

Jazz Audition Requirements for Undergraduate Admission, UW-Madison Mead Witter School of Music

2023-2024

Please see additional information about the Mead Witter School of Music application process here:
<http://www.music.wisc.edu/undergraduate-admissions/>

Video pre-screening materials required of all applicants

Video pre-screening materials are due together with the other application materials at the time of the application deadline. Applicants who are able to submit their other materials by the application deadline may request an automatic 7-day extension to complete their prescreening videos by contacting Jared Jellison at admissions@music.wisc.edu; however, applicants should be aware that this may delay when they receive notification whether they have been advanced to the full audition.

Please submit unlisted (not “private”) YouTube links to video recordings of the following materials. These pieces may be recorded with live accompaniment, or with pre-recorded backing tracks of the applicant’s choice, or as unaccompanied solo pieces.

- 3 jazz compositions in contrasting styles. One of the pieces must be in a medium-tempo swing feel. All of the pieces should include melody statements and improvised solos. Rhythm section players should also demonstrate accompanying techniques in these pieces (for examples, bass lines in different styles, guitar or piano comping, playing “time” on drums).
- One fully notated piece without improvisation, such as a piece from the classical repertoire, a jazz etude, or a jazz solo transcription

Please also submit PDFs of the sheet music of all four pieces.

Following a successful review of the pre-screening materials, applicants will be scheduled for a live audition on the formal audition day. Live auditions can take place in-person on campus, or remotely through zoom. Applicants will be neither advantaged nor penalized for choosing either the in-person or the remote option in consideration for admission or scholarship awards.

Audition date: in-person option

Applicants electing to audition in-person will be scheduled for a 25-minute time slot. Following a successful pre-screening, applicants will receive email notification and feedback from the jazz faculty regarding which pieces to prepare for their in-person live audition. In most situations, the in-person live audition will consist of two pieces from the pre-screening videos, and faculty may also send feedback on additional techniques or styles they would like the applicant to demonstrate at the in-person live audition. At the in-person live audition, applicants will be accompanied by a student rhythm section.

At the in-person live audition, applicants will also be asked to sight-read one or two short excerpts of jazz music and may also be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of major and minor scales.

Audition date: remote option

Applicants electing to audition remotely will be scheduled for a 20-minute audition over Zoom. Following a successful pre-screening, applicants will receive email notification and feedback from the jazz faculty regarding which pieces to prepare for the remote live audition. In most situations, the remote live audition will consist of one or two pieces from the pre-screening videos, and faculty may also send feedback on additional techniques or styles they would like the applicant to demonstrate at the remote live audition. The remote live audition will be unaccompanied.

The sight-reading piece: applicants will be emailed a PDF of a short “sight-reading” piece one hour prior to their live audition time. Applicants are encouraged to prepare and practice this piece prior to their live audition.

Applicants may also be asked to demonstrate their knowledge of major and minor scales.

Applicants must wear headphones for the remote live audition to eliminate the need for Zoom’s feedback suppression, which results in artificial and processed-sounding audio. The single biggest improvement of how well we can hear you and hear the subtleties of your tone and dynamics comes not from any expensive microphone, but from you using inexpensive headphones.

Applicants are encouraged to schedule a “mock audition” with a friend using Zoom to familiarize themselves with the platform, and to work out technological issues such as microphone placements and audio settings prior to the day of the audition. Applicants should also consider and plan for the logistics of how to view the sight-reading music they will receive by email one hour prior to their audition while staying on camera (access to a printer or a separate tablet/e-reader may be helpful).