



MUSIC TEACHERS NATIONAL ASSOCIATION

A HOW-TO GUIDE FOR HOSTING SUCCESSFUL ONLINE ADJUDICATED EVENTS

How to Register Students and Collect Payments

Registration

Online Registration form

Online forms have become increasingly popular as they offer a highly efficient way to collect information. There are two platforms we suggest considering: If you need a simple form that doesn't collect payments, try using [Google Forms](#). If you need to collect payments, look into [JotForm](#).

Both Google Forms and JotForm can be embedded on an existing website and offer form submissions in a downloadable spreadsheet. JotForm works with a variety of payment processors including PayPal, Square, Stripe, WorldPay, Authorize.net, eCheck, among others. JotForm can also handle multi-page forms, sophisticated form logic and more. It's one of the best solutions available for online forms.

- *Video introduction to building forms using JotForm:* <https://youtu.be/YWWt1Vt47t8>
- *Video tutorial on how to use Google Forms:* <https://youtu.be/LxlfPLPI0wM>

Hard Copy Registration form

A form that is printed, completed and mailed can still be a viable option to consider for your online event. For smaller events especially, it could be more efficient to use a regular print-and-mail form. If you'd like to offer more flexibility to members, consider offering accepting scans of forms via email in addition to hard copies printed and mailed.

Digital PDF Registration form

This option allows two alternatives for returning the registration form. Individuals can print and complete by hand as they would a hard copy form or they can type their responses on a computer, save the PDF and return via email. Adobe Acrobat is the most popular software for creating a digital PDF form. Another option is the free website www.pdfescape.com.

Collecting Payments

For smaller events, mailed paper checks may still be the most convenient and hassle-free option for event organizers. Checks have the added advantage of not having any processing fees associated with them. If collecting credit card payments, regardless of the payment processor, your organization will lose a small amount (typically 2–4%) from processing fees.

If collecting payments for a large number of individuals, we suggest considering setting up an online registration form that includes a payment field. JotForm (www.JotForm.com) is one of the best platforms available for building forms to accept digital payments.

- *Video tutorial for adding payment fields to JotForms:* https://youtu.be/y_6BOafz3mI

How To Organize Registration Information for Communication, Scheduling, Certificates, Etc.

A digital spreadsheet is the answer to organizing your event’s registrations. This can be done using Microsoft Excel, Google Sheets, Numbers (for Apple users), or OpenOffice Calc.

Set up your spreadsheet with columns labeled “TIME,” “STUDENT NAME,” “TEACHER NAME,” “CONTACT EMAIL,” “LEVEL,” and any other information collected on the application form. Each student should have their own row on the spreadsheet. If you used an online registration form like Google Forms or JotForm, a spreadsheet with all your data can be downloaded in a single click without spending time manually inputting data.

It is important to maintain a **Master Schedule** spreadsheet with all information related to the festival. Using cloud-based software like Google Sheets may be beneficial if multiple event organizers need access to the spreadsheet.

Use the master schedule to keep track of your administrative tasks. If students are required to provide PDF scans of their music, for example, create a new column “Music Scans” and type Yes/No as you receive scans to help you keep track of what has been turned in.

When it’s time to send a schedule to teachers or families, simply make a copy of your master schedule spreadsheet and remove all unnecessary columns. You may also highlight sections of your master spreadsheet and paste them directly into an email or word document.

If printing a large number of certificates, a feature in Microsoft Word called “Mail-Merge” can save you a lot of time manually typing names and ratings. A mail-merge tutorial from Microsoft is available [here](#).

Collecting Pre-Recorded Performances for Events

When collecting video or audio recordings, there are generally two approaches to consider. Your intended use of the videos will determine which approach to adopt:

- 1) Instruct students to upload videos to a platform like www.YouTube.com or www.Vimeo.com. The link is then shared with the event organizer. This is the easiest method and typically results in fewer technical hiccups. The video may be configured as “unlisted” so it’s viewable to anyone with the link but not accessible to the public. For additional security, the video may be configured as “private” which allows the video to be shared only with a specific group of people. These approaches are ideal for adjudication or when no further editing to the video will occur.
- 2) Instruct students to transfer their video file directly to the event organizer. This approach is best for events where individual performances will be edited together to create a seamless video to be broadcast or posted at a later time. Videos are too large to be sent as an email attachment, so here

are some convenient options for collecting collect video files:

- a. Instruct students to upload their video to Google Drive, Dropbox, Microsoft Onedrive, or another cloud file-sharing platform and share a link to the with the event organizer's email address.

Alternatively, the event organizer could set up a shared folder in Google Drive, Dropbox, and instruct students to “drag” their video file into the folder. The downside with this approach is that anyone with access to the folder can see others' uploaded content.

- b. Set up an online form where students upload their file directly to the form (this works great with JotForm).
- c. Use a large file transfer service such as <https://wetransfer.com> or www.transferbigfiles.com

Managing “Live” Performances for a Virtual Event

Zoom has become one of the most popular and convenient platforms for hosting live virtual events, and it can work great for performances or festivals. Skype, Google Meet, and Webex are some alternate platforms.

Platform Capabilities

There are a plethora of settings available to event organizers for platforms like Zoom. Passcodes, waiting rooms, breakout rooms, Q&A functionality and automatic muting of participants when they enter the room are just some of the functions that can be toggled on/off as you set up your meeting.

Whether it is Zoom or another platform, we strongly encourage you to review the platform's documentation to ensure you aren't overlooking any of the platform's capabilities. Video tutorials are available for Zoom on a wide variety of topics, so gaining fluency with a platform like Zoom is easier than ever before!

Advance Communication

It's critical all those participating are sent instructions for signing into the platform well in advance. If software must be installed or if a password is required, communicate this clearly and send reminders.

Be specific about what students are expected to do and what role parents need to play in setting up the technology. Have a plan in place to address any technical/connectivity issues.

Day of the Event

We strongly encourage appointing an “emcee” who will welcome attendees, keep everything on schedule and address questions or technical issues as they happen. This person will also be responsible for muting and un-muting attendees so people are not talking over one another. Unless discussion is specifically part of the event, it's highly advised to keep attendees muted until it is their turn to speak or perform.

The chat box is a place where attendees can voice their praise or pose questions. Consider appointing a specific person to monitor the chat throughout the event.

Virtual backdrops, a high-quality USB microphone and novel props or costumes can go a long way to making a virtual event feel special for attendees. Don't be shy to pull out all the stops and remember to have fun!

- *Comprehensive video tutorial of Google Drive:* <https://youtu.be/82CUzgqUxKU>

Sending PDF Copies of the Music to Judges for Evaluation Purposes

If the student purchased the sheet music, he or she can submit a PDF copy of it for the judges to use for evaluation at a virtual competitions or festival. However, only one copy of the sheet music could be used by the judges.

For events with multiple judges, you would not be able to make additional copies of the score and distribute them to the judges without violating copyright laws. It would be necessary to purchase the number of copies of the sheet music being distributed in order to give one to each judge.

The same is true with PDFs that are sent to the judges and displayed on individual computers. If there are three judges, unless the music publisher consented, you would need to show that three sets of music were purchased.

Sharing Rating Sheets, Video Links, Scanned Music to Adjudicators

Rating Sheets

If hard copy, handwritten rating sheets are preferred, you'll need to either mail the rating sheets to the adjudicator or send them a document they can then print at home. If fully digital ratings sheets are preferred, they can be sent to adjudicators via email as a multi-page document. If the rating sheets are for a *live* event, ensure the sheets are in the exact performance order.

Scanned Music

Scans of music can be sent in the mail as hard copies or via email as a digital scan. Music should be labeled with the student's name. If music is for a *live* event, ensure the music is in the exact performance order.

Video Links

When collecting video links students, we suggest keeping them in a column of your **Master Schedule**. When the time comes to deliver the video links to adjudicators you can copy the links from the spreadsheet and paste them directly in an email or document to provide adjudicators.

Returning Rating Sheets back to the Host Organization

Rating sheets with handwritten comments can be mailed back to the event organizer or, alternatively, scanned and sent to the event organizer as a digital PDF file. Rating sheets with typed comments can be sent to the event organizer via email.

If dealing with a large number of rating sheets, consider setting up a shared folder in Google Drive or Dropbox between the adjudicators and event organizers. This will aid in handling a large number of files and make it easier to keep track of compared to relying on email.

Compiling the Information from Adjudicators

The easiest way to organize information from adjudicators is to add a new column to your **Master Schedule** spreadsheet. “RATING” or “TROPHY SIZE” might be some of the columns you would add. Then, the spreadsheet could be shared with the person ordering awards or printing certificates. If printing a large number of certificates, a feature in Microsoft Word called “Mail-Merge” can save you a lot of time manually typing names and ratings. A mail-merge tutorial from Microsoft is available [here](#).

Returning Rating Sheet(s) and Certificates

For all but the smallest events, returning rating sheets and certificates to the teacher will make the most sense. Your association will save on postage costs, and the teacher can distribute rating sheets and certificates to their students at their next in-person lesson. Another option would be to distribute rating sheets and certificates at your association’s next meeting, completely eliminating the step of mailing.

Of course, mailing rating sheets and certificates directly to students may be preferred. In this case, be sure to collect mailing addresses upfront on the application form to save time on this step.

Any sheet music scans (hard copy or digital) need to be deleted or destroyed after the event. The retention of any music copies would represent a violation of copyright law.

Dividing Work between Volunteers

Each event is different, and certain roles make take multiple volunteers whereas for other events it could be done by a single person. In general, encourage open communication among your volunteers if at any point someone needs additional help. Consider having weekly “check-in” meetings with your volunteers to keep planning on-track.

Below are examples of various jobs that could be fulfilled by volunteers organizing a virtual event:

- **Event Organizer.** This is the leader of the group and the primary person who will organize the applicants’ information and the schedule. They create and maintain the **Master Schedule**. They will be the main person sending and receiving communications to parents and teachers.
- **Communications Manager.** This role can be served by the Event Organizer; however, it may be too much work for one person. They will assist the Event Organizer in sending important

communications and reminder emails to parents, students and teachers.

- **Emcee (Live Events).** This person welcomes attendees, gives introductions and makes sure the virtual event runs on schedule. It's important this person keeps the energy level up and quickly addresses any in-the-moment hiccups that occur.
- **Chat Monitor (Live Events).** This person is dedicated to monitoring the chat box and answering any questions that arise during the event. They also watch for any negative comments and intervene if necessary.
- **Music Scan Organizer.** This person collects music scans from teachers and students. They organize the scans in performance order and provide them to adjudicators in advance of the event.
- **Award/Certificate Manager.** This person is in charge of printing certificates using data from the Master Schedule and returning rating sheets. This includes addressing and stuffing envelopes and applying postage.