaching resources.) Network with others to learn about institutions, programs, and competitions that will benefit your studio clients. Attend Chapter, Regional and National meetings, workshops, and conventions. For more information on programs and activities, see [www.vsnats.org](http://www.vsnats.org).**

## KNOW YOUR OFFICERS

The website provides a listing of the officers and board of directors who volunteer their time to serve the organization, according to the NATS code of ethics and chapter bylaws. Our chapter's governing documents are available on the VSNATS website. If you are interested in volunteering time to support chapter events, please contact a member of the board. Contact information is also available at [www.vsnats.org](http://www.vsnats.org).

## PAY DUES

Membership in the national organization is required prior to local chapter membership. NATS (National) will send you notification of your annual membership dues. You must be current with your payment to be active locally. Members pay both national and local dues either online at the national website [www.nats.org](http://www.nats.org), OR via mail directly through the national organization. Chapter dues are no longer collected locally.

You must be paid-in-full at the national AND chapter levels to participate in the Arizona district-wide STUDENT AUDITIONS. Failure to do so will result in your students' ineligibility to participate in the auditions. Please be aware of DEADLINES for dues payments, to keep your memberships active and current.

**The National deadline for membership renewal is January 1<sup>st</sup>** (there is a one-month grace period until February 1<sup>st</sup>, before your membership lapses into a delinquent status, after which an additional reinstatement fee is required.)  
**Because of the timing of our Student Auditions in February, ALL dues should be paid by January 1st to ensure participation eligibility.**

## STUDENT AUDITIONS

Each year NATS chapters and regions host Student Auditions, an exciting experience where singers perform and receive written feedback about their performances. Student Auditions offer students of NATS teachers the opportunity to be adjudicated on their performance skills in characterization, as well as vocal skill. We want students to learn by observing other singers, therefore auditions are open. Participants will also learn from an expert clinician in vocal performance related fields at a workshop which precedes the award ceremony. 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 repertoire. An awards ceremony and recital at the culmination of the Auditions showcases the outstanding performers in each category. With the majority of member studios participating and hundreds of students performing in over 15 categories, Student Auditions is a monumental undertaking. The team of volunteers, under the direction of the Auditions Chair, works hard to provide students and teachers with the best event possible.

**VSNATS auditions** are typically held for Music Theater genres each fall semester, separately from the classical genres. Auditions for classical genres are held every other spring semester in the Valley of the Sun, although participation is district wide for all auditions. When auditions are not held in the Valley of the Sun, the Grand Canyon Chapter and the Southern Arizona Chapter alternate in hosting.

YOUR cooperation and adherence to the deadlines, rules, and policies will do much to make the Auditions a successful experience for everyone. The [VSNATS website](http://www.vsnats.org) provides all of the information that you need:

- **Date and location**
- **Fees and payment information**
- **Division numbers, descriptions, repertoire requirements**
- **Online registration procedure**

## AUDITIONS 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

- ✓ Serve as **Adjudicators**.
- ✓ 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 application materials and payment in a timely manner. TRIPLE check entries for any errors.
- ✓ Ensure that all requirements are met.
- ✓ Guarantee that students adhere to the NATS Policy on Copyright Issues. NO photocopies of any kind are allowed.
- ✓ 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.
- Take into consideration the category. Beginning high school students should not be on the same scoring scale as senior college.
- Back up your scores with constructive comments. Students and Teachers may be puzzled by a low score which is accompanied only by praising comments. Similarly, students with high scores would like to know how they may continue to improve.

### ADJUDICATOR – DIVISION/ROOM CHAIR

The Auditions Chairperson will assign a chairperson from the team of adjudicators in each room. The chairperson will:

- Check and verify music legitimacy. NO photocopies are allowed, per the NATS [National Copyright Policy](#).
- Assign a timekeeper. STAY on TIME.
- Note any policy or rule infraction; do NOT mention it to the student. Evaluate and score. Bring any concerns to the Tabulation Room. (See [Copyright Resolution Procedure](#))

At the end of your schedule, please *collate sheets by singer*. Check for signatures and scores. This saves our volunteers time in the tabulation room. Please return the envelope with score sheets, to the Tabulation 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 local level Auditions.

### **Members should not abuse this policy; teachers who repeatedly miss or cancel their judging assignment for Auditions without providing a substitute (two or more times) may be prohibited from submitting students.**

- ✓ If extenuating circumstances require that you cancel your judging assignment at the last minute, you must make a reasonable effort to find a substitute, as well as notify the AUDITIONS CHAIR.
- ✓ **Voicemail and email are not sufficient forms of communication for this situation. You must personally speak with the Auditions Chair to explain your circumstances.**

## COLLABORATIVE PIANISTS

- Per NATS National policy, 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, if they have not elected to hire an official accompanist provided by NATS. The official pianist fee does NOT include warm-up or rehearsal. Any outside rehearsal must be privately negotiated with the individual pianist.
- A collaborative pianist may play for a maximum of (20) twenty students.
- Collaborative pianists must play only from original music or approved digital copies, in accordance with the NATS Copyright Policy.

## GUIDELINES – a Checklist for Successful Participation in Auditions

- ✓ 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. **In the interest of fairness to all participants, it is imperative that students are entered into the correct division. Be sure to total the complete number of years of training your student has received, even BEFORE they studied with you.**
- ✓ NO schedule or repertoire changes will be allowed after the schedule is published. Students performing repertoire not listed may be disqualified.
- ✓ Obtain pianist 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 TWENTY (20) auditioning students.
- ✓ 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: ONE PayPal payment for ALL entries.** 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 online approximately two weeks before the Auditions.
- ✓ Require professionalism from your students.

- ✓ Student Checklist:
  - 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 15 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:
    - Confirm their own pianist
    - Choose one selection that is less than three minutes.
    - Prepare to make an introduction, announcing their name, division, accompanist, piece, and composer.
- ✓ 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 awards ceremony and recital, collecting your score sheets afterward.
- ✓ 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 VSNATS board 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.**

## ANNUAL WORKSHOPS

The Valley of the Sun Chapter offers a Fall Workshop annually, which serves the vocal arts community in the Phoenix Metro area. Coordinated by the 1<sup>st</sup> Vice President/Programs Chair, our Fall Workshop welcomes the interested community at large to join NATS members in learning about various topics related to the vocal arts as continuing education. The workshop consists of four sessions held over two days. Past workshops have featured among others, leading opera and vocal coaches, the late Lorenzo Malfatti, Dr. Shirley Emmons, Dr. Robert Sataloff, renowned otolaryngologist, American composer Ricky Ian Gordon, and YogaVoice® Seminar founder Mark Moliterno. For information on our most recent Fall Workshop visit [www.vsnats.org](http://www.vsnats.org).

**Valley of the Sun NATS (VSNATS)** is a Chapter of the National Association of Teachers of Singing. VSNATS is a 501(c) (3) organization serving the greater Phoenix area and surrounding valley cities, as well as Prescott and other outlying areas. The VSNATS chapter currently has 71 members in 15 cities. There are two other chapters in the Arizona District: the [Grand Canyon Chapter](#) and the [Southern Arizona Chapter](#).