

NEC'S AUDITION TIPS

GENERAL

- If possible, record in a large room or hall for better sound.
- Try to fill the space with your sound.
- The quality and sincerity of your playing matters! Show your sensitivity.
- Play with others! Especially if you're applying for a jazz major - part of what we're listening for is not only how a student sounds but how they interact with and relate to other musicians.
- Perform! (And, good luck!)

RECORDING

- Whenever possible, record at 24 bit and 48khz sample rate.
- On iPhone, you can record in higher resolution vs the standard low quality.
 - GarageBand is preferable to Voice Memos, but both have settings that improve audio quality.
 - In GarageBand advanced settings - choose "24 bit audio resolution."
 - In Voice Memos settings (accessed through the separate Settings app) choose "lossless" audio quality.
- When exporting, mp3's (especially at high bitrates like 320) it will always sound better than AAC's or mp4's, so use mp3's whenever possible.

MIC + SOUND

- Placement of the mic relative to the instrument and the space matters most. When the mic is closer to your instrument, you will get more direct instrument sound and less reverberation from your space and ambient noise.
- Make short test recordings, stopping to listen between each take, and keep track of which settings you like best.
- As you check your mic location, also keep track of how loud your signal is. You should be able to see some kind of level meter on your recording app. The meter should never reach the absolute top. The goal is to record as loud as possible without distorting. Play loud when checking your mic, and always assume that your real performance may be even a little louder than that, so set your microphone gain in a way that gives you a strong level on the meter without going "into the red" or distorting.

PLACEMENT

- If filming from a phone or tablet, be sure to film horizontally, not vertically (landscape, not portrait).
- Your camera should record from a fixed position as if the adjudicators were seated in front of you. Do not use several cameras, just one well-placed camera.
- The camera should capture at least the upper $\frac{2}{3}$ of your body. For singers, your facial expressions should be in clear view; instrumentalists should show range of motion and mechanics of the instrument.
- Consider lighting to ensure that you are well-lit. Light should be facing you; backlighting creates shadows.
- Properly trim your video (beginning and end) so that it is only you performing. Do not include extraneous footage of you setting up your camera or turning it off at the end.

