

SOUND OFF!



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

For more information on how to make the strongest application to Sound Off!, check out our [Resources for Readiness](#)

WHAT IS SOUND OFF!?

It's the premier Northwest 21-and-under battle of the bands. Since the Museum of Pop Culture launched the program in 2001, Sound Off! has supported the all-ages scene by giving artists an opportunity to showcase their original music, connect with the artistic community, and help launch their music career. Sound Off! concerts take place annually at MoPOP in Seattle in February and March. If you are considering applying to Sound Off!, we recommend that you watch videos of past performances to get a feel for the diversity of genres and styles that have been represented in the semifinals. Here are some other Sound Off! resources to check out.

[Sound Off! Web Page](#)
[MoPOP Youth Advisory Board](#)

WHAT IS MUSEUM OF POP CULTURE (MOPOP)?

The Museum of Pop Culture's mission is to make creative expression a life-changing force by offering experiences that inspire and connect our communities. At MoPOP, artists, audiences, and ideas converge, bringing understanding, interpretation, and scholarship to the popular culture of our time. MoPOP is housed in a 140,000 square foot building designed by Frank O. Gehry that includes multiple innovative galleries, an interactive Sound Lab, and Sky Church—a concert venue with state-of-the-art sound and lighting that houses one of the largest indoor LED screens in the world. The spectacular, prominently visible MoPOP structure has the presence of a monumental sculpture set against the backdrop of Seattle Center.

WHEN ARE THE SOUND OFF! CONCERTS?

Sound Off! Semifinals concerts take place at MoPOP on Saturday nights in 2020, February 15, 22, and 29 with the Finals taking place on Saturday, March 7. Finals will be live broadcast on KEXP's local music show, Audioasis.

WHAT ARE THE PRIZES?

The four finalist bands receive prizes such as musical instruments, one-on-one industry consultations, radio airplay, and festival performances. This year KEXP is offering the top four finalist bands an opportunity to do a live in-studio recording and produce a video of a song to be posted on KEXP's website.

Though only four bands advance to finals, all 12 semifinalists get media training, a professional photo shoot, press, t-shirts, video documentation of their performances, participation in a music industry panel, and the opportunity to play a well-attended show at a world class performance venue.

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AM I ELIGIBLE TO APPLY?

Bands or artists must be from the Northwest (this is defined as Washington, Oregon, Idaho, or British Columbia) and must be age 21 or under. Your songs must be original — no covers allowed. All genres of music are accepted. Check out the rules and regulations for full eligibility requirements.

HOW DO I APPLY?

The Sound Off! application is online at <https://mopop.submittable.com/submit> and takes about 15 minutes.

You'll need to submit four MP3s of original music, a band photo, a band bio, and answers to some questions about your band and band members (you will need birthdates and contact info for each member of your band, so be sure to have that ready.)

Once your application has been received you will get a confirmation email from MoPOP. Submissions will be judged on content and a demonstration of the potential for a compelling live performance, not on the audio quality of recordings or on the quality of photos or video production.

WHEN IS THE DEADLINE TO APPLY?

Applications are due by 11:59pm on Monday, October 14, 2019. Unfinished applications will not be considered.

HOW DO I CONVERT MY MUSIC FILES TO MP3?

You can use an online audio converter or you can easily do this in iTunes. For iTunes:

1. Open iTunes Preferences. (Windows: Choose Edit > Preferences. Mac: Choose iTunes > Preferences.)
2. Click the General button, then click the Importing Settings button in the second section of the window.
3. From the Import Using pop-up menu, choose create MP3 version, then click OK to save the settings.
4. Select one or more songs in your library, right click and create MP3 version.

WHAT BANDS HAVE PARTICIPATED IN SOUND OFF!?

Tons! Here are just a few: The Lonely Forest, Sol, Naked Giants, Cosmos, LAZA, Emma Lee Toyoda, Jason McCue, Falon Sierra, Paris Alexa, Travis Thompson, The Globes, Maiah Wynne, Brite Futures, Kithkin, Schoolyard Heroes, Idiot Pilot, Special Explosion, i///u, Tomten, The Lonely H, Nude, New Faces, members of Hey Marseilles, Grand Hallway, Baja Boy, Beat Connection, Oberhofer, Vox Mod, Cumulus, La Luz, Kairos and many more.

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HOW ARE BANDS SELECTED FOR SOUND OFF!?

Three panels review all the applicants and choose 12 bands to perform live at MoPOP. Bands are scored based on song composition and arrangement, creativity and originality, technical ability and musicianship. Each category is equally weighted.

The following are examples of questions the judges may consider when rating bands:

Composition and Arrangement

How strong is the songwriting/composition (musical arrangement, lyrics, harmonies, instrumentation, rhythm, use of technology etc.)?

Creativity

Does the music sound inspired? Do they have an artistic identity? Are they bringing something interesting to their genre?

Technical Ability and Musicianship

How impressive is the musicianship? Are they proficient with instruments, vocals, and in time and/or in tune?

Band selection criteria subject to change.

HOW CAN I BUY TICKETS FOR SOUND OFF!?

Tickets will go on sale this December for the 2020 Sound Off! shows and may be purchased online.

DIDN'T FIND AN ANSWER?

Contact us at soundoff@MoPOP.org