

Connecticut College Music Department Audition Guidelines

The Music Department welcomes the participation of both majors and nonmajors in its ensembles and individual lessons. Auditions are offered each semester, and are designed simply to determine a student's level of preparation. Based on your audition, you will be placed into 1- or 2-credit lessons, or you may be encouraged to take a music theory course before beginning lessons. If you wish to study outside of the college structure (for a fee, and not for credit) you may contact the Thames Valley Music School, which shares our facilities, and has excellent instructors; their office is in Cummings 216, and extension is 2749. If you are not sure of your level please come and audition, and we will help you figure out the best course of action.

As a general rule, instrumentalists (with the exception of keyboard and percussion students) should have their own instruments. The Music Department does own a small collection of instruments that are available for loan to students, however. See the Music Department assistant for details (Cummings Arts Center room 216; ext. 2720).

Ensembles

Ensembles count as one credit. Each ensemble follows a slightly different procedure for auditions:

Chamber Choir

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. A second round of auditions takes place on the first Friday of classes, during both fall and spring semesters. Each audition will take ten minutes or less.
- The expectation is that a singer can carry a musical line securely, learn music fairly quickly, is able to match pitch, and has at least a rudimentary ability to read music.
- The audition is in three parts:
 - 1) Simple vocalises to get a sense of voice quality and range
 - 2) Short prepared piece (1-2 minutes) of student's choice sung without piano such as a folksong, hymn, "Happy Birthday," "My Country Tis of Thee"
 - 3) Pitch-matching exercise in order to test ear and pitch retention
 - 4) Sight-reading assessment

Concert Band

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. A second round of auditions takes place the following week.
- The audition will consist of:
 - Playing an etude or solo work of your choice that demonstrates performing ability
 - A short sight-reading selection

Jazz Ensemble

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. A second round of auditions takes place the following week.
- The audition will consist of:
 - Playing an etude or solo piece of your choice that demonstrates performing ability
 - Playing a 'standard' jazz ballad AND a swing or bebop selection of your choice. These can be straight out of a fakebook, or any source you choose.

Traditional Jazz Band

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. A second round of auditions takes place the following week.
- Those eligible to audition include: trumpet, clarinet, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone, trombone, bass (tuba or double bass), drums, mallets, vocalist, banjo, violin, guitar, and piano. Only one vocalist will be selected. Students must have the ability to transpose parts as needed and to improvise.
- The audition will consist of:
 - Playing an etude or solo piece of your choice that demonstrates performing ability
 - Playing a 'standard' jazz ballad AND a swing selection of your choice. These can be straight out of a fakebook, or any source you choose.

Orchestra

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. Additional auditions take place during the first rehearsal of the semester, during both fall and spring semesters; these include auditions for new members, and seating auditions for returning members.
- The audition for new members will consist of:
 - Playing a chromatic scale, 2 octaves, except harp, which will play a diatonic scale
 - Playing a prepared classical piece of your choice
 - Sight reading drawn from the standard classical orchestral repertoire
- For returning students the audition will include:
 - Playing a chromatic scale, 2 octaves, except harp, which will play a diatonic scale
 - Sight reading drawn from the standard classical orchestral repertoire

Percussion and New Music Ensemble

- Auditions are held in the fall during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. Additional auditions will take place by arrangement. Both percussionists and other instrumentalists interested in new music are welcome to audition.
- For the audition students will:
 - Play a piece of their choosing that demonstrates chamber music playing
 - Sight read an excerpt chosen by the director

Private instruction

Private instruction is available for *voice, violin, viola, cello, acoustic bass, classical guitar, harp, flute, clarinet, jazz clarinet, saxophone, jazz saxophone, bassoon, oboe, trumpet, trombone, French horn, euphonium, tuba, percussion, piano, jazz piano, organ, and harpsichord*. Depending on your level, lessons count as 1 or 2 credits, and are graded. The expectation is that you practice at least one half-hour per day for 1-credit lessons, and at least one hour per day for 2-credit lessons.

There is no additional fee for the college individual lessons, thanks to the generosity of the Jack Niblack '98 Music Lessons Fund.

Fall auditions are held during freshman orientation, on the afternoon of placement tests. A second round of auditions takes place on the first Friday of classes. Spring auditions are held on the first Friday of classes. The guidelines below offer suggestions of what to prepare for auditions. We know that individual backgrounds vary considerably, though, so please just come to your audition warmed up (practice rooms are available; see the department assistant in Cummings 216) and prepared to do the best that you can, playing music that is appropriate to your level.

Voice:

- The audition will begin with a brief warm-up, though you should also warm up in advance.
- Please prepare one classical piece (from *24 Italian Art Songs* or from the standard vocal repertoire) or a familiar tune such as "My Country, 'Tis of Thee."
- Please bring two copies of the music you will perform; an accompanist will be provided. Greer Music Library (on the first floor of Cummings Arts Center) has a large collection of music.

For most instruments:

- Scales that are appropriate to your level
- Two contrasting classical movements or pieces
- In addition, you may be asked to sight read a piece

Some studios offer specific suggestions below:

Flute:

- Major scales up to four sharps and flats
- Chromatic scale
- An etude at the level of Andersen, Opus 33
- Two contrasting pieces or movements

Clarinet:

- Major scales up to three sharps and flats

- Chromatic scale from low E to E or G above the staff
- An etude from C. Rose, *Thirty-two Etudes for Clarinet* (the preferred edition can be found in David Hite, ed. *Artistic Studies from the French School* (Southern Music Co.))

Saxophone:

- All 12 major scales
- Chromatic scale from low Bb to high F or F#
- Two contrasting etudes from Ferling, *48 Famous Studies for Oboe or Saxophone* (or similar etude book)
- Part or all of a solo demonstrating performance capability

Jazz saxophone or clarinet:

- Scales and arpeggios (major and minor) up to three flats and sharps
- A jazz or classical etude, demonstrating instrumental technique
- Improvise on a 12 bar blues in either F or Bb (optional, depending on experience)
- In addition, you may be asked to sight read a standard jazz tune

Bassoon:

- Major scales up to three sharps and flats
- Chromatic scale 3 octaves low Bb to high Bb
- An etude at the level of Milde Studies in all Keys, op. 24 or Weissenborn 50 Bassoon Studies, Op. 8, Vol.II, or harder
- Part or all of a solo demonstrating performing capability (such as a movement from the Mozart or Weber Concerto)

Euphonium:

- All 12 major scales, preferably 2 octaves
- One technical etude (from Arban's *Trombone/Euphonium Method* or similar)
- One legato etude (from Rochut's *Melodious Etudes for Trombone* or similar)
- Part or all of a solo demonstrating performing capability

Tuba:

- All 12 major scales, preferably 2 octaves
- One technical etude (from Tyrell, Kopprasch, Blazhevich, Knaub, Arban, or similar)
- One legato etude (from Bordogni/Shoemaker, Kuehn, Rochut's *Melodious Etudes for Trombone 8ba*, or similar)
- Part or all of a solo demonstrating performing capability

Percussion:

- Prepare something on snare drum and mallets or timpani (if you play these instruments)
- The audition will also include sight reading

Piano:

- Any major scale, ascending and descending, hands together, two octaves
- A composition of moderate difficulty from the classical repertoire by composers such as Bach, Mozart, Haydn, Beethoven, or Chopin

Jazz piano:

- Major and minor scales appropriate to your level, along with major/minor/diminished/augmented arpeggios
- A jazz or classical piece, demonstrating instrumental technique
- Improvisation on a 12 bar blues in either F or Bb (optional, depending on experience)
- Playing off a lead sheet, or some other demonstration of a basic understanding of chord notation (optional, depending on experience)

Organ:

- Students may play the audition on the piano or the organ
- If auditioning on the organ, students should play a 4-part hymn with or without pedals and a composition for organ such as one of the "Eight Little Preludes and Fugues" attributed to Bach
- If auditioning on the piano, students should follow the guidelines for piano auditions

Harpsichord:

- Students may play the audition on the piano or the harpsichord
- If auditioning on the harpsichord, students should play a composition from the baroque or early classical period
- If auditioning on the piano, students should follow the guidelines for piano auditions

Classical Guitar:

- 1 and 2 octave major scales up to 4 sharps and down to 1 flat
- One etude from the Classical period (Carcassi, Carulli, Sor, Giuliani etc.) and/or one short composition that displays right hand finger picking techniques