

GSA APPLICANT GUIDE

Musical Theatre



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I. Program Description

At GSA, Musical Theatre students study dancing, acting and singing with GSA faculty and visiting artists. The Musical Theatre program is designed to provide students with intensive study in stage movement, jazz and tap dance, voice for sung and spoken text, energy work for relaxation and physical awareness, scene study and monologue work, script and character analysis, an overview of musical theatre history, research and criticism of selected works from the musical theatre lexicon, and audition preparation. Students present a staged performance of solo and ensemble work on the final day of the program.

II. Preliminary Round Application Requirements (due January 10th)

Submit the materials in this section through the online platform [Acceptd](#) no later than January 10th. NOTE: Applicants will be prompted to pay a \$30 application fee when submitting their materials (or \$35 if applying in two art forms). Students on free/reduced lunch may opt to have this fee waived when payment is requested.

For the Preliminary Round, submit the following (*see below for more detail*):

- a. Two Recommendation Forms
- b. Personal Short Essay
- c. Personal Question Video
- d. Monologue & Songs Videos (one monologue, two songs; three total videos)

a. Recommendation Forms (do this first!)

Identify two people to fill out recommendation forms for you: a school administrator (e.g. counselor) and a teacher/instructor (see below if those do not apply). Enter their names and email addresses in your online application, and the individuals will receive emails instructing them on how to complete the recommendation process.

- Before submitting your recommenders' information, contact them to ask for their permission to use them as a reference and explain why you want to attend GSA. Confirm with them when you submit their email addresses to ensure they receive the recommender email. Initiate this process as soon as possible so your recommenders have time to complete the forms before the application deadline.
- *Your teacher/instructor recommender does not have to teach at your high school, nor do they have to teach you in your art form of focus (although we recommend you choose someone who is familiar with your creative work, if possible).*

- *You do not need to submit letters of recommendation. Recommenders will receive an online form to fill out, which will serve as their recommendation for you.*
- *If you are home schooled, and/or you otherwise do not have a school administrator or teacher/instructor who can fill out your recommendation forms, please seek out another adult who can speak to your qualities/character/abilities in one way or another; this could include a mentor, a youth minister, a coach, etc.*
- *Applicants' parents/immediate family may not fill out their recommendation forms.*

b. Personal Short Essay (250-word max)

Provide an answer to the following question in essay form:

As you envision yourself attending GSA, describe to us one thing you will bring to/offer the community, and one thing that you know will challenge you.

Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. Upload this essay response as a document file; type out the question at the top of your response, so the question and answer are both in the document (the question restatement does not count toward the word count limit). When uploading your essay, title the file "Personal Short Essay."

c. Personal Question Video (90-second max)

Provide an answer to the following question in video form:

Artists play a vital role in society, ranging from sparking large cultural movements, to facilitating meaningful interpersonal connections. What impact do you seek to make on your community/world as an artist, and why is that an important impact to make? How will GSA help you achieve this?

- Be open, honest, and authentic in your response – let us learn something about you. While you are encouraged to prepare your thoughts before shooting the video and you may consult notes as you speak, please do not just read off a transcript. We want to get a sense of your personality.
- Record your answer in an interior space that is free from interruptions, noise, etc. Do not edit or splice the video. You do not need to include an introductory frame or any effects such as fades, etc.
- Shoot straight on, leaving the camera in one location. Review the video to ensure you can be seen AND heard. Ensure the video plays all the way to the end.

- When uploading your Personal Question Video, title the file "Personal Question Video."

d. Monologue & Songs Video (3 videos; one minute each)

Introduction

At the beginning of each video, introduce yourself by slowly and clearly stating:

- your name
- your monologue (the character and the title of the play), or
- your song (for each song, the title of the song and the show it is from)

MONOLOGUE VIDEO (60 SECONDS MAX)

After your introduction, transition into your monologue performance. Your monologue:

- should not exceed 60 seconds (it is okay if your introduction makes the video last a couple of seconds longer than one minute)
- must be memorized
- should be from a scripted contemporary play (no period pieces or Shakespeare, please) and **not a musical theatre work**.
- needs to be suitable for family viewing
- should be from a character relatively close to your age or similar to your life-experience
- is **NOT** a portrayal of a character of middle or advanced age, or a character speaking with a dialect. Do not select a monologue that focuses on motherhood, fatherhood, pregnancy, rape, death, dying, or on a character's mental or physical disability
- should not rely on props, costumes, make-up, or any other technical elements. A simple straight chair can be used if needed but is not recommended

Avoid using monologues from the following works that are generally considered to be "overdone" in auditions: *Promedy*, *Butterflies Are Free*, *Our Town*, *Quilters*, *Fantasticks*, *The Star-Spangled Girl*, *You're a Good Man Charlie Brown*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*.

SONG VIDEOS (TWO VIDEOS, EACH WITH A DIFFERENT SONG AND EACH 60 SECONDS MAX)

Perform at least 21 bars of each song, but do not exceed 32 bars; each selection must be a complete musical thought. Long verses or repeated choruses are not recommended. Your two songs:

- must be memorized
- need to be suitable for family viewing
- should come from musical theatre works
- should **not** be from the same musical
- one must be a ballad and one up-tempo, each from a different era:

- o One song should come from a contemporary musical, 1970 or later—e.g. A *Little Night Music*, *Song and Dance*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Secret Garden*, etc. These are just a few examples and not recommendations. Avoid songs from Broadway musicals that have been written/premiered in the past two years (excluding revivals), as these are often overdone.
- o One song should come from a standard musical, written before 1970s—e.g. *Guys and Dolls*, *South Pacific*, *Oklahoma*, *Bye, Bye Birdie*, etc. These are just a few examples and not recommendations.
- o It does not matter which style is an up-tempo and which is a ballad.

SONG ACCOMPANIMENT

It is *strongly encouraged and highly preferred* that you use a live piano accompanist for the songs portion of your video. If you do not work with or know an accompanist, ask for suggestions from teachers, houses of worship, arts/culture organizations, or family/friends in your community. If you are unable to access an accompanist, videos using recorded accompaniment, self-accompaniment, or no accompaniment will be considered.

Additional Video Requirements

- Record in an interior space that is free from interruptions, background noise, etc.
- Ensure you can be seen and heard as best as possible in the recording. Make sure the volume of the accompaniment does not overpower or obscure the sound of the voice but rather supports it.
- After uploading, ensure that the video image is upright (not sideways), and that the recording plays through to the end.
- In the description text box beneath your video upload, please type out your name, monologue title, and titles of both songs in the order you sing them (i.e. "John Smith, Monologue Title, Song Title 1, Song Title 2")

III. Final Round Requirements

Some applicants will be invited to participate in the Final Round of GSA Auditions/Reviews, which will consist of the elements described below. All applicants will be notified on February 26th of whether they are invited to the Final Round. If you are selected to participate in the Final Round, you will be required to attend in-person on March 20th, 21st, or 22nd in Lexington, KY at the University of Kentucky as scheduled by GSA.

The Final Round for Musical Theatre will include:

- a. Questionnaire
- b. Monologue & Song Performance
- c. Group Audition (Short Movement Exercise & Interview)

a. Questionnaire

When you arrive at the main registration table for your auditions/reviews, you will receive and complete a one to two-page questionnaire. This questionnaire may cover a range of topics, including your previous experience in your art form, your favorite artists, and/or your college and career goals. The questionnaire is not a quiz and is not scored, but it is a way for adjudicators to get to know you. The questionnaire may be used to customize questions in your interview.

b. Monologue & Song Performance

You will perform the same monologue and two songs you presented in the Preliminary Round. The adjudicators will ask you to sing a 21 – 32 bar selection of each song. However, be prepared to sing the complete song if requested. Even though these will be the same selections you performed in the Preliminary Round, please introduce yourself, your monologue, and your songs at the top of the audition.

Song Accompaniment

At the Final Round Audition, an accompanist will be provided.

- You must use the provided accompanist, and you must provide a copy of the music (with clear piano accompaniment and in the correct key) for the accompanist. Pre-recorded accompaniment and accompanying oneself is not allowed.

- All audition music must be two-sided copies, three-hole punched, and placed in a three-ring binder. Make sure that the entire accompaniment is clearly copied to the page and all cuts are clearly marked. Music may be placed in non-glare protective sleeves if you choose. When giving your music to the accompanist at the audition, provide them with direction on your desired tempo, and make them aware of any cuts, added markings, etc. in the music.

c. Group Audition (Short Movement Exercise & Interview)

You will participate in a group audition which will be a short movement exercise. There will also be a short interview with the adjudicators.

*The Musical Theatre Final Round will be recorded for use by the faculty in the final selection process **only** and will not be reproduced for other viewing.*

IV. Criteria

The work of each student will be given an objective review by the adjudicators as to how they fulfill each of the following criteria:

Vocal Health & Range

An ideal candidate sings and talks with flow and control of breath and with relaxed larynx and physical stance. Tone is resonant, balanced, and the voice moves smoothly from register to register.

Connection of Voice & Text

An ideal applicant articulates clearly and changes vocal quality in response to the text, mood and musical transitions. They utilize these techniques to inform character development, story arc, etc.

Text/Script Analysis and Truthfulness to Character

An ideal applicant performs with an understanding of and commitment to the goal of their character, truthfully demonstrating the arc of the monologue/song. Vocal choices are connected to the use of action/movement, all of which are specific, intentional, and reinforce the character's objective.

Dedication to Art Form, Growth, and Community

An ideal applicant demonstrates a commitment to and passion for their art form, as well as a desire and ability to grow as an artist. The applicant can thoughtfully and authentically explain why they want to attend GSA and how they are uniquely qualified to contribute to a robust, diverse community of artists.

Musical Theatre Dance Concepts & Techniques (Final Round only)

An ideal applicant replicates choreography with body alignment and sustains energy. They also express characterization with their body movement; moving in synchronization with others while demonstrating spatial awareness with physical expressiveness.

V. Tips

These tips are suggestions. They are NOT eligibility requirements for admittance to GSA.

- Choose music that **best highlights the strengths of your voice**.
- When choosing your songs, try to find **songs that provide contrast in rhythm, style, characterization, and approach**.
- Be sure to **understand the context** of your songs. Understand the words and range of emotion needed for the characters of your songs.
- Select a monologue that is age-appropriate, from a full-length contemporary play and most importantly, one which **provides you with a sense of connection to the material**.
- Be sure to **read the entire play** (not just your selected monologue) and develop your intellectual understanding of the words, syntax, and meaning of your monologue.
- **Memorize accurately and thoroughly**. Rehearse the monologue and songs until you feel absolutely confident to perform them easily.
- **Develop your physical and facial expressiveness** as a reflection of the character, as well as speaking voice.
- **Pay close attention to the adjudication criteria**. While GSA students are accepted based on their holistic identity as a young artist, the criteria are the foundation of how your materials are being scored.
- **Remember the adjudicators are very excited to see your work and they want you to do well!** We know it takes hard work to submit this application, and that it can be scary to "put yourself out there." We have faith in you, so put your best foot forward and don't be afraid to show us the wonderful artist you are. You prove a level of dedication just by submitting your application, and you should be proud of yourself.

VI. Class Announcement

From the Final Round in March, adjudicators will choose the 2020 GSA Summer Program class for all 9 art forms.

On **Friday, April 10** you'll receive your results via email. GSA will also make a big announcement on our website: www.kentuckygsa.org. Accepted and Alternate students will be listed. Accepted students will also receive paper written notification of their results via standard mail.

For technical support with the application contact Acceptd

Email: support@getacceptd.com

Phone: 1.888.725.2122, press 2

For questions about Summer Program, the content and/or requirements of the application, contact GSA

Email: gsainfo@kentuckycenter.org

Phone: 502.566.5192