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## Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media

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### Information for Prospective Jazz Majors

Eastman's Jazz Department can be found on the web at: <http://www.esm.rochester.edu/departments/jazz.php>

A major in **Writing Skills** within the BM and MM degrees is offered by the JCM department in addition to a major in **Performance skills** on the following instruments: Double Bass, Drum Set, Guitar, Piano, Saxophone, Trombone and Trumpet.

Writing skills applicants must perform jazz auditions and maintain proficiency on one of the above instruments.

Multi-instrumentalist applicants for the JCM department should select only one of the instruments as a major.

**Private jazz studio instruction is not available at Eastman for the following instruments; it is not possible to accommodate the following instruments as Jazz majors because of inadequate performance opportunities for these instruments in jazz ensembles:**

Cello, Electric Bass, Euphonium, French Horn, Harp, Organ and Electronic Keyboards, Percussion (other than drum set), Tuba, Vibraphone /Mallet instruments, Viola, Violin, Voice (Vocal Jazz), or Woodwinds other than Saxophone.

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### Preliminary Materials

All candidates for JCM degrees (BM, MM, and DMA) must submit a prescreening audition recording, a completed Eastman application and all supplementary materials **to be received by December 1 at the latest**; this recording should comprise 3-4 varied jazz selections (each should include improvisation) not exceeding 20 minutes of music. All BM and MM applicants to the writing concentration, and all DMA applicants, must submit representative **scores and recordings** of compositions and/or arrangements for varied jazz ensemble formations.

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### Suggested Repertoire – Jazz Writing Skills Emphasis

- You must submit three or four scores of compositions and/or arrangements that display writing for large and small jazz group formats.
  - Recordings must be included. Recordings from reading sessions and rehearsals are acceptable. If live performers are not available, recordings of computer sequences of works may be submitted.
  - Candidates with a background in classical composition are encouraged to submit one or two examples of original non-jazz works.
  - A jazz performance recording (on a separate CD from your writing CD and noted as a performance recording) featuring improvisation on your primary instrument is also required, although two selections in varied styles will suffice.
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### Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media (JCM) Audition Process

The JCM faculty generally reviews all preliminary applications, recordings and scores in December. Out of 120-150 total jazz applications and recordings (bachelor's master's and doctoral levels) in any given year, the jazz faculty invites roughly 40 finalists for live on-campus auditions in February. Because of the nature of this audition, JCM applicants must audition in Rochester. The live jazz audition is 15 minutes in duration, performed before members of the faculty and accompanied by an Eastman student rhythm section. At the end of the audition day, all of the jazz applicants (typically 8-12) meet collectively for one hour with the Eastman jazz faculty and perform additional music in an impromptu jam session. This also affords the opportunity for questions about various aspects of the program. The JCM department invites applicants to attend classes, rehearsals, and performances surrounding their audition date.

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### Important details

- Candidates invited for a live audition should plan to perform at least some material not heard on the preliminary audition recording.
- For the jazz audition, be prepared to perform 3 jazz selections in varied styles and to improvise on each. Original compositions and non-standard repertoire are acceptable as part of the audition, but keep in mind that the accompanying musicians will not have a chance to rehearse with you. Bring three photocopies of each selection in lead sheet form for the accompanying rhythm section. The group jazz audition is one hour in length, and brings the day's auditioning candidates together in varied performing configurations.
- An individual audition (heard by a jazz or classical teacher) is required of all jazz applicants. The audition should be prepared according to the guidelines for the specific instrument, as listed on Eastman's Admissions Office website. Individual auditions of jazz applicants are not judged in competition with classical performance majors.
- In addition to the individual and jazz audition, candidates should be prepared for tests in musicianship and in aural skills/sight singing.

**Bassists:** If transporting your double bass is problematic, arrangements can be made to borrow an instrument. An amp will be provided.

**Guitarists:** You may choose to play with or without a pianist in the accompanying group. An amp will be provided.

**Drummers:** Kit will be provided; bring sticks, brushes, and cymbals (if desired), but keep in mind that time allows for only minor adjustments of the equipment. Plan to perform repertoire in trio format that emphasizes interactive playing. Be sure to bring lead sheets and/or accurate parts for your accompanying musicians.

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The Eastman Jazz Faculty recommends the following considerations for high school students planning to audition for the Eastman Bachelor of Music Degree program in Jazz Studies & Contemporary Media:

- 1. STUDY WITH A JAZZ TEACHER DURING HIGH SCHOOL.** Once you know that you want to pursue a jazz degree at Eastman, work closely with your school music director OR locate a private jazz instructor. Find a teacher who plays your instrument and who can teach you jazz improvisation, theory, and aural skills. Clinics, workshops and summer jazz camps are strongly recommended.
- 2. ESTABLISH A DAILY JAZZ LISTENING REGIMEN.** Expose yourself to the broadest spectrum of live performances and recordings by the masters. Increase your knowledge of jazz language and vocabulary by transcribing, studying and playing important solos.
- 3. DON'T IGNORE YOUR CLASSICAL STUDIES.** A well-balanced high school music background will set the stage for a successful collegiate music school experience. Get a head start on general piano studies (if you are not a pianist) and an adequate introduction to music history and theory.
- 4. COMPILE SOLID HIGH SCHOOL GRADES.** Your transcripts and academic records will be carefully examined.
- 5. ASSEMBLE STRONG RECOMMENDATIONS.** Knowing that you'll likely be with us for four years, we need to check you out musically AND personally. We want to know what your major teachers think about your artistry, commitment, and character. Secure reference letters from people that know you best and can articulate your strengths to us in writing.
- 6. STUDY EASTMAN'S MATERIALS AND THE JCM WEBSITE FOR ANSWERS TO YOUR QUESTIONS.**
- 7. VISIT EASTMAN DURING YOUR JUNIOR YEAR OR ATTEND THE EASTMAN SUMMER HIGH SCHOOL JAZZ STUDIES PROGRAM.** Speak with admissions representatives and jazz faculty members to see if Eastman's JCM program is for you. Find out what your respective studio professor will want to hear in the audition process. Check out recordings and/or educational material by faculty members. Get a sense of what Eastman is about before you apply and audition for us in your senior year.
- 8. THOUGHTFULLY CHOOSE YOUR AUDITION REPERTOIRE.** Select tunes that represent a varied mix of styles, display your musicianship, showcase your technical skills, and most importantly, demonstrate your improvisational prowess. Use care and imagination, and be sure to have clear lead sheets or parts for your accompanying musicians. We enjoy hearing original compositions, non-traditional material, and lesser-known jazz standards, but keep in mind that rehearsing with your accompanying musicians on the day of your audition is not possible. Pick a strong opening piece. Don't start your audition by asking, "So, what do you want to hear?!"
- 9. PREPARE THOROUGHLY FOR YOUR AUDITION.** Know the material cold; commit melodies and chord changes to memory, and bring clear photocopies of your audition tunes for the accompanying musicians. Students attempting to "wing it" typically fall short.
- 10. FORMULATE MEANINGFUL QUESTIONS FOR YOUR INTERVIEWERS AND AUDITIONING FACULTY MEMBERS.** Don't forget that you are essentially auditioning us, too. Probing questions help you get to know us better. Don't waste time with stock questions that are covered in the school's printed literature and website, and make certain that your major questions are answered before the audition experience is completed.
- 11. BE ABLE TO ARTICULATE YOUR MUSICAL INTERESTS AND ASPIRATIONS.** We want to know what your influences have been, and what paths you are hoping to travel as a jazz musician.
- 12. REMEMBER THAT EASTMAN'S LARGE POOL OF JAZZ APPLICANTS MEANS TOUGH DECISIONS FOR THE JAZZ FACULTY.** Roughly 10% of Eastman jazz applicants are admitted to the program. We will do everything we can to make the experience fair, thorough, and comfortable, but inevitably, many outstanding candidates cannot be accepted.