

## **Recording Tips – TMEA Online Auditions**

The intent of TMEA was to come up with a system that would equalize the opportunities for all Texas student musicians in this online audition process. This process can be completed on virtually any Internet connected device.

TMEA has specified other than an external microphone (and external speakers for those students recording with a backing track) no mixers or devices leading to potential digital enhancements can be used.

What follows are some ideas that could help ALL students have the chance to make their best quality recording possible. These are just a few ideas and I'm sure there may be more.

### **Recordings Without Backing Tracks**

For those in Band & Orchestra recording without a backing track the #1 key is to have a quality microphone.

The second factor having a most dramatic effect on the recording is placement of the microphone or device itself if using the internal device mic. This audition system provides students with the opportunity to record multiple times and experiment with this placement to maximize clarity and limit distortion.

The third, and easily controllable element is the environment in which the recording is being made. Again, trial and error should guide the student to find the best acoustical setting for their best results.

### **Recordings WITH Backing Tracks**

For vocalists and jazz/mariachi instrumentalists needing to record with a backing track there are also many factors to consider beyond the above.

Again remember, students have the opportunity for recording countless attempts to experiment in obtaining their best results.

Initially, students will see the BACKING VOLUME control where they can adjust the volume of the track in balance to their efforts. Again, trial and error will yield a better result.

It is necessary for the backing track to be heard on the audition recording so ear buds or headphones cannot be used unless a splitter is used to the headphones and the speaker.

If students are using a phone, other small device, or a device with inferior speakers it is advisable to use external speakers (either connected or Bluetooth – just make sure the use of Bluetooth on the device does not DISABLE the microphone). This will increase the volume of the track while also enhancing the quality of the sound. It also provides an additional volume control of the backing track. Again, experimenting with the balance between recording and voice/instrument will be necessary. Vary speaker, microphone, device locations as possible to achieve your best results!

Another option that might be of great use to jazz rhythm musicians and others would be to use a splitter in the device's headphone jack having one side connected to headphones or earbuds and the other to external speakers. This way the player (think drummers) can hear the track loud enough while not having to turn the external speakers up so loud it causes any distortion.

One more option could be to play the recording through an external device. Be sure the recording you use matches the backing track in MusicFirst. In this case the student must TURN OFF the backing track in the recording tool.