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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 listed above, or writing skills as a major.

In most cases, undergraduate bass, piano, saxophone, trombone and trumpet students have applied lessons with a classical teacher in their freshman and sophomore years, and with jazz faculty in their junior and senior years. Guitarists typically study secondary classical guitar for their first four semesters in addition to four years of applied jazz lessons. Drum set majors have applied jazz lessons for four years.

**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 (which may be studied as a secondary instrument).

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### Preliminary Materials

All candidates for JCM degrees (BM, MM, and DMA) must submit a prescreening audition recording with this form, a completed Eastman application and all supplementary materials **to be received by December 1**; 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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### Preliminary Recording Specifications

- A Compact Disc is the required media format for jazz recordings - no other formats are acceptable. Good quality recordings of live performances and rehearsals are welcome, but must be edited to focus on the applicant, not the supporting musicians.
- Clearly print name, instrument, and the degree for which you are applying on the recording and on the recording container.
- BM and MM applicants: Indicate whether you are applying for jazz performance (JCM) or writing skills emphasis (JCW).
- List selections (title and composer) on the container.
- Recorded music should not exceed 20 minutes, with selections clearly labeled.
- DO NOT include classical audition material on this recording. Performance skills in classical repertory, if required, will be evaluated separately at the final audition in Rochester. In 2009-10, new drumset majors who enroll at Eastman who wish to have opportunities for classical percussion lessons or ensemble opportunities can have a classical assessment upon matriculation rather than on the live audition day in Rochester – drumset applicants may submit a recording demonstrating their classical skills, clearly marked as such.

### Suggested Repertory – Jazz Performance Emphasis

- Recordings of 3-4 selections in varying jazz styles (ballad, swing, straight 8<sup>th</sup> note, etc.) should emphasize improvisational skills.
- Recordings that feature the soloist in jazz small group formats are preferred. Recordings with play-along recordings are also acceptable. Large ensemble recordings that feature the soloist should be faded into and out of the solo segments.
- Candidates may include examples of non-traditional improvisational formats as well as their original compositions and arrangements as part of the recording.

### Suggested Repertory – 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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**IMPORTANT: For the timely processing of your application, send all your materials together to be received by December 1 to:**

**PRESCREENING BOX, ADMISSIONS OFFICE, EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, 26 GIBBS STREET, ROCHESTER, NY 14604.**

**Write the Degree, Major and Instrument (as applicable) in the Top Left Corner of your mailing envelope. Review will occur in December.**

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### Jazz Studies and Contemporary Media (JCM) Audition Process

The JCM faculty generally review 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.

**You may keep this page for your records.**

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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 3-4 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.
- A classical audition (heard by a teacher of the classical instrument) is required of all jazz applicants except for drumset and graduate bass applicants. The classical audition should be prepared according to the guidelines for the specific instrument, as listed on Eastman's Admissions Office website. Classical auditions of jazz applicants are not judged in competition with classical performance majors.
- In addition to the classical and jazz audition, candidates should be prepared for tests in musicianship and in aural skills/sight singing.

**Bassists:** Although only acoustic double bass players can be admitted, applicants who double on electric bass may bring both instruments to the audition. 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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## Information on Preparing for the Eastman Jazz Audition

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 and 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. Eastman requires both jazz and classical auditions for prospective jazz majors; jazz applicants with weak classical backgrounds or inadequately prepared classical audition components are not admitted to the jazz major.
- 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 REPERTORY.** 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.