

THE YOUNG MUSICIAN'S TEXTBOOK

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# intune

MONTHLY

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PLAYING THE  
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- >> From Bach to Bata, Hamm on Cook's Hit
- >> College Corner, Kate Earl and The Listening List





## Audition Like an Ace

Although academic considerations such as GPA and standardized tests play a role in admissions for performance majors, an audition is almost always necessary. We asked Dr. Joseph Pisano, Associate Chair of Music and Fine Arts, Assistant Professor of Music at Grove City College (Penn.) for his tips.

## Get the requirements

Check the audition requirements for every school you're applying to: These can be very specific and vary greatly from school to school.

## Do practice runs

Make sure that your audition pieces are thoroughly prepared and that you are comfortable playing them in front of a variety of different people, including your family, friends, teachers, etc. Don't let the audition be the first time that you performed the music in front of anyone other than your private instructor!

## Dress for success

There is usually no need to be in a suit and tie (or formal gown), but looking nice and professional for the audition will do much more to help your case than simply "rolling" in clad in ripped jeans and an old t-shirt.

## Be flexible

Audition time may be limited, so while you must prepare to play through all the required music, adjudicators may stop you and ask only to hear partial sections. This is entirely normal—don't let it disturb you!

## Speak Up

An audition not only showcases your musical and technical prowess but that it also showcases you as a person. There's usually time during to ask about the program, the professors, or anything that may be on your mind. Go in prepared with a couple of questions show your interest the program. If you don't have questions, take the time to thank the audition committee and let them know how excited you are about their program. Follow up with a thank you note to the chair of the music department and audition committee.

# Majoring in Performance

**T**he study of instrumental and vocal performance is among the longest established forms of higher music education. And while this type of intensive training comes largely out of a classical tradition, music schools today offer opportunities for musicians of all genres and instruments. Performance degrees are available at conservatories and at schools of music within larger universities, both private and public.

If you're looking at studying music beyond high school, the first thing you need to decide is what type of degree you want to earn and what program you'd like to enroll in. At conventional four-year colleges and universities, performance majors can typically expect to earn either a bachelor of arts (B.A.) or bachelor of music (B.M.) degree, depending on the school and the kind of program offered.

A bachelor of music is generally a more intensive program, requiring more music credits than a B.A., and would be preferred in careers where the prestige of having studied rigorously in a specialized music program is important, such as in an opera company or symphony orchestra. Students can major in individual symphonic instruments—such as any of the woodwinds, brasses or strings, or percussion—as well as voice, guitar, and piano. The class load for performance majors is usually heavy, so majoring in more than one instrument is rare.

Another important consideration is whether a program with a classical or jazz focus is more

suited to your goal. The skills and repertoire you learn for classical vocal or guitar performance will be different from jazz vocal or jazz guitar performance. For example, classical programs do not stress improvisational skills; repertoire, tone production and interpretation are more important. Jazz programs, by contrast, will teach you skills that are more translatable to pop and rock music performance, such as improvisation and playing by ear. Students interested in performing pop music are usually steered toward jazz programs. But in all cases, you'll also be required to take progressively more advanced courses in harmony, music theory, and ear training. Depending on the program and your degree track, you may also take conducting, composition and improvisation. Music history, keyboard skills, and attending other students' performances are usually required as well.

But the core of performance study is through one-on-one lessons, sometimes with one primary professor for your entire time at the school. You'll have opportunities to play in ensembles, and you'll have to perform in solo recitals and possibly before your peers in forum-type classes. No matter what program you choose and what major you take, be prepared to practice! According to the college board, individual practice is the most time-consuming activity of a performance major's academic life.

But it's that opportunity to devote ones time to achieving excellence as a singer or player that makes college performance programs special. **T**