

AMERICAN GUILD OF MUSIC

120th Nationals Virtual Contest

ELIGIBILITY

All students must be entered by teachers or studios that are members of the American Guild of Music. An individual teacher may become a Professional member, or a Studio may become a Studio/Store member, which permits all of the teachers who teach at that studio to enter students.

In an effort to ensure the delivery of a valuable and fair competition experience on a virtual platform, the American Guild of Music has had to reduce the number of events open for competition and will cap the number of contestants, therefore it is very important to get your registration completed well in advance of the deadline date. AGM will also be providing participating students with a video outlining virtual competition, how to's, do's and don'ts.

GENERAL RULES and INFORMATION

- 1) The decisions of the judges are final!
- 2) The Contest Director reserves the right to delete, create or group divisions depending on entries. No refunds unless entry is denied by the contest director.
- 3) Contestants are required to provide an original, published music score for the judge for NAIC and Length of Study events only. Contestants are not required to provide musical scores for POP or EVALUATION for the 44th Great Lakes Regional Virtual Contest.
- 4) A 5 point deduction will be levied for those in NAIC QUALIFICATIONS/NAIC FINALS, LENGTH OF STUDY, AGE QUALIFICATIONS /AGE FINALS/ TEST LIST who do not provide an original, published score. Students must upload their musical score no later than 7 DAYS in advance of the competition date and time. Memorization is mandatory in all divisions except Evaluation. A 10 point deduction will be levied for failure to perform by memory.
- 5) A score of 91 is necessary for a first place award.
- 6) Dressing for success is a fundamental aspect of professional performance. Appropriate performance dress is mandatory. Performance dress is defined as no t-shirts, tank tops, shorts, jeans, flip-flops, track pants, sneakers, hats, or any clothing with tears and rips or offensive language. Exceptions would be costumes for performance theme enhancement. (In the Vocal Musical Theatre divisions, additional points will not be awarded for the use of props and costumes) If a judge deems that performance attire is questionable, they will instruct the performer to change, or be sent to the contest director before the performance. If the attire is deemed unacceptable, the contestant will not be allowed to compete, but may be permitted to perform for comments only.

7) All performances are the property of the American Guild of Music and may be used for promotion. All rights reserved.

8) All contestants and attendees are expected to act in a respectful and dignified manner. Cell Phones and Pagers must be turned off in the virtual contest rooms. Ensure that auxiliary noise is kept to an absolute minimum as these can easily be picked up on the microphone of a performing contestant.

9) If a contestant enters one or more divisions for a second instrument, the length of study for the secondary instrument will include a handicap of 50% of the difference between the length of study of the primary and secondary instrument. If the secondary instrument length of study exceeds that of the primary instrument, a handicap of 50% of the difference between the length of study of the secondary and primary instrument will be added to the primary instrument's length of study. This length of study handicap will be added before any age handicap. There will be no handicapping between piano and keyboard. Students whose primary instrument is voice, will have no handicap when competing on a secondary instrument.

10) Any point deductions or disqualification for music by a judge must be approved by the Contest Director at that Contest.

11) For all Band and Orchestral String instrument divisions, students must perform in the instrumentation for which the piece of music is written. (E.g. If a flutist plays a piece of music that includes an accompaniment part, it must be performed with the accompaniment.

12) Students must receive a score of 80% or above to pass a theory test. If a 91% or above is received, students must move to the next level.

13) No song can be sung in any vocal or group division that includes profanity, sexually explicit content, or obscene gestures. Violators will be immediately disqualified.

14) Upon entering the ZOOM meeting for the virtual competition, please ensure that the Zoom username is labeled as the STUDENT'S name as it appears in the program.

15) During any performance, audience members may NOT take any audio, video, or still recordings of any child other than their own, unless there is express written consent from a parent or legal guardian of the performer.

16) Audio, video, or still recordings are strictly prohibited during Evaluations. Evaluations are not performances.

ADDITIONAL RULES FOR SOLO EVENTS

1) Time limits will be strictly observed. Players exceeding the time limits will be stopped and/or lose points. In NAIC events, all non-essential repeats **MUST** be eliminated. **Time limits have been reduced due to the online virtual nature of this contest. Please see time limits.**

2) Contestants that require accompaniment may use a recorded accompaniment. Do not play the accompaniment track from the same device that you are using to run ZOOM. A separate device and speaker are required to balance sound. Vocalists may not accompany themselves for any solo.

3) Improvisation is not allowed except in the Pop divisions. Keyboard may use appropriate effects if noted, but no multi-track sequencing is allowed in Non-Sequenced Keyboard events.

4) Medleys are allowed under the following conditions; Vocal medleys are allowable but only as a published arrangement. Medleys are allowable in all other divisions, as long as they meet time limit requirements. Allowable medleys are defined as 2 pieces of music with a written segue connecting the 2 pieces. Multiple pieces cannot be performed in a solo division without a published segue.

EVALUATION - For All Instruments

The students perform a solo of their own choice, not necessarily memorized, for an evaluation in a one-on-one experience with a judge. This division is not a contest. Each student has the opportunity to receive an award based on their own personal evaluation. Award designations are: A, AA, AAA, with AAA being the highest award. A parent or guardian is encouraged to be in the room during the entire evaluation. All evaluations will be recorded by the adjudicator. Contestants are not required to provide sheet music for this event.

LOS - LENGTH OF STUDY (Piano, Keyboard, Accordion, Drums, Guitar)

Contestants are required to provide the judge with a musical score. This division is based on a contestant's Length of Study. Contestants will be divided by their Length of study as outlined in the chart below. Vocalists will be grouped by age. Memorization is mandatory and improvisation is not allowed.

LOS Category	Time Studied
Preparatory	0 through 6 months of study 2 minute time limit
Cadet	7 through 12 months of study 2 minute time limit
Junior I	13 through 18 months of study 3 minute time limit
Junior II	19 through 24 months of study 3 minute time limit
Intermediate	25 through 36 months of study 5 minute time limit
Senior	37 through 48 months of study 5 minute time limit
Advanced	49 through 60 months of study 6 minute time limit
Student Artist Jr.	61 through 78 months of study 8 minute time limit
Student Artist Sr.	79 through 96 months of study 10 minute time limit
Open	97 months & up & teachers 10 minute time limit
Adult Student	21 years +- taking lessons 10 minute time limit
Adult Hobby	21 years +- not taking lessons 10 minute time limit
Adult Teacher	21 years +- teacher 10 minute time limit
NAIC	72 Months + (or permission) 10 minute time limit

POP - (Piano, Strings, Keyboard, Voice, Guitar, Accordion)

Contestants are NOT required to provide the judge with a musical score. Based on Length of Study, Pop division allows the students to perform a solo of their own choice. Vocal Pop is grouped by age, and is also open to vocalists not taking lessons. This division emphasizes entertainment value. Any improvisation or effects may be used within time limits (See Length of Study times).

Pop Category	Time Studied
Novice	0 through 6 months of study 2 minute time limit
Elementary	7 through 12 months of study 2 minute time limit
Freshmen I	13 through 18 months of study 3 minute time limit
Freshmen II	19 through 24 months of study 3 minute time limit
Sophomore	25 through 36 months of study 5 minute time limit
Performer	37 through 48 months of study 5 minute time limit
Player	49 through 60 months of study 6 minute time limit
Artist Jr.	61 through 78 months of study 8 minute time limit
Artist Sr.	79 through 96 months of study 8 minute time limit
Pro	97 months & up & teachers 8 minute time limit
Adult Student	21 years +- taking less 8 minute time limit
NAIC	72 Months + (or permission) 10 minute time limit

AGE QUALIFICATIONS & AGE FINALS

Piano, Voice, Wind, Strings, Guitar, Keyboard

Contestants will be grouped by age regardless of how long they have been studying. Vocalists may compete in Classical Art Song and Musical Theatre divisions. Students who place 1st, 2nd and 3rd qualify for the Age Finals which will take place at the Nationals Competition.

NORTH AMERICAN INVITATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIP QUALIFICATIONS & NAIC FINALS

Piano Classical, Pop Piano, Vocal Musical Theatre, Vocal Classical, and Vocal Pop, Strings

This division is open to any person who is currently studying the applied instrument or voice and has studied for a minimum of 72 months (not required for vocal students), is at least 14 years of age with a maximum age of 20 years old, and performs a piece or composition equivalent to Test List Level 8 or above. Students studying less than 72 months and/or is less than 14 years of age may enter with permission by the Contest Director and Board of Directors upon approval and provided the contestant submits the manuscript with entry. The contestant must play the same piece submitted for this division at the competition. **A 10 minute time limit** will be strictly enforced. Scripted music must be provided for the judge except for NAICQ Pop divisions.

Original compositions must receive prior approval from the Board of Directors in the field of expertise. Vocal Pop contestants must submit the title of their song selection at the time of entry for approval from the Board of Directors in the field of expertise.

Championship, First Runner-up and Second Runner-up awards are given on each instrument at each regional qualifying round. The Champion, First Runner-up and Second Runner-up of this division automatically qualify to participate in the North American Invitational Championship held the following summer at the AGM National Convention. A student may qualify only once each year for the Nationals. At the Nationals, if there are less than 3 contestants in the qualifying round, those students will perform in the NAIC Finals instead of having to qualify. Championship and Runner-up awards will be given for each instrument at Nationals.

This is a Virtual Contest!

Virtual Contest Format

The American Guild of Music contest will look different than an in-person contest. We will be using the ZOOM platform to conduct the contest. In order to participate, you must have a ZOOM compatible device such as a computer, tablet, or smartphone. Please read the following to understand the general format of the contest:

- 1) Prior to the competition, you will receive an email with your schedule as well as a "Meeting ID." The Meeting ID is your link to access the contest rooms. You cannot enter the contest without this information.
- 2) AGM will be using the "Breakout Rooms" feature to run our contests. Upon logging into the meeting with the provided code, you will be placed into a waiting room. The Contest Director will then "open the door" for you and you will be placed into the general session. This is NOT the competition room. The Contest Director will then move you to the Breakout Room that your performance will occur.
- 3) Once you are placed into a Breakout Room, you will see the other contestants in your division as well as an AGM Host and the judge. The AGM Host will be running your contest room and will be your point of contact if there are any issues or questions. If you need to ask a question of the AGM Host, please utilize the "Chat" feature rather than speak out.
- 4) During the contest please ensure that your camera is on the entire time and that you are respectful to all performers. You may use the "Applause" reaction at the end of each performance to congratulate each performer.
- 5) At the conclusion of the division, the AGM Host will let the room know of it's completion. To leave the contest, click the "Leave Meeting" button.
- 6) Please note: even if you will be using the same meeting code for multiple contests you will need to re-login at the beginning of each event in order to be placed into the correct contest room easily.

Device Sound Settings

In order to deliver the best sound quality of your performance, the American Guild of Music recommends (but does not require) that all participants use a microphone plugged into their device. It is especially recommended for those that will be participating using a mobile device such as a phone or tablet.

A suitable, affordable USB microphone such as Blue Microphone's "Snowball" model works sufficiently in capturing sound for Zoom to process. (DISCLAIMER: AGM has no affiliation with Blue Microphones or their products.)

If plugging a USB microphone into a phone or tablet, additional adaptors may be required.

All contestants are responsible for testing any sound equipment BEFORE the competition to ensure it's in working order and proper adjustments. Performers will not be allowed time for sound level checks and device set-up once a contest begins.

Prior to the contest, please adjust the following sound settings in Zoom:

- Don't allow microphone to automatically adjust volume
- Enable original sound
- Disable Suppress Persistent Background Noise
- Disable Suppress Intermittent Background Noise
- Auto Echo Cancellation (not aggressive)

Setting Up Your Device for the Contest

In general, devices used for competition should be set so that a performer can be clearly seen. Please note the following for specific instruments:

- Piano & Keyboard Events: The camera should be set so that the judge can clearly see the performer's face, hands, feet (for pedaling), and the music stand. If all of that is not possible, the judge must at least see the student's face, hands, and the piano music stand.
- Vocal Events: The camera should be set square on and the judge can see the top half of the performer's body.
- Wind/String/Percussion Events: The camera should be set so that the judge can see the performer from the waist up or so that the instrument, performer's hands, and face are all visible to the judge.

Other considerations for device set up:

- Lighting is important. The judge should be able to clearly see the performer and the instrument (in non-vocal events). Please avoid standing in front of a light or window, and have a light shining on the performer for enhancement if needed.
- Setting. While we understand there are limitations, please ensure that your setting does not contain any profanity, sexually explicit content, or obscene gestures in the decor, lighting, etc.
- Please remember this is a contest and we want everyone's health and safety to take top priority. Be sure you are competing in a comfortable, socially distanced space if performing from somewhere outside of the household.

General Device Safety

- Ensure your computer, smartphone (Android/Samsung/iOS) or other device is up-to-date on its computer software and patches. Check for updates regularly and do not leave your computer or device off for long periods without getting updates.
- Ensure that your computer or smartphone device has an up-to-date anti-virus product installed. We recommend purchasing one from a well-known vendor such as McAfee, Sophos, Trend Micro, Symantec or MalwareBytes.
- Keep your web browser up-to-date. Using current versions of Chrome, Microsoft Edge, Firefox, and Safari. If you are unable to install the latest versions of the software, we recommend you limit the use of that device.
- We will be using ZOOM as our service provider for the 119th National Virtual Contest, please download the zoom app and create an account. Ensure that your device (computer, smartphone, or tablet) is Zoom compatible either through an internet browser or the Zoom app,
- Ensure that the email address provided on your contest registration is an up to date and accessible address as the American Guild will be using the registration email provided to send out competition information and zoom meeting ID.
- Ensure your device is fully charged. If your device powers down due to lack of power during your performance, you will be marked based on the performance to that point.
- Ensure that your WIFI connection is working. For best coverage, turn off the WIFI on all extraneous devices except the one device required to connect to ZOOM.

Conducting Safe Online Contest Events

The American Guild of Music considers the safety of all participants in high regard. We will be following strict protocol for the safe delivery of each performance.

To increase the security and privacy of our online competition, here are some of the steps that we take to ensure safe delivery of content:

- Contestants will be emailed a meeting code with a specific date and time of entry. Do not share your Personal Meeting ID publicly, and do not use it to host meetings.
- Contestants will be placed in a waiting room until their event begins
- An AGM room monitor will control the muting and unmuting of all participants

- AGM will disable file transfers
- AGM will prevent participants from saving the chat
- AGM will disable the option for participants to record locally
- AGM will control screen sharing and annotation so that only the host can share and annotate when necessary
- AGM will disable private chat between users
- AGM will remove a participant if they have not been invited or become disruptive in the session
- Participants will be able to chat with the AGM host only, in the event that they are experiencing technical difficulties.
- AGM Judge is NOT the host, and as in all AGM Contests, communication between the performer and the judge is strictly prohibited and must go through the AGM host

Instrumentation for Piano Competition

For AGM Virtual contests, piano competitions may use an acoustic piano OR a 76-88 weighted electronic keyboard. Please follow the guidelines below for your competition instrument.

Acoustic Pianos: If possible, please ensure that your piano has been recently tuned. However, there is no penalty to a student's score unless the judge feels the tuning drastically detracts from the student's performance.

Digital Pianos: When keys on a digital keyboard are weighted, they feel more like playing real piano keys. Weighted keys are a feature that help electronic pianos/keyboards feel more like the action of an acoustic piano. If you are still unsure, please search online for the brand/model of your keyboard and review the manufacturer's description.

Students using a digital piano or keyboard for the contest should ensure that it uses weighted keys as it affects the ability to properly perform dynamics. If a performer uses an instrument without weighted keys or does not allow for dynamic contrast without adjusting the overall volume, a penalty will be incurred as all markings in a musical competition will be judged.

Students using a digital piano or keyboard should also ensure they have working accessories that replicate an acoustic piano to properly perform their work (i.e. sustain pedal). A penalty may be incurred if such an accessory is not used and is called for in the score, or the judge feels it's absence detracted from the performance.

Prior to competition, those using a digital keyboard or piano should ensure they have done a sound check to set the proper volume level for their instrument. If a judge cannot hear it, or if the sound is distorted from a loud volume, it may affect the performer's score.

Please note, all rulings of the judge are final so it is best to ensure that your instrument is properly set up and tested BEFORE the contest.