

CMSA Tools for Successful Open Mic Performance

Creating engaging content requires the marriage of creativity and execution, and production can make or break a great performance.

Location, location, location!

- Find a quiet spot where you can close the door to prevent interruption or distraction.
- Make sure the air is flowing so you're comfortable, but don't set yourself up directly near a fan or AC unit. The sound can obliterate your audio, so don't sit too close.
- Keep your topic in mind when choosing a location. Think, "what environment will complement my performance?"
- Consider your background. Choose something you feel represents you well and that can help bring your home studio to life.

Camera position

- The camera lens should be directly opposite your face. Too low or too high and the viewer will be looking up or down at you instead of making direct eye contact.
- Make sure you have the correct head room. Move the camera so you just have a small space above your head. Your goal is to be centered, not too high or low on screen.
- Make sure to include your instrument in the shot. If you are using a music stand, keep it low so the audience can see you and your instrument.
- Test your framing by recording part of your performance. For example, if you are playing an instrument, you want to make sure nothing is cut off.

Lighting and Wardrobe

- Consider all available light sources, not just what's on your ceiling. If you get great natural light, perhaps sitting by a window is best. Just make sure the light hits your right or left cheek, not directly in your face or from behind.
- Consider adding ring or video lighting. Search for "light for video recording" on Amazon.com for some options.
- Test by recording various lighting options. Remember to test at the time of day you will be presenting or recording if you are using natural lighting.
- Check your pandemic hair, grooming, and clothing!
- For clothing, choose something that will highlight you. Wear colors or patterns that help separate you from the background. Steer clear of black and white clothes — they can blend in or blow-out on the screen. Stay away from small patterns.

Sound and Recording Audio and Video

- Use a microphone in a quiet studio space if you have one.
- Record your performance video in HD 1080p. Most phones, laptops, and cameras have an HD setting. Check Google for how to review and modify the settings if you don't know how.
- If recording audio and video, typically phones record better sound quality than laptops. Record your audio separately on your phone (if you are not using it as the primary audio source) so you have a backup audio.
- Test your audio and video by recording a segment and making adjustments.
- Record your video as .mp4 or mov.

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Final Prep and Recording

- Let everyone in your space know the times when you'll be live or recording. That means no interruptions, no matter how small. Once they have the schedule, close the door 15 minutes before you go live to give you time to focus.
- Make sure your computer or phone is plugged into a power source for the duration of your session. Check to ensure you have the latest software downloaded and your remote audio is hooked up if needed.
- Place your cell phone on silent mode and turn off all notifications on your computer. Close out applications.
- Have fun!

Uploading your Open Mic Video

- Submit Open Mic Information Form by Friday, October 15th as a "letter of intent" to be considered for our Saturday night Open Mic Concert at the convention.
- Final videos must be uploaded before Thursday, October 28 to be included in the concert.
- Videos submitted before November 5th will be available OnDemand.
- Upload your final video before the deadline.
 - Visit <https://classicalmandolinsociety.org/user-file-uploads/>.
 - Complete the Open Mic Information form and submit it if you have not already done so. You should receive confirmation.
 - Complete the upload form: Browse button to select your file; Upload button to upload your video. You should receive confirmation.
 - If a pw is requested: Uploads
- You may submit multiple videos; please submit one Information Form for each. Any videos not selected for the Saturday Open Mic concert will be available OnDemand.