



Opportunities for the Industrious Musician

<http://plaza.obu.edu/bynumj/lowbrass>

Summer Festivals:

Provide an intense and extensive learning environment that enables musicians to improve personal and ensemble skills

Regardless of style, there are two basic types of performance oriented festivals: ensemble and chamber

- **Classical Ensemble**

Hot Springs Music Festival - Hot Springs, AR (www.hotmusic.org)
Sewanee Summer Music Festival – Sewanee, TN (www2.sewanee.edu/ssmf)
Eastern Music Festival – Greensboro, NC (easternmusicfestival.org)
Brevard Music Festival – Brevard, NC (www.brevardmusic.org)
Festival Institute at Roundtop – Roundtop, TX (www.festivalhill.org/Summerprogram.html)

Aspen Music Festival – Aspen, CO (www.aspenmusicfestival.com)
Tanglewood Music Festival - Lenox, MA (www.tanglewood.org)
National Repertory Orchestra – Breckinridge, CO (www.nromusic.com)
National Orchestral Institute - College Park, MD (www.noimusic.com)
Music Academy of the West - Santa Barbara, CA (www.musicacademy.com)

Emphasis is generally placed on orchestral experience. In addition to this, most festivals include private instruction and coached chamber ensembles as part of the curriculum. Many festivals include solo opportunities, either in master classes or concerto competitions.

- **Jazz and Commercial Ensemble**

Henry Mancini Institute – Los Angeles, CA (www.manciniinstitute.org)

Emphasis is on mentoring the professional advancement of instrumentalists and composers. Participants attend master classes, rehearsals, mentoring sessions and panel discussions to prepare them for a successful life in music. Includes work with jazz band, jazz orchestra, film orchestra, and jazz combo.

- **Classical Chamber**

Bar Harbor Brass Week (www.barharborbrass.org)
Boston University Tanglewood Institute (www.bu.edu/cfa/music/tanglewood)
Rafael-Mendez Brass Institute (www.mendezbrassinstitute.com)
Stony Brook Summer Music Festival (www.naples.cc.sunysb.edu/CAS/music.nsf)
Summer Brass Institute (www.brass.menloschool.org)
Bowdoin International Music Festival (www.summERMUSIC.org)
Atlantic Brass Quintet Summer Seminar (www.atlanticbrassquintet.com/seminar)

Emphasis is placed on learning effective methods of working in chamber groups. Concentration is on individual and group development. Private lessons, master classes, and chamber coachings are part of the daily regimen.

Useful Websites:

Peabody Institute – Career Counseling and Placement: Summer Festivals (www.peabody.jhu.edu/960)
Summer Music Camps - (www.myco.org/summer)

Graduate School:

Once in graduate school, there is a complete immersion in one's chosen field of study. There is also an emphasis placed on personal responsibility for musical growth and professional development.

Suggestions and Timeline:

- Determine audition pieces well in advance (**at least 3 months** before auditioning). Generally, 2 contrasting etudes, 1- 2 solo movements, and 2-3 orchestral excerpts will provide a good representation of your skill level. Choose material that showcases what you do well every day, not just on “good playing days”.
- Decide on which schools you would be interesting in attending. Primary factors in making this decision should include –
 1. Teacher - With whom do you want to study? Why?
 2. Location – Are there ample performance/learning opportunities outside of school?
 3. Quality of University ensembles
 4. National reputation of school

It is important to remember that most schools prefer live auditions. Travel expenses may become a factor in deciding how many schools for which you will audition. Always find out if a school will accept a recording, or if they offer satellite audition sites. However, it is always best to visit the campus and general location of each school. Talking with current students can be very helpful in learning about the overall environment of the school, location, and even your potential private instructor.

One more item on deciding which schools you are targeting: rank the schools you are interested in order of your preference. Always include one “in my dreams” school, as well as one “if all else fails” school. This is not to say include a school you would hate attending, but to always leave yourself a failsafe.

- If possible, set up a private lesson with your potential instructor one month prior to your audition. This allows both parties to witness what private lessons would be like should you attend that particular institution. The primary advantage of doing this is to ensure you are giving a good representation of your skill. Sometimes audition anxiety gets the best of us.
- Practice material, trying to include any suggestions offered during private lessons. Be able to play entire audition with minimal breaks in between each selection. Practice performing in front of peers (especially of different instruments, or vocalists). Try to perform material at different times of the day – especially in the morning.
- Set your travel itinerary. Allow for one day rest before audition to avoid “travel chops”. If possible, set up your auditions as a tour. Go from one audition to the next. It may seem very stressful, but you will become adjusted to auditioning, and the nerves will begin to disappear. If each audition is several weeks apart, there will always be an element of newness in the process.
- **Always try to wait for each offer before accepting anything**, unless you hear from your “dream school” first. Committing to an academic institution is taken very seriously. You would not want to agree to one place and then hear from a school higher on your preference list.

*For music education majors: If possible, try adjusting your degree track in order that you can student teach in the fall semester. This is usually possible by taking one or two summer courses (if offered).

Auditioning for graduate school is a very intense process. That is compounded if one is student teaching while auditioning.

Collaborative Etiquette:

As a musician, each of us will perform with piano on more than one occasion. While this can be a great experience, here are some suggestions to make things run smoothly:

- Learn your music – especially the accompaniment. Listen to recordings and analyze the score. Have a true understanding of how everything fits together. When your part is resting, do you know exactly what the accompaniment is doing? If not, then you should become more familiar with the piece. After all, this is your piece, not the pianist's. This speeds up the process of putting things together during the first rehearsal.
- Do not go into a rehearsal without having your part down cold. There is nothing more frustrating for an accompanist than for the soloist to really be struggling with the part. Most would consider rehearsing like this a complete waste of time and energy.
- Do not expect more than 4 or 5 rehearsals before the performance. Try to keep in mind – while this is a culminating performance for you, it is only one of many for which the accompanist is preparing. There are only so many hours in a week. That being said, if your accompanist offers more time – take it for the gift that it is.
- Have definite musical ideas to offer. Know exactly how you want each phrase to sound. Do not simply go where the accompanist leads. You are the soloist, and it is the pianist's job to follow. However, this is a collaborative effort. If your accompanist has an idea – listen and you may like it.
- If things go wrong during a run-through or performance, do not try to “fix” things. Simply play your part as you know how to play. Remember – you can only see your line, but the accompanist has the entire score and can see where you are.
- Acknowledge the work your accompanist has done, both during the performance and afterwards. Even if they offer to play for free, it is always a good gesture to pay them or buy a gift for them.

Final Words:

Be aggressive in seeking performance and teaching opportunities. Perform recitals outside of school. Develop autonomous chamber ensembles and perform on a regular basis. Enter both solo and chamber competitions. Set up a recital tour by starting off small with the surrounding areas.

Most of all, remember this - If you are waiting for good things to happen, don't hold your breath. You need to learn the art of making opportunities for yourselves. This takes as much practice as learning any instrument.