

Greetings, SERNATS Colleagues,

I hope this email finds you well. As we approach the final weeks of the semester, I wanted to touch base with some details about the upcoming SERNATS Annual Conference and Student Auditions at Stetson University, March 6-8, 2025.

First, the **Call for Scholar and Artist Presentations and Call for Student Poster Presentations is open until 11:59 p.m. on December 1, 2024**. Please consider applying for a recital or presentation and encouraging your students to apply for a poster presentation. You can find all the details here: <https://www.sernats.org/sernats-conferenceauditions.html#/>. Please contact our Education Chair, Lara Wilson, with any questions: wilsonlc@uab.edu.

Second, I am thrilled to announce the incredible W. Stephen Smith will be our guest clinician this year. You can read more about Mr. Smith here: <https://www.wstephensmith.com/>. We are also bringing back our annual business dinner. Both the business dinner and master class are scheduled for Thursday, March 6. It will be nice to kick off the weekend with a meal together followed by an evening of master teaching with Mr. Smith. Applications for master class participants will open in January, so watch for announcements via email and social media!

Next, I want to make you aware of a format change for our 2025 student auditions. As many of you will remember from our last business meeting, we voted to reduce the number of audition days from three to two. Post HS Classical, Spiritual, and Musical Theatre categories will take place on Friday, March 7; Children, Youth, HS, and Adult Classical, Spiritual, and Musical Theatre categories as well as ALL Commercial Music Categories will be held on Saturday, March 8. To accommodate all categories in two days, the SERNATS Executive Board has voted to tweak the audition format in a “pilot year” experiment. Replacing the “Finals Concert” will be a “Winners Concert” at the end of each audition day. The top five singers from each category will be selected from the semifinal rounds (this is the same as it has been in the past), but only the First Place Winners will perform in the concert (this is a change). Each of the top five winners in every category will be presented with certificates at the conclusion of the Winners Concerts and will qualify to enter the NSA preliminary round.

Finally, the addition of Youth, Children, and Commercial Music Categories caused an adjustment to the prize money amounts we awarded last year. Since the adjusted amounts seemed very small, we decided to look at common practice in other NATS regions. After polling other region governors and discussing it as a SERNATS board, we have elected to award prize money to first-place winners only. This will enable us to pool the rest of the money into a fund so we can increase the amounts of NSA semifinalist travel stipends *and* have some travel funds available for teachers of NSA semifinalists who do not have access to travel funds from a school or university.

We know these changes are big. Following the student auditions at Stetson, we will send out a survey to every member in attendance, followed by a vote of the full SERNATS membership to decide whether we want to keep the new format or go back to a three-day event. We will also take a final vote on the prize money. Please know that we did not make these “pilot year” changes lightly—they came after lengthy board discussions, as well as discussions with other region governors, national NSA team members, and our host school. Changes are never easy, but hopefully, we have created a schedule that will serve our members and students well.

SERNATS Registrar, Jennifer D'Agostino, will send detailed student audition information in December, so keep an eye out for that. In the meantime, please see the tentative schedule, below, and let me know if you have any questions. I look forward to seeing you at our Annual Conference and Student Auditions in March!

Sincerely,

Becky Salter, NATS Southeastern Region Governor

2025 SERNATS Annual Conference and Student Auditions Projected Schedule*:

Thursday, March 6:

1:00 p.m. Executive Board Meeting

5:00 p.m. Business Dinner (all members)

7:30 p.m. Master Class with W. Stephen Smith**

Friday, March 7:

8:00 a.m. Adjudicator Meeting

8:30 a.m. - 5:30 p.m. Post HS MT, Classical, and Spiritual--Prelims and Semifinals

11:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Scholar and Artist Series Presentations***

2:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. Scholar and Artist Poster Presentations***

7:30 p.m. - 10:30 p.m. Winners Concert & Presentation of Certificates

Saturday, March 8:

8:00 a.m. Adjudicator Check-in

8:15 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Commercial Music All Ages--Prelims and Semifinals (live!!)

8:15 a.m.- 2:00 p.m. Youth, Children, High School, Adult MT, Classical, Spiritual--Prelims and Semifinals

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. Scholar and Artist Series Presentations

3:00 p.m. - 6:00 p.m. Winners Concert & Presentation of Certificates

***Times are tentative and may shift based on registration numbers**

****Watch for master class application announcements in January 2025**

*****Scholar and Artist Series Applications due by December 1, 2024!!**