



NOLA Chamber Fest Registration and Recording Resources 2021

By Jane Koelsch and Winfred Felton

As we prepare for NCF 2021, we wanted to offer resources for having a successful festival experience! In this guide you will find resources for registering, uploading, recording, and more. We hope this guide will be helpful as you prepare for NOLA Chamber Fest! If you have any questions during any part of the process, please don't hesitate to reach out to the NCF Team. We're looking forward to making music with you!

If you have any questions about the registration process, or any steps along the way, feel free to contact us at

nolachamberfest@lyricabaroque.com

Key Dates

Super Early Bird Deadline All Divisions
November 13, 2020

Early-bird Deadline for Junior, High School, & Community Divisions
January 5, 2021

Early-bird Deadline for College, Graduate, & Emerging Ensemble Divisions
January 22, 2021

Last Call Recorded Prelim Round Due for College, Graduate & EE Divisions
February 5, 2021

Last Call Registration For Junior, High School, & Community Divisions
February 19, 2021

Recorded Preliminary Round Results Announced
February 22, 2021

NOLA Chamber Fest 2021
March 18th - 22nd, 2021



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RECORDING PREPARATION

The first step in preparing for a recording is to schedule **individual practice**. Some things to consider for efficient practice sessions are:

- Practice shorter time blocks every day, rather than longer periods every once in a while.
- Practice with a metronome.
- Make sure to practice slowly.
- Use a tuner or a drone for excellent pitch.

After engaging in consistent personal practice to prepare for the recording, another step is to schedule rehearsals with your ensembles. **Regular rehearsals** each week are a key factor in preparation. Work with your ensemble to find times during the week that you can set aside to prepare.

If you need help finding a coach, please reach out and contact us!

Coachings provide excellent feedback for the entire group, and are the next step in making sure your group is playing your best. NCF requires that a group meet with a coach at least **three times** in order to participate in the competition.

Another option is to take your part to your private teacher to see if there are instrument specific issues of the music that can be improved to help the group's performance. If you need help finding a private teacher, please contact us, and we can connect you with one!

The final step is **finding/using the right equipment**. Whether it's something you already have, or bought specifically for this recording, familiarize yourself with how to use it so you're prepared on recording day. Read below for tips on no, low, or medium budget resources and plans!



PRELIMINARY ROUND RECORDING

Budget Planning

Below are some suggestions for how to optimize your recording session to best suit your group! There's no one perfect set up or way to record, so we hope these tips will be useful in giving ideas on ways to record.

No Budget options include recording from your phone and finding a free space to record such as a space at school, public library or church. Make sure your phone is recording from the best angle possible — **test the sound** laying your phone horizontally against a music stand 6-8 feet away from the group, making sure the phone microphone is not being blocked by the stand. Another sound test involves placing the phone microphone standing up vertically on the stand. Sometimes even rotating the phone can have an impact on the sound.

Low Budget (\$10-\$30) options include recording from your phone, recording from a free space, and potentially using a USB microphone that plugs into your phone. If you're considering purchasing a mic, splitting the costs between group members takes the financial strain off of one single member. We highly recommend using a USB mic. This enhances the recording quality with little additional cost

Here are some potential options — click the links below!

[Small Mic \\$10](#)

[Small iPhone USB Mic \\$23](#)

[Aux Mic with Filter \\$25](#)



Medium Budget (\$35 - \$100) options could include purchasing a USB mic with a stand, and looking into renting a space for optimal sound quality for recording. A mic stand enables you to have mobility with your microphone. With the stand, be sure the mic is 8 feet back and 8 feet above where the sound is coming from. In addition to a mic stand, you can also bring a cloth, mat, or rug from home placed under the mic and stand. Depending on the space and room acoustics, this can help improve the sound quality of your recording. If you're considering purchasing a mic, splitting the costs between group members takes the financial strain off of one single member. Here are a few options in the links below:

[XLR Condenser Microphone with stand - \\$45](#)

[USB Microphone \\$37](#)

[Audio Interface for Microphone - \\$99](#)

TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION

Other Helpful Tips

Some other things that can help your recording session are:

- Look at the frequency chart of the microphone you are considering purchasing, and compare it to frequency charts on your instrument. You can find a frequency chart on your instrument by googling it.
- Position your microphone and instrument to ensure that you are not playing directly at a hard surface or a wall.
- If you are recording in a corner, block the corner with sound absorbing materials such as a rug, curtain, or sheet.
- If the ceiling and the floor are both reflective surfaces, perform standing on a rug to enhance the recording.
- For strings, place the microphone at an angle to the f holes of the instrument. For winds, angle the microphone towards the middle of your instrument. For brass, set the microphone so that it is not directly pointed at the bell, but still angled towards it.



RECORDING SUBMISSION

The most important part of the recording submission process is to **plan ahead**. Uploading a recording can take a considerable amount of time. If you experience slow wifi connection during the uploading process, it can potentially take even longer. To make sure that your group's recording **and score** are submitted on time, schedule a personal deadline before the actual due date in order to give yourself plenty of time.

Scores need to be uploaded too! Follow the link provided in your email to upload ONE PDF copy of the score!

To upload follow the steps below:

1. Find your registration confirmation email from Nola Chamber Fest
2. Click on the link to submit your recording
3. Drag your file, or choose from your saved files to start the upload. The file should be **MP3, AAC, WAV, or M4A**. If the file doesn't save as one of these, you can export it to one of these types so that it can be uploaded.
4. Dropbox will notify you when the upload is complete.
5. We recommend keeping the screen open while uploading to make sure you don't lose progress on the upload.



MORE IDEAS

For additional help, we've included a link and the transcript to our video guide that includes more tips on where to find the best space, how to record efficiently, and internet connection troubleshooting. We hope that this additional resource can be useful for any remaining questions you might have, and will help you successfully prepare for NCF 2021!

Video

<https://youtu.be/wYuxIdsSSC8>

Video Transcript

Winfred: My name is Winfred Felton, and I am the newly appointed social media intern for Lyrica Baroque and NOLA Chamber Fest. I am also a bassoonist studying Bassoon Performance at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. I am thrilled to be sharing resources with you, as well as helping you through the general application process.

Jane: Hi! My name is Jane Koelsch and I am an administrative assistant for Lyrica Baroque and NOLA Chamber Fest! I am also a clarinetist and am currently studying Arts Administration at the Eastman School of Music. Winfred and I are looking forward to sharing some tips that will be helpful for you and your group as you prepare for NCF 2021!

To learn more about us, you can read more [here!](#)

Finding a Space

Winfred: Finding a space is one of the most crucial aspects to ensure you will have a good recording. There are several factors one should consider when deciding on a space to record in. However, **the overall goal is to find a space that accurately reflects how you and your group sound.** Appropriate spaces can range from classrooms and lecture halls, to churches and concert halls. In general, the bigger your group, the bigger the space you will need.

These spaces usually need to be **reserved**, and it is best to contact whoever owns the space in order to arrange this. It is important to note that these spaces may cost money. If reserving your space is financially troubling, most schools will let you use classrooms after hours, free of charge. When reserving this space, it is also best to **reserve it for multiple recording/rehearsal sessions**. This is because you usually do not want your first time in the space to be when you are recording, as you are not as acclimated to the space as you could be.

When you achieve your desired space, it is now time to prepare to record. While it may seem like there are a lot of variables to account for when making a recording, a lot of them can be figured out through simple tests. The first thing I would recommend doing when arriving is turning your recording device on for a few seconds, turning it off, and then **listening to a playback**. This will give you an idea of the background noises present in your rehearsal space. Air conditioners and various electronic devices are notorious for causing unwanted noises in your recordings. If you are unable to silence these background noises, it is important to make sure that your overall ensemble level of noise covers this background noise as much as possible. After determining background noise, I would then suggest recording a take of your desired piece. Make note of what sounds good, and what could be improved. If you are using a mic, try adjusting gain, or the position of the mic if something sounds too loud or too soft. If you are using a cell phone, mic sensitivity can be adjusted, as well as positioning of the phone.

External Microphone

Winfred: While not necessary, external microphones can be great tools for recording. While a cell phone is an excellent tool for recording, the built-in microphones do have their limits. **External microphones** provide a more dedicated way of interpreting sound and can really enhance your overall recording. Another great thing about external microphones is that they are easily accessible. There are decent quality USB microphones that are priced starting at around \$40. If you are unable to purchase an external microphone, the first thing I would do is **check with nearby schools and libraries**. These institutions will usually have some kind of recording equipment available, and you should be able to **check-out and borrow these free of charge**. If these institutions do not have microphones for you to use, try getting in touch with a private teacher, or trusted professional for more options. While it can be hard to ask, remember that **your community is there to help you**, and will usually be glad to lend you a hand.



Just Using Your Phone

Jane: One of the first steps of making a successful audio recording from your phone is to check your spacial awareness, meaning no one particular group member is too close to the mic! Before you begin, **record a few sections** from your pieces to ensure that no one particular instrument is coming through more than the others. You don't want to have a successful take, and then realize during playback that half the group can't be heard. **Make sure that where you set your phone is stable as well.** You want to make sure your phone won't fall during a take. Some options to keep your phone stable might be a popsocket for the back, or a phone stand.

During the sound check, make sure you **test dynamic levels** as well. Practice your loudest and softest sections to ensure you don't blow out the mic and/or can be heard during pianissimo moments. Then adjust group levels from there. Finally, make sure your **notifications are off** by turning on airplane mode or do-not-disturb. Receiving a phone call or text during a take can sometimes stop recordings, or at least leave the notification sound in the recording. Following these steps can help you have a successful recording session, and save group time and energy overall.

Wifi/Connection Problem-Solving

Jane: Congrats! You recorded a successful take everyone is proud of! Now, the next step is to **upload** your recording. You can do this through the **dropbox folder link** that you received when you registered for NCF!

If you're having trouble uploading, here are some things you can check. First, check to see if your internet connection is stable. If you are experiencing trouble connecting, you can try to **disconnect and reconnect** to your wifi. If you are connecting to your own router, or have access to the one you are connected to, you may be able to restart it and reconnect. If the problem persists, it may be a good idea to try from a **different location**. Most local libraries have public wifi. Even though they might be closed due to COVID-19, the wifi can still be accessed from outside the building. A few other options may be to ask another member of the group to upload, or, if you are a student, to check the wifi connection at your school.

If you have tried these things and are still having difficulties, please reach out to us so we can troubleshoot with you!



CONTACT INFORMATION

Email

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Sacha Peiser, NCF Director
sacha@lyricabaroque.com

Jane Koelsch, NCF Administrative Assistant
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Social Media

Facebook - [NOLA Chamber Fest](#)

Instagram - [@nolachamberfest](#)

FAQ's

Should each individual member register for NCF?

Yes, each member from your group needs to register through [Active.com](#).

I'm having trouble uploading my recording! Who should I contact?

You can contact us through email if you are having trouble! We strongly recommend trying to upload a few days before the deadline in case any problems occur.

Where can I find the deadlines for registration?

All dates and deadlines can be found online at our [website](#).

Who should I contact if I miss a deadline?

If you have missed a deadline for registration or uploading, please contact Sacha Peiser at sacha@lyricabaroque.com.

