

## Info for prospective music majors

Keep in mind that practically every school will require an audition or audition tape to be submitted as part of the application process. For composition majors, a portfolio of at least 3, preferably full length works, with scores and recorded performances need to be submitted. **Give yourself at least 18 months to prepare, prior to the application being due.**

Decide if you want to do early action or decision rather than regular decision. If early action/decision is for you, you need to be researching, preparing, practicing and starting to visit schools no later than spring of your sophomore year.

- I. Consider the type of college environment that best suits you
  - a. Conservatory  
Julliard, Oberlin, New England Conservatory, Manhattan School of Music, etc.
  - b. Conservatory within Broader University setting  
Indiana, Rice, USC, Northwestern, UCLA, Syracuse, Ithaca College, Carnegie Mellon, etc.
  - c. Other – Berklee College, Cal Arts, etc.  
These schools focus more on equipping their students for particular Music industry related jobs. For instance, Berklee is known for producing session musicians and has more of a non-classical focus for rock and jazz musicians
  - d. Liberal Arts colleges or Universities that have a departmental music program and offer a generic music major, but not a full conservatory or school of music program.

A conservatory like Julliard or Oberlin might be desirable if you are interested in pursuing a career in concert performance. Keep in mind, competitive pressures are extraordinary and not for the faint of heart. Conservatories within broader university environments give full conservatory programs, but offer students the opportunity to benefit from a cross section of non-musical related disciplines.

- II. Consider your desired area of music study
  - a. Voice
  - b. Instrumental Performance
  - c. Composition
  - d. Music Education
  - e. Music Business
  - f. Music Technology/Recording

Most music programs offer majors for “a” through “d” options. Others like USC’s Thornton School of Music offer a Music Business major which might be suited for a musically inclined student interested in

working in the music industry in a management or marketing related role.

- III. Match the environment you are looking for with the program or programs you are interested in studying to come up with a list of schools. Research college websites and faculty to find out if schools have a particular focus, for example, UCLA has a bias for post modern, avant garde styles of music. Some applications will require you select faculty members so it helps if you know faculty background and achievements.
- IV. Visit your top choice schools during sophomore, and junior years
- V. Visit the general undergraduate and undergraduate music admissions websites to identify application, audition and portfolio submission requirements, media types for recorded auditions and deadlines.

Expect to play pieces from several different periods of music. Schools identify the repertoire and genre they desire. There can also be some flexibility within genre so double check with the music admission department. For example, Indiana ok'd the presto movement from Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata even though they only listed a slow sonata movement among their piano audition requirements.

In many cases, you will be submitting two applications, one for undergraduate admission and one for admission to the school of music. Deadlines are not always matched up. For instance, USC's Thornton School of music requires that its application be sent in before the general university admission deadline.

All schools prefer a live audition, and some will accept taped submissions. Others offer regional auditions so you don't have to travel back after visiting the school. Many regional auditions on the West Coast take place at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. Spaces for regional auditions fill up fast so reserve your spot early!

Some schools prescreen applicants prior to inviting them to audition either due to large number of applicants or the fact that some instrument performance majors are impacted, i.e., the school only has room to accept X number of clarinets, strings, trumpet, etc. based on the openings they are trying to fill in their orchestras and ensembles. Try to find out if your chosen school expects to have enough spaces for your instrument; otherwise, you might be 1 of 1000 applicants applying for two brass or 10 string positions, as an example.

- VI. Expect to complete audition preparation and **recording no later than the summer prior to your senior year in high school.** Expect to do a combination of live auditions and submittals of recorded auditions. Be prepared to have VHS tapes, and CD recordings.

It is extremely difficult and stressful to be completing college applications and audition preparations at the same time. Save the fall for general college applications.

- VII. Open a FED EX account and have on hand boxes and envelopes for those last minute submittals of materials. A lot of applications are done online, but if you are submitting tapes and portfolios, you still need to get hard copy to the admissions office.