

UCLA PHILHARMONIA, SYMPHONY AND WIND ENSEMBLE FAQ

SCHEDULE AND PROFILE OF EACH ENSEMBLE

Q: What is the normal weekly schedule of each ensemble?

Philharmonia: 3:05 – 5:50 PM Tuesdays/Thursdays

Symphony: 7:30 – 10 PM Wednesdays

Wind Ensemble: 3:00 – 5:50 PM Mondays/Wednesdays

Note: Each ensemble may schedule rehearsals at other times as needed. These additional rehearsals will generally be listed in each quarter's syllabus.

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

A: There are clear and precise attendance and tardiness policies for all three ensembles which are outlined in the course syllabi and handbooks you receive at the beginning of each quarter.

Q: May I enroll in Philharmonia, Symphony or Wind Ensemble without auditioning?

A: No. Enrollment in each of these ensembles is by audition only.

Q: Do I get to choose which of the three large ensembles to enroll in?

A: No. Barring exceptional circumstances, all undergraduate and MM Music Performance and undergraduate Music Education string majors are automatically assigned to Philharmonia. Music Performance and Music Education woodwind, brass, percussion and harp majors may designate on their audition forms any curricular conflicts they might foresee with any of the three ensembles in a given quarter, but final assignments are made by the faculty conductors in consultation with each studio's individual instructor and the Department Chair.

Non-Music Performance and non-Music Education majors should designate on their audition application which ensemble(s) they are auditioning for.

Assignments for all three quarters are posted shortly after Fall auditions are held.

Q: As a Music Performance or Music Education major who plays an orchestral or band instrument as my primary concentration, may I enroll in an ensemble like UCLA Chorale, Chamber Singers or in any of the Ethnomusicology ensembles instead of Philharmonia, Symphony or Wind Ensemble to fulfill my quarterly large ensemble

requirement?

A: No. While we encourage our students to experience a wide range of ensemble activity, Music Performance and Music Education majors who play orchestral or band instruments as their primary concentration are required to enroll in Philharmonia, Symphony or Wind Ensemble during each quarter that they are enrolled in individual instrumental instruction.

Q: What's the difference between Philharmonia and Symphony?

A: Philharmonia is a pre-professional training orchestra composed almost entirely of Music Performance and Music Education majors. It has an intensive rehearsal and performance schedule, regularly plays for opera productions, and has made commercial recordings. It is led primarily by faculty conductors and requires a major time commitment during and outside of rehearsal. Symphony is the campus-wide orchestra, open by audition to all orchestral instrumentalists with a UCLA affiliation. Symphony conductors are UCLA graduate student conducting majors, supervised by Professor Stulberg.

Q: Do Music Performance and Music Education majors play in Symphony? Is preference given to Music Performance and Music Education majors in auditions for Symphony?

A: Non-string sections in Symphony consist of approximately 80-90% Music Performance and Music Education majors. Auditions are completely open; there are no woodwind, brass, percussion, harp or keyboard spots "reserved" for Music Performance or Music Education majors. If two players are tied in terms of audition results, however, preference will generally be given to the Music Performance or Music Education major. With very few exceptions, all string players in Symphony are non-performance majors.

Q: As a Music Performance or Music Education major, may I play in more than one of the three ensembles in the same quarter?

A: Yes. Students occasionally enroll in more than one of the three large ensembles in a given quarter. Also, if one of the ensembles programs a work requiring a larger wind/brass/percussion/keyboard/harp complement than is officially enrolled in the ensemble (e.g., Stravinsky "The Rite of Spring" or Mahler Symphony No. 6), the instructors may propose to students in one of the other ensembles that they also participate in the rehearsals and performances of this work. Under these circumstances, the student may also receive course credit for their "guest" appearance in this additional ensemble, but such "double duty" does not carry forward and replace future ensemble participation requirements.

Q: As a non-Music Performance or non-Music Education major, may 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. Class schedules, labs and other commitments sometime make it impossible for players to remain in the orchestra for all three quarters. We ask that you notify us well in advance if you will be unable to participate in Symphony for an upcoming quarter.

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

A: Yes, though we strongly encourage all members to enroll. Symphony members enroll quarter by quarter.

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 90 members.

Q. Who conducts UCLA Symphony?

A. Symphony is conducted by our MM and doctoral conducting majors, under the supervision of Prof. Stulberg.

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

A. Music Performance and Music Education woodwind, brass, percussion and harp majors generally rotate by quarter among Philharmonia, Wind Ensemble and Symphony, though no student is guaranteed to rotate through all three ensembles in a given year. Non-Music Performance and non-Music Education woodwinds, brass, percussion and harp may rotate between Symphony and Wind Ensemble or may stay in the same ensemble through a given academic year. Woodwind, brass and percussion seating for all three ensembles is usually rotated within concerts; string sections in Philharmonia and Symphony rotate between concerts. There is no seniority system in selecting players or assigning parts for any of the three ensembles.

FALL QUARTER LARGE ENSEMBLE AUDITIONS

Q: Is participation in the Fall Quarter large ensemble auditions mandatory for Music Performance and Music Education majors?

A: Yes. For all Music Performance and Music Education majors who play orchestral instruments, participation in the annual Week 0 and Week 1 large ensemble auditions is mandatory. DMA students are not required to participate in fall auditions, but are welcome and highly encouraged to do so.

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. The auditions are generally around 10 to 12 minutes in length. For string auditions, you will be playing for Professor Stulberg and sometimes for our graduate student conductors and string faculty; for non-string auditions, you will be playing for Professors Cross and Stulberg, and sometimes for our student conductors and non-string faculty. We will ask you to play your solo piece and some of the required orchestral excerpts. Sightreading may be requested. Memorization is not required.

Important note: If you are a woodwind, brass, percussion, harp or keyboard player, please be advised that there is one set of joint auditions for UCLA Philharmonia, UCLA Wind Ensemble and UCLA Symphony. UCLA Symphonic Band is open for enrollment without an audition.

Q: Are the Fall Quarter large ensemble auditions held behind a screen?

A: 2025-26 auditions for all Music Performance and Music Education majors, and for all non-Music Performance and non-Music Education majors who play woodwind, brass, percussion, harp or keyboards, will be held behind a screen. Auditions for all non-Music Performance and non-Music Education majors who play string instruments are not screened. Since many factors go into placement decisions besides the audition itself, students' names are identified to the audition committees after all Music Performance majors on a given instrument have auditioned.

Q: Am I required to prepare the entire list of excerpts on my instrument or may I choose which of the listed excerpts to prepare?

A: All auditioners are expected to prepare the entire list of excerpts for their audition.

Q: What's an "exposition?"

A: Please see: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exposition_\(music\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Exposition_(music))

Q: How competitive are the auditions for Symphony?

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

Q: Can non-Music Performance and non-Music Education majors audition for Philharmonia?

A: Advanced non-Music Performance and non-Music string players are welcome to audition for Philharmonia, but they must be prepared to make the major commitment described above. While non-Music Performance and non-Music Education woodwind, brass, percussion, keyboard and harp players may also audition for Philharmonia, these positions are almost always assigned to Music Performance and Music Education majors.

Q: If I am a non-Music Performance and non-Music Education string player and want to audition for both Philharmonia and Symphony, should I prepare the audition list for Music Performance and Music Education strings, the audition list for non-Music Performance and non-Music Education strings, or both?

A: If you are a non-Music Performance or non-Music Education string player auditioning for Philharmonia only, or for Philharmonia and Symphony, please prepare the Music Performance and Music Education audition list.

Q: If I am a non-Music Performance or non-Music Education string player and want to audition for Symphony principal and Philharmonia section, which excerpts do I prepare?

A. Please prepare the Philharmonia section excerpts and the Symphony principal solo excerpts.

Q: As a non-Music Performance or non-Music Education major, may I audition for Symphony or Wind Ensemble at any point in the school year other than at the initial Fall Quarter auditions?

A: Mid-year auditions may occur on a case-by-case basis, depending on the needs of the ensemble. Please contact the instructors about this towards the end of a given quarter.

Q: If my audition did not go well or I feel that I have improved substantially since the time of the audition, may I re-audition later in the academic year?

A: You are welcome to request a “re-audition” at any point in the year, though final decisions about whether this audition is granted are made by the ensemble instructors.

Q: How may I receive feedback on my audition?

A: Students are welcome and encouraged to seek feedback about their auditions from their ensemble directors, TAs and the students’ individual instructors. An initial e-mail to request feedback is encouraged.

Neal Stulberg (*he/him/his*)
Professor/Director of Orchestral Studies
Department of Music
UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music
Mobile: 310-382-6663
stulberg@lunacrest.com
stulberg@ucla.edu

Travis J. Cross (*he/him/his*)
Director of Bands
Professor of Music
UCLA Herb Alpert School of Music
2421 Schoenberg Music Building
Office (310) 206-1085
tjcross@ucla.edu