

Hoff-Barthelson Music School

College Advisory 2016

Your application process will depend on the degree that you are seeking. A Bachelor of Arts in music, like most BAs, involves many courses outside of your major with approximately 40% of course work in the arts. A Bachelor of Music, like a Bachelor of Fine Arts, is essentially a professional degree, and the course balance will be the opposite. You can get a BM in music performance, composition, jazz studies, music theory, music history, or music education. Most of your courses will be degree-related: private lessons, solo classes, ensembles, composition, music theory, ear-training, music history, world music, piano for non-pianists, business of music, etc. If you are sure that you want a career in performance, you are probably going for a Bachelor of Music, but it is not essential, and many routes are possible.

If you are interested in a BA in music or valuable performance opportunities in the setting of a liberal arts degree, you will follow the general application process while focusing on the quality of these offerings. Beware of assuming that a university with a strong school of music will be a good place for you. This varies, and in some cases the professors and ensembles are only available to the music performance majors. It is important to ask about specific opportunities. You can schedule a trial lesson during your campus visit; this may help with your ultimate choice of school.

5-year double degree programs (BA/BM) are available at most universities with schools of music and at some conservatories that have arrangements with other colleges. This allows you to experience both tracks without committing early on. It is generally easy to withdraw from one if you become focused on the other. If you are interested, ask about the logistics. Scheduling and location are important factors in determining how manageable it will be, particularly if the schools are on separate campuses. Some conservatories offer cross-registration with nearby universities. Other options include certificates and music minors.

If you are planning to get a BM or double degree, the process is entirely different from the one for a BA. It changes your college list. Different programs are strong in different instruments. You are looking for a teacher and mentor, one who is right for your specific needs and goals at this point in your development as a performer. Instead of institutional reputation, you will prioritize the personal match with the teacher and the stature and postgraduate outcomes of the studio. Ask your music teachers, coaches, conductors, other students and parents for suggestions. Consider teachers you have met at summer music festivals or master classes. You will not be able to find up-to-date, accurate information for each instrument in a guidebook or magazine ranking.

At a conservatory, you will receive intensive music performance training and the basic required liberal arts coursework oriented to musicians. Some university schools of music function essentially like conservatories but offer a broader range of elective liberal arts courses and of course more interactions with students with varied interests and ideas.

A degree in music education is required to teach music in elementary or high school. You can also look for degrees in music business, music industry, arts administration, or specialized degree programs in composition, jazz, music theory or music history.

Please see the following specific advice for each track.

For students who want to study music within a liberal arts program:

Making your list

- Look at schools with strong music departments and ensemble opportunities.
- Universities that offer a BM degree vary widely in opportunities for non-majors.
 - At some, access to teachers and ensembles is limited to the music students.
 - Some offer performance minors.
 - Some invite non-majors to audition for the ensembles within the school of music.
 - Some have non-major orchestras and ensembles.
- Ask about teachers and performance opportunities.
 - Some smaller schools have consortia with other schools.
- Find out whether the school gives credit and/or subsidy for music performance.
 - Some have specific music scholarships

Planning the tour:

- Arrange to speak with someone from the music department when you visit.
- Find a class, performance or rehearsal to observe.
- You can ask to join an orchestra rehearsal.
- You can request a sample lesson (for a fee) with a teacher when you visit.

When you visit:

- Look into the adequacy and accessibility of practice rooms.
- Look around in the music department; read bulletin boards, posters.
- Talk to the students about their experiences.

The application process:

- Send a recording as supplemental material to schools that will accept it.
 - Websites have specific instructions under admissions or the music department.
 - Some require it *earlier than their application deadlines*.
 - Some have specific requirements.
 - Schedule the accompanist and recording session. Allow ample time whether recording professionally or with personal equipment.
 - Sound quality is important in addition to your performance.
 - You can reserve space at Hoff to make the recording.
 - If possible, consider recording each piece when it is in optimal shape, rather than all at one session as the deadline approaches.
- Include a music resume of activities since 9th grade. It helps to keep an ongoing record.
 - Teachers
 - Music classes
 - Ensembles, including NYSSMA/WCSMA; any significant orchestra positions
 - Major performances
 - Major repertoire
 - Master classes
 - Summer programs
 - Outreach performances
 - Paid performances
 - Awards or honors
 - Teaching experience
- You can ask your music teacher for a supplemental letter of recommendation
- The Common Application has an arts supplement form.

For students who want to prepare for a career in music performance:

Making your list:

- Look for the best teacher as well as the reputation of the studio *for your instrument*.
- Ask your music teachers, other musicians, college students and parents for advice.
- Consider conservatories and university schools of music.
 - Is the academic aspect a priority? Do you want two bachelor's degrees?
- Attend a performing arts college fair. (See nacacnet.org)
- For location, consider access to live music (orchestra, jazz, etc.) as well as performance and work opportunities (work study, internships, freelance gigs, private teaching)
- Ask questions: Are there any anticipated faculty changes? (Very important!)
- Ask about other opportunities such as jazz if you are interested and not a major.
- Students generally apply to between 5 and 10 schools.

The application process:

- Check application deadlines early. Many are due in December.
- Keep a chart of deadlines, audition schedules and requirements, etc.
- Applying earlier may give you a better selection of audition dates.
- A few schools have early decision or rolling admissions with early audition dates.
- Some universities have separate applications for the university and the school of music.
- Some conservatories use the Unified Application, which is like the Common Application, but as with the Common Application, most have supplements.
- Some require specific formats for the resume. (See previous page for resume tips.)

Planning your college tour:

- Start by contacting each teacher to arrange a trial lesson. This can be very revealing for both parties. It cannot be done after the audition. Fees can range from \$100 to \$250.
- Check the schedules for classes, rehearsals or performances to observe.
- Try to attend a professional orchestra concert if the members are on the faculty. You may be able to meet them afterward.

When you visit:

- Ask permission to record the lesson; this is very useful in preparing for the audition.
- Find opportunities to observe and speak with the students.
- Look at the performance spaces, practice rooms and bulletin boards.
- Consider sending a follow-up note or e-mail after the lesson.

The audition:

- Check audition requirements to plan and prepare your repertoire early.
- Pre-screening recordings are required for certain instruments and are increasingly common. (See previous page for some points about making a recording.)
- All require live auditions, preferably on site. Regional auditions are recorded and reviewed by the faculty. A second visit shows interest and is another chance to meet the faculty.
- Accompaniment may or may not be provided, and may require a fee.
- Choose repertoire that highlights your strengths, not necessarily the most difficult.
- Plan recitals, mock auditions or recording sessions for practice. Enter competitions.
- Dress respectfully but comfortably for the audition. Jackets/ties are not universal.
- Arrive early and accommodate your need for warm-up.
- If given a choice, start with your favorite piece.
- There may be additional musical skills or theory testing, etc.
- The conversation is also important; this is your interview.

Other important considerations:

- Learn how to avoid overuse injury. It can be life changing.
- Plan your senior year carefully. The applications are time-consuming. You will spend a lot of time practicing for auditions. You will travel a lot and miss a lot of school.

It is said that 80-90% of the admissions decision rests on the 10-minute audition.

Other information:

Competitions: (If you are interested, ask your teacher as deadlines are approaching.)

Yonkers Philharmonic Orchestra Concerto Competition (application deadline 2/8/16)

Hudson Valley Music Club Competition, Dobbs Ferry

Jerome Sala Wind Competition at Lehman College

Ridgewood Band Youth Soloist Competition, Ridgewood NJ (deadline in January)

Queens Symphony Orchestra Young Soloist Competition (deadline 2/19/16)

OCA-WHV Rising Star, White Plains (for Asian-American students)

NY Chamber Players Orchestra Young Artists' Competition

Associated Music Teachers League Scholarship Award, Queens College

Chaminade Club of Yonkers Scholarship Competition - for seniors (deadline 4/23/16)

American String Teachers Association Competition (astaweb.com/solo) (deadline November)

National YoungArts Foundation (apply in the spring of grades 9-11 for the following year)

You can ask your teacher about international competitions

For a professional recording:

Jeremy Tressler 914-290-4134 oniom@optonline.net

Robert Kessler 914-232-5250

Related links:

http://issuu.com/sboschoolbandorchestra/docs/cscg_2013/14 - a college guide

peabody.jhu.edu/doubledegree - on different routes for different kinds of students.

talk.collegeconfidential.com/music-major/258796-so-you-want-music-major-one-familys-experience.html - a parent discussion from 2006. You can search under your instrument for information and ideas on specific schools and teachers.

<http://nces.ed.gov/collegenavigator> provides statistics, eg number of music majors.

collegeboard.org

Books:

The *Fiske Guide to Colleges* has a list of conservatories and schools "strong in music."

Peterson's *College Guide for Performing Arts Majors* 2009 has some general information, but the specific school listings are erratic. (petersons.com)

Creative Colleges by Elaina Loveland, 2010

A Guide to College Choices for the Performing and Visual Arts by Ed Schoenberg and Kavin Buck, 2008

College guides in music publications (September issues)