The Effect of Memorization and Eye Contact on Evaluation of Solo Vocal Performances

Sandra L. Howard
Keene State College Department of Music

The purpose of this study was to examine the effect of the presence of a music stand and performer’s eye contact on high school solo vocal performance quality ratings. Undergraduate music and non-music majors (N = 167) assigned ratings to three audiovisual recordings: memorized, non-memorized with eye contact to audience, and non-memorized without eye contact to audience. Significantly higher ratings (p < .05) were assigned to the memorized presentation condition. A four-way ANOVA test revealed no main effects for DVD order, adjudicator gender, degree major, and academic level. Pearson r correlations indicated significant differences (p < .05) between reported self-beliefs on the importance of nonmusical factors and the visual aspect during performance with assigned ratings.

Review of Literature

The evaluation of solo vocal performance occurs routinely in contemporary society, and may be related to academic or musical settings including solo contests, semester juries, selection for honor choirs, and admission to schools of music. Whybrew (1962) suggested that adjudicators form “generalized impressions in a haphazard manner” (p. 2) during music assessment and that these judgments are often based on subjective responses. Boyle and Radocy (1987) stated, “measurement of musical performance is inherently subjective. Music consists of sequential aural sensations and any judgment of musical performance is based on those sensations as they are processed by the judge’s brain” (p. 171). According to Stanley, Brooker, and Gilbert (2002), evaluators of music performance may rely on a “gut reaction, an intuitive or emotional response which is basically one of enjoyment” (p. 47). While many festivals and institutions recommend that singers perform repertoire selections from memory during the audition process, it is unclear if memorization has an effect on adjudicator’s assigned performance quality ratings.

Extant research suggests the manner in which a performance is presented can impact an evaluator’s feedback, rating, or assessment of elements of a musical performance. Nonmusical factors that may impact assigned ratings include travel distance to audition site (Lien & Humphreys, 2001), order of performance (Flores & Ginsburgh, 1996), time of day and school size (Bergee & McWhirter, 2005). Assessment criteria (Jones, 1986; Pazitka-Munroe, 2002), musical material to be performed (Wiest-Parthun, 1998), number of adjudicators
present (Elliott, 1995b; Ryder, 1990), and mode of presentation (Forsythe & Kelly, 1989; Howard, 2009; Pitzer & Morrison, 2009) are examples of possible variables that influence performance evaluation.

In the United States, however, there appear to be inconsistent perceptions on the possible influence of visual aspects on ratings assigned to solo vocal performances during high school honor choir audition processes (Howard, 2008). One representative from each state’s music educators association reported varying requirements for mode of presentation used in district and state festival auditions (24% = blind format; 58% = viewed format; 12% = teacher recommendation only or no district level festival; 6% = procedures varied within state). Some recent research supports including the visual aspect of performance as it may assist adjudicators in making more informed responses when assessing performance quality (Lehman & Davidson, 2002; Ryan & Costa-Giomi, 2004; Wapnick, Darrow, Kovacs, & Dalrymple, 1997; Wapnick, Mazza, & Darrow, 1998). In other cases, blind audition processes are used in an attempt to diminish the possible effect of visual biases on selection to the ensemble (Goldin & Rouse, 2000).

A number of nonmusical factors appear to influence adjudicators’ perceptions and assigned performance ratings. Music research has focused on the impact of visual elements that can influence performance ratings: initial impressions (Robinson, 2000; VanWeelden, 2002), performers’ attractiveness (Ryan & Costa-Giomi, 2004; Ryan, Wapnick, LaCaille, & Darrow, 2006; Wapnick et al., 1997; 1998; Wapnick, Mazza, & Darrow, 2000), facial expression (Mayne, 1992), age (McCrary, 1993), gender (Goldin & Rouse, 2000), and race (Cheek, 2007; Elliott, 1995a; Johnson & Stewart, 2005). Researchers have examined other social aspects of performance evaluation (Davidson, 1997), performance attire (Howard, 2009; Ryan et al., 2006; Wapnick et al., 1998, 2000), stage deportment (Davidson & da Costa-Coimbra, 2001; Howard, 2009), movement (Davidson, 1994), and memorization (Siddell-Strebel, 2007) as other possible influences on adjudicators’ perceptions of performance quality.

Memorization of performance repertoire, in particular, has been investigated as a possible influence on adjudicator bias. Music professionals continue to explore the potential benefits of memorization and its role on internalizing a piece of music. Researchers advocate for the act of memorization to further develop motor skills (Reubart, 1985) and instill diligence in practice (Hallam, 1995; Noyle, 1987). Williamon (1999) investigated the value of performing from memory and found that memorized performances yielded higher performance quality ratings than non-memorized performances while Siddell-Strebel’s (2007) study involving performance evaluation of cellists found no main effect for memorization.

Other research investigations examined the effect of adjudicator gender on performance evaluation where, in some cases, data found that female adjudicators assigned higher ratings to performances than their male
counterparts (Wapnick et al., 1997; 2000) while inconsistent findings on main effect for adjudicator gender have been reported (Davidson & da Costa Coimbra, 2001; Howard, 2009; Wapnick et al., 1998; Wapnick, Ryan, Lacaille & Darrow, 2004).

Adjudicators’ level of music training or expertise yielded varying results from advocating for expert-only adjudicators (Ekholm, 1997; Johnson, 1997) to identifying less consistency in ratings from more experienced adjudicators (Kim, 2000). Adjudicators’ proficiency level or area of expertise using brass versus non-brass (Fiske, 1975, 1977) and keyboard versus non-keyboard players (Roberts, 1975) revealed no significant difference between adjudicator groups. In addition, Banister’s (1991) study found no main effect for an adjudicator’s level of training on assigned ratings to performers at a state-level solo contest, yet, more recent research identified significant differences in performance ratings were attributed to adjudicator level of training (Bergee & Cecconi-Roberts, 2002; Howard, 2008; Wapnick et al., 2004).

The topic of possible bias in performance evaluation continues to interest investigators from many fields of study. Numerous research findings indicate that nonmusical factors have an effect on performance evaluation, evaluation is situational, and can be subjective. Further research is warranted to investigate the effects of nonmusical factors (i.e. adjudicator’s gender, degree major, and performer’s memorization) on adjudicators’ ratings of high school solo vocal performances, and to identify possible areas of bias to expand the current body of research. The purpose of this study is to determine whether the presence of a music stand and differentiated eye contact (focused on music stand or to audience) during a high school solo vocalist’s performances would affect adjudicators’ ratings of the overall musical performance quality.

**Method**

*Musical Stands and Differentiated Eye Contact During High School Solo Vocalist’s Performances*

### Adjudicators:

Undergraduate music (n = 40) and non-music majors (n = 127) enrolled at a liberal arts college in the eastern region of the United States served as adjudicators (N = 167) for this investigation. Adjudicators (males = 83; females = 84) were freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors enrolled in music major or general elective undergraduate music courses.

### Preparation of DVD Recordings:

The performer for stimulus recordings was a Caucasian, high school female singer enrolled in private voice lessons. No other nonmusical factors or physical attributes were considered in the selection of the solo vocalist. The solo vocalist performed three consecutive performances of *Un Moto di Gioia* by W. A. Mozart with piano accompaniment during a single recording session and was instructed to sing each performance with as much consistency of vocal production and musical expressiveness as possible while other variables were manipulated across the performance recordings (i.e. presence of music stand; eye contact). The solo vocalist was instructed on specific behaviors to include in each of the three presentation conditions: memorized (no music stand, eye contact to audience);
non-memorized with eye contact (presence of music stand, eye contact to audience); non-memorized without eye contact (presence of music stand, little to no eye contact to audience).

Performances were recorded in a collegiate recital hall using a Canon ZR500 digital video camcorder. Each video recording showed a front angle; full-length view of the solo vocalist wearing a concert gown, standing in front of a grand piano, and performing the prepared piece. Digital footage was edited using iMovie 2009 software and three 50-second audiovisual performance excerpts were extracted (Robinson, 2000; Vasil, 1973; Winter, 1989). The researcher dubbed the audio recording from the memorized performance recording to be closely synchronized (within .1 second) with lip movement of the two other subsequent stimulus recordings and presentation conditions (Elliott, 1995a). A silent 5-second transition showing a black screen separated each performance excerpt on the stimulus DVD. In an effort to minimize order effect, audiovisual recordings were arranged in three unique and different presentation orders using iMovie 2009, iTunes 10, and iDVD version 7.0.4 software. The duration of each stimulus DVD was approximately three minutes.

Procedure: The researcher obtained IRB permission to conduct the investigation and obtained signed consent from the solo vocalist and guardian. Each undergraduate adjudicator received two copies of a consent form—one copy to be signed and submitted to the investigator prior to the collection of data, and the other for adjudicators’ personal records. The researcher contacted music faculty by email to invite undergraduate student adjudicators to volunteer as a participant in this study.

Data collection was completed over a two-week period within the context of music major or general elective music courses with groups ranging from 4 to 45 adjudicators in university music classrooms. The researcher made no attempt to define “overall musical performance quality”. Adjudicators were directed consider each performance as being “weak” or “strong” and assign a rating (Burnsed & King, 1987; Fiske, 1975, 1977; Mills, 1991; Wapnick, Flowers, Alegant, & Jasinskas, 1993) using a 6-point Likert type scale (1 = weak; 6 = strong) provided on the researcher-constructed Solo Vocal Performance Evaluation Form. The researcher asked adjudicators if they had any questions about the procedure, then started the stimulus recording that played continuously for three minutes as participants observed and marked their evaluation forms. Following the final performance excerpt, adjudicators responded to two questions using a provided Likert-type scale: (1) Although you were asked to rate the overall musical quality of each performance, how much do you think your ratings were influenced by the presence of the music stand? (1 = not at all influenced; 4 = very influenced), (2) In your opinion, how important is the visual aspect of a performance in the evaluation of the overall musical performance quality of solo vocalists? (1 = not very important; 4 = very important) (Wapnick et al., 2000). Adjudicators were also asked to indicate demographic information: gender, degree major (music or non-music major),
and academic level (undergraduate level: freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior). Directly following the collection of data, the researcher read a debriefing script to adjudicators and invited questions.

Results

Student adjudicator responses on the Solo Vocal Performance Evaluation Form served as quantitative data for the study, and were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences 16.0 (SPSS). A four-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to examine adjudicators’ assigned performance ratings as a function of: adjudicator gender, adjudicator degree major, adjudicator academic level, and performance excerpt order. Data revealed no order effect \( (F(2) = 1.334, p > .05) \) for adjudicators’ ratings as a function of performance excerpt order on the three randomly ordered stimulus DVD recordings.

A three-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was applied to examine adjudicators’ assigned performance ratings to the three presentation conditions: memorized, non-memorized with eye contact, non-memorized without eye contact. No main effects were identified for adjudicator gender \( (F(1) = .700, p > .05) \), adjudicator degree major \( (F(1) = 1.590, p > .05) \), or adjudicator academic level \( (F(3) = .862, p > .05) \). However, results indicated significant differences for performance quality ratings assigned to differentiated presentation conditions \( (F(1) = 2035.621, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .94) \) with overall mean scores for memorized \( (M = 4.42, sd = 1.09) \), non-memorized with eye contact \( (M = 4.13, sd = .88) \), and non-memorized without eye contact \( (M = 3.87, sd = 1.14) \) as shown in Table 1.

In addition, a three-way ANOVA examined adjudicators’ stated beliefs regarding nonmusical influences on performance evaluation (i.e. presence of music stand, eye contact). Findings revealed main effects for adjudicators’ gender \( (F(1) = 8.403, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .05) \) and degree major \( (F(1) = 22.281, p < .05, \eta^2_p = .13) \), yet adjudicator academic level did not yield significant results \( (F(3) = .998, p > .05) \). In response to “Although you were asked to rate the overall musical quality of each performance, how much do you think your ratings were influenced by the presence of the music stand?” female adjudicators indicated greater influence on assigned performance ratings \( (M = 2.36, sd = 1.04) \) than their male counterparts \( (M = 1.92, sd = .99) \). Participants’ responses to “In your opinion, how important is the visual aspect of a performance in the evaluation of the overall musical performance quality of solo vocalists?” indicated that female adjudicators reported a moderately high level of importance \( (M = 3.10, sd = .83) \) while male adjudicators identified a moderate level of importance \( (M = 2.63, sd = .93) \).

A series of Pearson \( r \) correlations were applied to examine possible relationships between participants’ stated beliefs regarding the importance of selected variables (presence of music stand, eye contact) in performance
evaluation with actual assigned ratings for the three stimulus recording presentation conditions as shown in Table 2.

Table 1. *Mean Scores of Presentation Conditions Involving Memorized, Non-memorized with Eye Contact, Non-memorized without Eye Contact by Adjudicator Gender and Degree Major*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Condition</th>
<th>Major</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Memorized</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>1.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.19</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.62</td>
<td>0.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.40</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.24</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.60</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.42</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-memorized w/ Eye Contact</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>0.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.14</td>
<td>0.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.05</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>4.00</td>
<td>0.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.32</td>
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<td></td>
<td>4.16</td>
<td>0.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.99</td>
<td>0.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>0.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>0.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-memorized w/o Eye Contact</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.29</td>
<td>1.06</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Non-music</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>4.17</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>4.04</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>3.78</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>3.95</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: *Italic* font indicates mean score by major. **Bold** font indicates overall mean score, 
\( F(1) = 2035.621, p < .05, \eta^2 = .94 \)
Table 2. Correlations for Stated Beliefs on Influence of Presence of Music Stand, Importance of Visual Aspect in Performance Evaluation, and Assigned Performance Ratings to Presentation Conditions by Adjudicator Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Memorized</th>
<th>Non-Memorized w/ Eye Contact</th>
<th>Non-Memorized w/o Eye Contact</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How much were your ratings influenced by the music stand?</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.293*</td>
<td>-.010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.216*</td>
<td>-.003</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is the visual aspect in performance evaluation?</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>.269*</td>
<td>.054</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>.081</td>
<td>.093</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p < .05, two-tailed

A series of Pearson $r$ correlations were applied to examine possible relationships between participants’ stated beliefs regarding the importance of selected variables (presence of music stand, eye contact) in performance evaluation with actual assigned ratings for the three stimulus recording presentation conditions as shown in Table 2.

**Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to examine the possible influence of a performer’s memorization and eye contact to audience on adjudicator’s assigned ratings to high school solo vocal performances. Mean scores of performance ratings support conventional opinion and recent findings (Siddell-Strebel, 2007) regarding the topic of solo vocal performances with or without music. The memorized performance yielded significantly higher ratings than those assigned to the non-memorized presentation conditions. Performance ratings were lower for the non-memorized with eye contact presentation condition, yet mean scores were still significantly higher than those assigned to the non-memorized without eye contact presentation condition. This suggests that for this small population of adjudicators ($N = 167$), the presentation conditions were placed in a three-tier hierarchy of overall performance quality. Implications to the profession suggest that solo vocalists should perform memorized works to achieve the highest level of perceived performance quality, however presentations with non-memorized material may be able to maintain meaningful communication to the audience. Future research could replicate the methodology implemented in this study for possible application in a choral performance setting.

No main effect was found for adjudicator gender. However, as with
previous research (Howard, 2009; Wapnick et al., 1997; 2000), female adjudicators tended to rate all performances slightly higher than male adjudicators. In this investigation, undergraduate student adjudicators rated all performances similarly, a result which supports earlier research findings (Wapnick et al., 2004). These inconclusive findings merit further investigation and suggest the need for continued consistency in audition processes for acceptance to honors choir or admission to a school of music. Many state music educators associations use solo vocal adjudicators as their own control, which may increase reliability with performance ratings. Additional research could investigate ratings assigned by male and female adjudicators to solo vocal auditions comparing the overall outcome of singers selected for an honors chorus.

Examined data from this investigation also concluded no main effect for adjudicator’s degree major, which supports previous research involving brass versus non-brass players (Fiske, 1975; 1977), keyboard versus non-keyboard players (Roberts, 1975), and various combinations of adjudicator experience levels with music when rating pianists (Ryan & Costa-Giomi, 2004) and cellists (Siddell-Strebel, 2007). Future replications of earlier research could involve comparing actual ratings from an honor choir audition with performance ratings assigned by evaluators of varying ages and music experience levels. Additional research may provide a more current perspective on the effect of an adjudicator’s primary instrument or level of expertise on evaluating music performances. It is possible that non-music major adjudicators were unclear about the task to rate the overall performance quality for each excerpt due to less music experience and although no adjudicators asked questions prior to the start of the adjudication process when given the opportunity. In addition, the Solo Vocal Evaluation Form included rating scale reminders of “weak” and “strong” to aid adjudicators. The prevalence of televised music adjudication programs within pop culture may provide non-music majors with sufficient general knowledge in making overall judgments for performance quality and could serve as an interesting topic for study.

This investigation included freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior level undergraduate student adjudicators and the data revealed no main effect for academic level. Previous research investigated differences among the sophistication level of adjudicators (i.e. young children, high school, undergraduate, and graduate students, university faculty, retired individuals), which in many cases revealed higher performance ratings assigned by peer group adjudicators (Bergee, 1993; 1997) than those with additional training. These results seem to suggest that as a person receives more training beyond high school, one becomes more discriminating in issues of vocal production and performance quality. Further study might include other adjudicator groups beyond undergraduate students as it appears, for these adjudicators, the increase in proficiency level between grade levels does not provide enough of a change in sophistication or listening discrimination.
While attempts were made to minimize peer influence during the data collection process, it is possible that testing in small groups rather than individual appointments may have had an impact on adjudicators’ ratings of performances. Different university music classrooms were used for testing and arranged in a similar manner, however, other variables such as classroom size, acoustical space, quality of visual image, and sound system may have affected performance ratings. In addition, data collection occurred at varying times of day and may have affected adjudicators’ responses.

Audiovisual stimulus presentation conditions were determined in advance to represent specific combinations of characteristics including the presence of the music stand and differentiated eye contact to the audience. In an effort to control for consistency in vocal production across multiple recorded excerpts, one audio recording from the soloists’ vocal performances was extracted and synchronized to match the performer’s subsequent performance presentation conditions. Although participants did not report a perceived lack of performance authenticity, this may have affected performance ratings. It is unclear to the researcher whether adjudicators detected subtle timing differences (i.e. within .1 second) in the dubbed video excerpts. For this investigation, all adjudicators rated performance excerpts provided by a recorded stimulus DVD and it is possible that performance ratings may have differed if assigned within a live performance setting.

Correlations revealed mixed results between assigned performance ratings and adjudicators’ self-beliefs of how much assigned ratings were influenced by the presence of the music stand. In this study, both male and female adjudicators indicated moderate influence due to the presence of the music stand. These reports support a weak positive correlation, which may suggest their self-awareness of influence by the presence of the music stand and supports their higher ratings on performance quality. While adjudicators acknowledged this influence, they may have been unaware of its greater impact on assigning performance ratings.

Reported self-beliefs for the non-memorized with eye contact presentation condition indicated nearly no correlation. These findings suggest a more neutral reaction to non-memorized performances that are able to communicate to the audience, which could indicate that these adjudicators perceived performing with sheet music as not a distraction or impetus to lower performance ratings, however their assigned ratings suggest otherwise. The weak negative correlation with the non-memorized without eye contact presentation condition could indicate that for this population of male adjudicators, they did not acknowledge or were unaware of the level of impact this presentation condition had on the lower ratings they assigned. Female adjudicators’ self-beliefs revealed a moderate negative correlation with assigned performance ratings, which could indicate that as their declaration of influence increased, their performance ratings decreased for a singer whose performance was non-memorized with little to no eye contact to the audience. The mixed results
among self-beliefs and differentiated presentation conditions show some trending with influence of the music stand and its impact on performance ratings. It appears that adjudicators were influenced more by these nonmusical factors than they believed, which could indicate preferential bias toward memorization.

Adjudicators also responded to a second question, which asked about their self-beliefs of the importance of the visual aspect in evaluating solo vocal performances. While male adjudicators’ self-beliefs resulted in a weak positive correlation, a comparison between performance ratings and self-beliefs by female adjudicators reported nearly no correlation. Given that performance ratings for the memorized presentation condition yielded significantly higher ratings than those assigned to non-memorized presentation conditions, it is possible in this case, that female adjudicators were unaware of the impact the visual aspect had in their performance evaluation. Both male and female adjudicators self-beliefs indicated nearly no correlation with the non-memorized with eye contact presentation condition and a little to weak negative correlation with the performance ratings assigned to the non-memorized without eye contact presentation condition. While it is possible the question was vague, these findings suggest that participants had an inaccurate sense of the role that the visual aspect had in their own perceptions of music performance quality. It is difficult to pinpoint biases that adjudicators bring to the task of performance evaluation. These findings support previous research that suggests adjudicators can have a lack of self-awareness of possible biases (i.e. performance attire, stage deportment) (Howard, 2009) and it is suggested that music educators encourage the students and model memorized performances to enhance the possible outcome of assigned performance ratings.

Results from this study provide music educators and adjudicators with additional considerations as they prepare singers for solo vocal auditions. Music educators are encouraged to discuss audition criteria with students prior to the audition process, conduct mock auditions using the audition-scoring rubric, and provide additional training on nonmusical factors in the performance setting. Through these results, it appears that when provided with a choice between performing memorized or non-memorized, it may be beneficial for solo vocalists to choose to perform from memory to obtain higher performance quality ratings. Continued discussion is encouraged on audition criteria to determine whether or not nonmusical factors (i.e. visual aspect, eye contact, level of memorization) should be included on evaluation forms, as it seems that these elements can impact overall performance ratings. Adjudicators are encouraged to seek additional training regarding the possible influence of nonmusical biases in performance evaluation. State music associations, schools of music, and others who administer auditions are encouraged to further define evaluation procedures and provide performers with access to audition rating criteria in advance to create a more equitable process.
References


