

UCLA SYMPHONY FAQs

Q: How do I sign up for an audition?

A: Go to www.uclaorchestras.com and click on the Audition Info page. There you will find PDFs, listed by instrument, which contain the audition requirements and copies of the required orchestral excerpts. In late summer, a link is added to the page which allows you to sign up for an audition time.

Q. What are the auditions like?

A. When you sign up to audition, you may designate whether you are auditioning for either orchestra or for both. (If you are a wind, brass, percussion, harp or keyboard player, please be advised that there are one set of auditions for all of our large ensembles -- UCLA Philharmonia, UCLA Wind Ensemble, UCLA Symphony and UCLA Symphonic Band.) The auditions are generally around 10 to 15 minutes in length. For string auditions, you will be playing for Professor Neal Stulberg and sometimes for our graduate student conductors and selected faculty; for non-string auditions, you will be playing for Professors Travis Cross and Neal Stulberg, and for our student conductors and selected faculty. We will ask you to play your solo piece and some of the required orchestral excerpts. Sightreading may be requested.

Q: Can non-music majors audition for Philharmonia?

A: Philharmonia is a pre-professional training orchestra, requiring a major time commitment during and outside of rehearsal. Advanced non-major string players are welcome to audition for Philharmonia, but they must be prepared to make this kind of commitment. While woodwind, brass, percussion, keyboard and harp players may also audition for Philharmonia, these positions are almost always occupied by music majors.

Q: How competitive are the auditions for Symphony?

A: There are generally many more applicants than spaces, so auditions are quite competitive.

Q. How good is UCLA Symphony? How large is the orchestra?

A. UCLA Symphony is an outstanding and well-disciplined campus orchestra, capable of playing major orchestral works like Rimsky-Korsakov "Scheherazade," Shostakovich Symphony No. 5, Beethoven Symphony No. 6 ("Pastorale"), Dvorak Symphony No. 9 ("From the New World"), Elgar "Enigma" Variations and Stravinsky "Firebird" Suite. It consists of approximately 85 members.

Q. Who conducts UCLA Symphony?

A. Symphony is conducted by our Masters and doctoral student conductors, under the supervision of their instructors.

Q: Do any music majors play in Symphony? Is preference given to music majors in auditions?

A: With very few exceptions, all string players in Symphony are non-majors. Woodwind and brass sections consist of approximately 80% music majors. Auditions are completely open; there are no spots "reserved" for music majors. If two players are tied in terms of audition results, however, preference will generally be given to the music major.

Q. Is there a rotation system between orchestras? How does seating work?

A. Music major woodwind, brass and percussion players generally rotate by quarter among Philharmonia, Wind Ensemble and Symphony. Non-major woodwind, brass and percussion players may rotate between ensembles or may stay in the same ensemble through a given academic year. Woodwind and brass seating for both orchestras is usually rotated within concerts; string sections rotate between concerts. There is no seniority system in selecting players or assigning parts for either orchestra.

Q: Can I join Symphony quarter by quarter or is the commitment for the entire year?

A: The expectation is that you will stay in the orchestra for the entire year. With non-majors, however, class schedules, labs and other commitments sometime make it impossible for players to remain in the orchestra for all three quarters.

Q: What is the attendance requirement for Philharmonia and Symphony?

A: There are strict attendance and tardiness policies for both orchestras which are outlined in the course syllabi and handbooks you receive at the beginning of each year.

Q: Can I be in UCLA Symphony without enrolling in the course?

A: Yes, however we encourage all members to enroll. Symphony members enroll separately for each quarter.

- Neal Stulberg