



EUYO Audition video recording guidelines

We are aware that most of you will have already done a lot of audition recordings before and some of the following tips and tricks might be old news to you. Nevertheless, give it a shot - you might end up finding something useful in this document that can make your recording extra special.

In general, using the built-in mics and camera of your **smartphone** is a good way to start.

- the recording quality on most modern smartphones is generally very good.
- it is easy to make simple video recordings using built-in apps.
- they do not generate fan noise.
- they can be placed easily on music stands, etc.

If you happen to have additional equipment, such as external mics, audio interfaces, computer software, etc, and the expertise to create good results with them, you are more than welcome to use them if you wish.

Whichever approach you take, make sure to get familiar with your equipment to allow yourself to fully focus on your performance when you create your audition video.

Video recording with Smartphones/Tablets

- Use your phone's back camera (not the one you take selfies with), record in landscape and make sure your microphone is not covered when recording.
- The built-in mics on most smartphones are generally capable of making good quality recordings.
- If you want to use external mics with your smartphone you can use a USB mic, such as the Rode NT-USB Mini, or regular mics into a class-compliant USB audio interface, such as the Focusrite Scarlett range of audio interfaces. Using USB devices with your smartphone usually requires an adaptor. Also, be aware that when using external mics, you may need to set the gain manually - to set this, you will need to make multiple test recordings of the loudest passage in your performance, adjusting the gain each time to ensure it is metering as loud as possible without distorting.
- We highly recommend powering your phone from its charger so that it does not run out of battery during your recording.
- Make sure you have enough storage on your phone. A 40 minute iPhone recording at 720p 30fps takes 1.6 GB space.
- You can choose to record on your built-in video recording software, also called the "Camera" app, or use any other available recording app.
- We recommend recording at a resolution of 1280 x 720 at 30fps
- Put your Airplane Mode or Do Not Disturb mode on, so that no one can interrupt your recording.

Room setup

- If at all possible, get help of a member of your household to help you set up and make your test recordings. This way, they can try different camera angles and placements while you perform excerpts, which can be a lot easier than trying to do it all yourself.
- Choose a calm, quiet, and comfortable room that has the least disturbance from the outside world, eg traffic noise, neighbours, etc.
- Let everyone in your household know when you are recording your performance, so they don't inadvertently disturb you.
- Choose a room that has the most flattering acoustic – this might be one of the larger rooms in your house, particularly if the wall surfaces have soft furnishings that break up otherwise shiny, reflective, parallel surfaces. If it feels good to play in, and does not sound too boomy or boxy, it is a good candidate. Top Tip: Bathrooms might feel enjoyable to play in but tend to sound terrible on recordings.
- Choose a clean, tidy room with a non-distracting background if you can.

Lighting

- Don't be backlit! Don't have a bright window or light behind you. Shooting away from (rather than towards) bright lights will allow you to be well-lit by them, rather than being drowned out by them.
- Cameras need more light than eyes do, so choosing a bright/well-lit room is important in helping you to be seen clearly and look good. If you have extra lights, consider using them.
- Natural vs artificial light
- Both can look good, just be aware that natural light can change and is of course only there during daytime!

Device placement

The first thing to consider when placing your device is its distance from the source, which will have the following effects on the audio:

	Closer	Further away
Perspective	More detailed, up-front sound	More natural perspective
Timbral balance	Requires critical listening and experimentation to balance parts of the instrument, eg mechanical/breath noises vs tone, bass vs treble, body vs neck, etc	More blended, balanced sound
Precise positioning	Moving mic by a few cm can make a big difference to the sound – experiment and listen carefully around the instrument to find a good spot	Ultra-precise positioning less critical as sound is more blended at a distance
Room acoustic	Less – good for rejecting a poor acoustic	More – good when a room acoustic is flattering
External sounds	More rejection – good if your recording environment is noisy	Less rejection – find if your recording environment is quiet
Spill	Less spill- gives more separation and control	More spill – gives less control, although a certain amount of spill can be useful as 'sonic glue'
Frequency response	More bass	Less bass

For audio and video recordings done with a single device, such as your smartphone or tablet, we recommend placing your device:

- on a stable surface around eye-height, eg a music stand or bookshelf.
- about 2m from you.
- with your room's main light source behind the camera.

Experiment with placement to find a result that works to give both clear video and audio by making various test recordings. If you are using external mics, this gives you the flexibility of being able to place your camera and mics independently

Instrument specifics:

Acoustic piano – Acoustic pianos (both grand and upright) are complex instruments, and small placement changes can have a significant effect, especially at the close distances required by small rooms. Having a friend move their ears around while you play can help to identify ‘sweet spots’ as good starting points.

Brass instruments – perform off-axis to your recording device to avoid wind blasts overpowering the mic.

The Look

- A plain background to your shot is best if you can achieve it, but getting your audio and lighting right is a higher priority.
- Also, it is better to shoot from ahead or above than from below – a nostril shot is not normally the most flattering angle!
- The main thing is that you and your playing can be seen clearly – if in doubt, aim to replicate what a judging panel would be able to see in a live performance.

The finishing touch

The key to getting the audio of any recording right is to make test recordings, listen critically to them, then to listen in the room to compare the actual sound with what you hear in your test recordings, and adjust mic/device positions accordingly. If you have a friend who can play while you listen (or listen while you play), this can really help in setting and fine-tuning your recording mic/device positions. A good way to listen in the room is to close one ear (it is safer to press in your ‘tragus’ ear flap than to directly stick your finger in your ear!) and listen with the other ear – this gives a pretty good approximation as to what a mic will pick up at that precise position.

Listen for:

Distortion - If your recording distorts in loud passages, turn the mic gain down. If your device does not allow you to adjust mic gain, try moving further away.

Noise (hiss) - If your recording has a distracting bed of hiss, turn the mic gain up. If your device does not allow you to adjust mic gain, try moving closer.

Room acoustic - If your recording sounds boomy, try a different room or moving your recording device closer.

External noises - If your recording suffers from external noises, try a different room, moving your recording device closer, recording at a different time of day.

Look for:

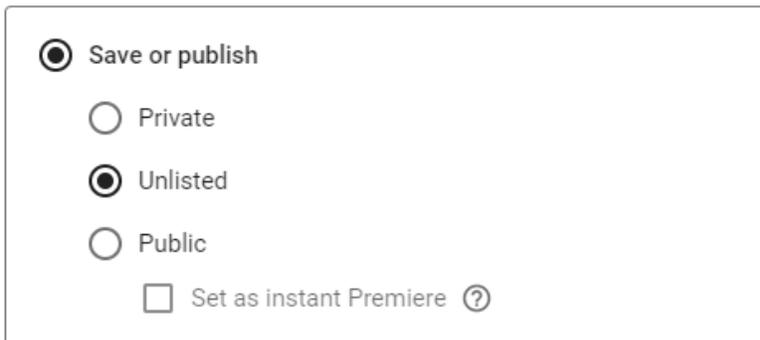
Can you see yourself and your playing clearly?

As a guide, think about replicating what a judging panel would be able to see, and think about the following factors (see the previous section for further details):

- Lighting – be well lit and not backlit
- Shot composition – replicate what a live judging panel would see
- Resolution - should be 1280 x 720

Your Performance

- Once you have pressed record, at the beginning of your performance announce your full name and the name of the solo piece that you chose to play.
- Play the solo piece and the excerpts in one take.
- Upload the video file to YouTube and make sure to set it as 'Unlisted'. That will enable the EUYO panel to see your video, but no one else will be able to watch it.
- Finally, copy the link to your YouTube video into the application form on the EUYO website, fill out all your personal details and submit the application form.



A screenshot of the YouTube video privacy settings menu. It shows four radio button options: 'Save or publish' (selected), 'Private', 'Unlisted' (selected), and 'Public'. Below these is a checkbox for 'Set as instant Premiere' with a question mark icon.

Et voilà!

You've successfully applied for the EUYO 2021.

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*These guidelines are brought to in cooperation with
the Recording and Audio Visual Team of the
Guildhall School of Music & Drama.*