

UIISO String Auditions for Spring 2023

University of Iowa Symphony Orchestras (UIISO) will be conducting blind auditions occurring every semester for strings. These blind auditions will help determine where a student should be seated in each major concert cycle, as well as admission status into the ensemble for non-music majors and community members.

What is a blind audition?

A blind audition is an opportunity to perform excerpts for faculty without them seeing who you are, as the committee will be seated behind a screen. All auditions will be held behind a curtain, and your name will not be announced to the faculty and placement committee. This ensures fair and impartial assessments of the student's technique and overall musicianship, while also preparing students for upcoming repertoire.

- Arrive 30 minutes prior to your call time, and you may wait or warm up in a nearby practice room. Auditions may be running ahead or behind schedule, please be flexible.
- Do not wear heeled shoes (high heels, pumps, etc.) that may make a noise on the hardwood floor. If you would prefer, you can take off your shoes outside the audition room and wear only socks to the audition as to not make any walking noise.
- Under no circumstances can you speak inside the audition room. If there is a question, you may whisper to the audition attendant so they can relay your question. If you speak inside the audition room, your audition will be immediately canceled and rescheduled for a different time.
- Audition committee may ask at any point for you to replay an excerpt, with the possibility of asking for it differently (i.e., a bit faster, more articulated, etc.) You may not be asked to play all excerpts.

UNDERGRADUATE JUNIORS AND SENIORS, MASTERS, AND DMA MUSIC PERFORMANCE MAJORS ARE REQUIRED TO PREPARE AND TAKE THE EXTRA PRINCIPAL EXCERPTS IN THEIR AUDITIONS. THIS INCLUDES BA and BM. SAID EXCERPTS WILL BE EXPLICITLY MARKED IN THE AUDITION FORMS. ANY OTHERS CAN ELECT TO TAKE PRINCIPAL AUDITIONS WITH WRITTEN REQUEST IN THE SIGN UP: https://uiowa.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4TUP3uE9DPoTTYG A MUSIC PERFORMANCE MAJOR DOES NOT INCLUDE: MUSIC EDUCATION, MUSIC THERAPY, OR MUSIC MINOR.

VIOLINS MAY CHOOSE TO AUDITION FOR SECOND VIOLIN. THIS CAN INCLUDE EDUCATION, THERAPY, MUSIC MINORS, AND NON-MAJORS. NO MUSIC PERFORMANCE STUDENT CAN TAKE SECOND VIOLIN AUDITIONS, INCLUDING FRESHMAN, SOPHOMORES, JUNIORS, SENIORS, MASTERS OR DOCTORAL STUDENTS.

How do I prepare for a blind audition?

Auditions can be stressful for even the most tenured musician, but the more experience you have with auditions, exams, concerts, and interviews, the easier future ones become. Your future self will thank you!

- Listen to reference recordings with your part or score in hand. All parts and scores can be found on IMSLP or on ICON. Please check your audition packet for links to recordings and scores.

- All excerpts have been given with no bowings. Please create bowings that accurately convey the musical intent while still being comfortable.
- Start practicing now! Being well prepared will give you more calmness and confidence on the day of the auditions. Regular practice in smaller amounts is more effective than cramming the night before.
- Get a full night's sleep, eat a healthy meal, and hydrate properly before your audition.
- Double check your audition time, giving yourself time to travel, set up, warm up and get in the mental mindset. If you are unsure of the room location, you may visit the building prior to your audition to get your physical bearings.

What if I'm nervous? How do I get in the mentality of performance?

Being nervous is completely normal, and shows you care about doing your best. You can channel that nervous energy into focused energy by visualizing the audition or a performance beforehand, completing breathing exercises, doing light physical exercise, as well as asking your friends and teachers for tips. If you become overwhelmed, take a minute to breathe, and remind yourself that the committee is rooting for you to do your best, and excited for you to share your music.

During the audition, breathe, smile, and have fun. This is your opportunity to share your musical story with us. No matter what happens, keep being present in the music and the moment.

What is sightreading?

Sightreading is an opportunity for the panel to see how well you can read music and play musically (dynamics, character, tempo) at first glance. During the sightreading portion, if you are asked to sightread, you will be given an explicitly stated amount of time to look over the excerpt, to think through the key signature, tempo, and time signature. Take your time, look for any accidentals or rhythms that may be a challenge for you. No matter what, during the sightreading, continue playing, even if you make a mistake. Keep breathing and smiling, think of it as a game, with joy and relaxation 😊, you got this!

I just finished my audition, now what?

Congratulations! You did it! Take 5-15 minutes to reflect and write down what went well and what could improve for next time. This reflection period will allow you to grow as a musician, future professional, and human.

Once auditions are completed, and the committee has come to a consensus, the seating for the first concert cycle will be posted to the physical bulletin board outside VOX2400, as well as the ICON page. If you have any questions, feel free to email the Orchestra Manager, Megan Maddaleno at **music-orchestra@uiowa.edu**.