

## The Zoom Where It Happens – Performer Guidelines

Greetings, performers! Thank you for devoting time, care, and talent to this shenanigan.

Everything you need to perform should be in this Drive folder, which is where you should post your videos when you're done:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/xxxxxxx>

Here are recommended guidelines to consider as you record your video performance of your part:

1. Please wear performance-level garb (at least where we can see you). This should look like “SCA Bard You”, because that’s what’s fun about it.
2. If you have a nice backdrop to put behind you, that’s a great thought. It is okay if we can see your modern room (this is supposed to be a Zoom call), though try to record in a space where the acoustics are not too echoey. Please do NOT attempt to add a “virtual background”, because those can interfere with your visibility. (Our editor can do that in post if necessary.) If there are things in your camera’s line of sight that might be busy or distracting, maybe you want to cover them with a sheet.
3. Use the best microphone and camera available, probably the one on your computer (though an external mic or webcam probably will improve on the built in one—no, please don’t buy one for this project unless you expect to get more use out of it). Your computer will probably be the most stable way for you to record, though if your phone is your best option, you can use that (but see below). If possible, record in “landscape” mode, so that the image is horizontal like a TV screen (for a phone, that means hold it sideways).
4. Check the settings for your recording app or software – many of them offer different qualities to record in. Please choose the highest quality available, so that we have the best video and audio possible to start from.
5. Check your microphone and your levels with a quick test run before you start. You don’t want to overpower your mic, which will result in “clipping” that is hard to mix with the other singers. Test recording and playback of the loudest part of the song. (It is much easier to bring overly-soft vocals up in the mix than to correct too-loud vocals that clip.) If you’re coming in too loud, check your Sound options – sometimes you can set the overall volume sensitivity of the specific microphone you’re using. Alternately, try placing it closer or further to where you’re sitting to get the best volume level overall.
6. You MUST perform while listening to the guide track I’ve provided; there is no practical way to match your performance up to the background music and other players if you don’t. A visible earbud in your ear is not a problem; everyone understands how at-home collaborative videos are done, and the audience won’t judge. This may mean you’re going to play the track from your phone, which maybe you can have somewhere behind you out of the way, or maybe it’s playing on your computer while you record with other software. Whatever works for you, but we don’t want to hear the guide track in the mic you’re singing to.

7. Stay present, because you don't know when your video frame is going to be onscreen. React to what you're hearing, imagine that you're seeing the actual players doing all this on the Zoom call.
8. We're playing for comedy, so you should be animated with your voice and facial expressions, but not move around too much (it's a Zoom call). Feel free to use your hands as you would in conversation for emphasis. Go a little bigger than you think you need to—again, sometimes you may be a small face in a grid, and you don't want your reactions to be missed.
9. For the principal bards: At the start of the piece, we are trying to explain and Inter-Kingdom Incident to our Royals. Play up the discomfort, the fear, the desperate attempts to weasel out of royal disfavor or banishment. This is war schtick, it makes it funnier.
10. Sing in YOUR comfortable range, but in the key presented here. On Company parts, find the harmony you like as long as you can do it confidently (we can pitch correct in post).
11. Note that my guide vocal is very carefully calibrated to match the melody and the *exact* spoken and sung rhythms from *Hamilton*, and the closer every line is to that level of precision, the less time the serious Hamilton fans will be distracted, and the more they will crack up at what we're doing. You don't have to sound *like me*, but the spoken words are *rap poetry*, and the stresses and syllable lengths are trying to match what the original *Hamilton* cast did on the very well-known recording.

If it sounds a little awkward getting the rap right, that's okay—favor the rap rhythm over sounding natural. We are going to have captions on the video itself, so everyone can follow the words of the filk even without CC enabled.

(If you are not sure that I've got it right, or you can't hear me precisely for whatever reason on the recording, just ping me, and I'll be happy to spend a few minutes on a video call and help iron out any concerns.)

12. I know the guide vocal cuts off suddenly on the last note, but that was just a goof when I mixed it down. The actual background music has a full note with a gunshot sound and a fade. This means, when you finish the final "Click! BOOM!" with the gestures (remember the gesture for that, please!), you should keep your game face on for maybe 10 seconds before you stop and cut the camera, preferably smiling.
13. If you have time, please try to do a second full take. We are going to have cuts in the video in places where we cut to "speaker view", so it will be possible to sample the better performance in different parts of the song even if that's different takes.
14. Hit me up with any other questions you have.

Drake