



2025 Guidelines & Helpful Tips for Your Submission

Video:

Professional equipment and/or studio space is not necessary for a successful application. With attention to a few details, your music making can be conveyed using readily available consumer electronics, including tablets and smartphones.

The performance video is a key element of this competition. If you do not have access to recording equipment or space with a piano needed to make an audition video, you may wish to ask if your teacher, school, or orchestra/ensemble program is able to help you fulfill this portion of your application. Should you need additional assistance, please contact YAC@symphonyguildcharlotte.org. We will be happy to work with you to ensure that you can successfully record your submission.

1. Sharing your Video*
 - a. sign into YouTube
 - b. click the Upload button at the top of the page
 - c. copy the link(s) to your online application in the appropriate boxes
 - d. NOTE: videos of pre-recorded live performances such as recitals will be accepted if recorded within three months prior to submission date and are not in a group performance
 - e. NOTE: be sure your video is set for public viewing; please do not include your name on the video
2. File sizes up to 5 GB are accepted. Use a format and resolution that is consistent with high-quality internet video – we recommend shooting in 1080p in a YouTube-compatible format
3. Where possible, we encourage you to keep the following in mind when making the recording:
 - a. Remember – your musical performance should be the most important aspect of your video submission. Judges will be looking for tone production, technique, rhythm, intonation, interpretation and phrasing.
 - b. Consider lighting, framing, and camera placement. Film in a well-lit, clutter free space, and be sure that there is more lighting in front of you (rather than from behind). Place the camera so that you, your instrument, and your full range of motion are always in the frame (including your fingers and hands). We should also be able to see, if applicable, both you and your pianist during the accompanied work.
 - Please be mindful that **all music must be memorized** for both phases of the competition – make sure that your video is framed to include some distance around you, so there will be no question that you are performing a memorized selection.Choose a distance that shows as much detail as possible, while still allowing the image to be framed as described above.
 - c. Use a fixed point of view, with the main focus on you. Leave the camera in one location, and do not pan. Consider placing the camera on a tripod or flat surface when shooting.
 - d. Do not use any special effects, i.e., dissolves or fades, etc.
 - e. Test the audio level so that there is no distortion during the loudest passages of your selections, while also making sure that the softest portions can still be heard. Check how your balance and blend

translate to the recording; no sound enhancements are allowed. If possible, consider using an external microphone connected to your camera to record your playing.

- f. Prior to recording your audition video, clean and/or adjust your instrument to be sure it is in the best possible condition. You may wish to ask your music teacher or a professional repair person to look at your instrument to assist with any necessary adjustments.
- g. While it is not necessary to use a grand piano for the accompanied segment, please be sure the instrument is in good tune before recording.
- h. No editing of the audio or video is permitted. Applicants whose videos show evidence of any cuts, splicing, manipulation of pitch, or other alteration within a performance segment will be subject to disqualification. Please note the selection of a complete, unedited performance segment from multiple takes is permissible. NOTE: As trimming files is not permitted, please restart the recorder for each take.

Written Statement:

Writing an artistic statement is one of the best ways for young artists to express their vision to others. Please limit your statement to 500 to 750 words.

1. Think about the following questions as writing prompts. Not all must be answered but are provided to guide you.
 - a. Why do you do play music?
 - b. What does learning and performing music signify or represent to you?
 - c. What is special about your process of learning music?
 - d. What do music and performing mean to you?
 - e. Why are you a musician?
 - f. Who has inspired you in the past, who inspires you today and why, and how do you use that inspiration?
2. Use your own voice. An artistic statement is not an academic research paper. Do not write a broad, general statement, but be specific. Your statement needs to include specifics about you. It is your opportunity to share your passion for music and performing. It is an introspective exercise in expressing with words, something you feel and do. Every musician has a story, and this your opportunity to tell your story.
3. If you have participated before, please give your essay a fresh perspective. The judging panel has noted that, in some instances, applicants have chosen to recycle prior year essays; this practice could result in a lower overall score.