Manhattan School of Music

MSM ZOOM AUDITION GUIDELINES

We look forward to meeting you at your Zoom audition at Manhattan School of Music!

Please follow the below guidelines to optimize your Zoom audition experience. While we highly recommend following as many of the tips below as possible, we understand that we are all working with the space and equipment available to us and the faculty are prepared to review Zoom auditions from a variety of settings using a wide variety of microphones.

We highly recommend that you test your connection and equipment in advance of your audition.

Repertoire requirements can be found on our website here.

Your Connection

- Establish a hard-wired (connected directly to your router or modem) internet connection using an ethernet cable if possible. This may require a USB-Ethernet adapter for most modern laptops.

- Test your connection speed: minimum speed requirement is 10Mbps download and 10Mbps (you can test your speed here).

- Zoom with a friend for a trial audition to test the quality of the video and audio. Look for frame skipping, dropped audio, and/or lag.

If your connection does not meet these standards, you might consider using a friend's internet only if it is possible to safely distance.

Your Equipment

- Use a device with a camera and a microphone (a tablet or computer). Video is required.

- We strongly recommend that you use an external microphone for your audition. A variety of USB microphones are available to purchase. Equipment can sometimes be rented from local stores or borrowed from teachers and friends.

  - If an external microphone is not available, we recommend using headphones with an attached microphone if possible.

  - If you do not have access to any of these options, the onboard speakers on your laptop or tablet will be acceptable.

- Make sure your equipment is securely positioned and that you and your instrument (if applicable) are fully visible at all times.

- Have your device plugged in or fully charged before your audition. Remember that we ask you to arrive in the Zoom room early for your audition, so your device may need to remain charged for longer than anticipated.

- If possible, wear headphones/earbuds during your audition to avoid causing an echo.

Zoom Settings

- Download the Zoom application onto your device.
- On the Home screen of the Zoom app, click the gear icon in the top right corner.

In the Audio tab:

- Connect the headphones you will be using during the audition. Under the "Speaker" heading, make sure to select your headphones in the dropdown menu.
- Connect the microphone you will be using during the audition (if you are using the microphone on your headphones, make sure they are connected). Under the "Microphone" heading, ensure your external microphone is selected in the dropdown menu.
- Uncheck "Automatically Adjust Microphone Volume."
- Under the "Music and Professional Audio" heading, tick the boxes for "Show in-meeting option to Enable Original Sound from a microphone" and "High fidelity music mode."
    - **Note**: if you do not see these options, your Zoom app may need to be updated.
- Click the Advanced link at the bottom and ensure that Echo Cancelation is set to Auto.

In the Video tab:

- Make sure the built-in camera for your device is selected and working.
- We recommend not using the HD mode.
- We recommend not using a background, filter, or any other setting similar to these as they could put additional strain on your connection speed.

Your Space

- Large rooms with high ceilings will generally offer the best acoustics, so choose the largest room to which you have access.
- We strongly recommend that you avoid spaces with excessive reverberation (i.e. bathrooms, tiled spaces, or empty rooms).
- Listen for background noise.
    - You may need to disconnect any noisy appliances in the room (heaters, air conditioners, fans, refrigerators, etc.) during your audition.
    - Make sure no background conversation can be heard.
    - Close doors and windows if possible.
    - Limit interruptions if possible (including family members, roommates, pets, etc.)
- Turn off notifications on all your devices (including the one you're using for your audition) and put them in Do Not Disturb mode.
- Silence all other electronics (landlines, alarm clocks, TVs, etc.).
- Consider the lighting.
    - You should be lit from the front. Avoid standing with your back to a window or light.
    - Check the lighting in advance and at the same time of day that your audition is scheduled.
    - Add lighting or close blinds as needed.

Test Your Setup

- ☐ Set up your equipment and space at the same general time of day as your scheduled Zoom audition.
- ☐ Start a meeting on the Zoom app and use the Record feature to record yourself performing.
- ☐ Watch the recording and adjust mic placement, lighting, background noise, etc. as needed.

Stay in Touch!

Feel free to contact us at admission@msmnyc.edu at any time if you have any questions or concerns. We will be happy to help!