

JAZZ AUDITIONS

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In addition to meeting the academic requirements for admission to the University of Toronto, admission to the Jazz Program is based on an audition. This document will give you some information about the audition process at U of T Jazz and help you to prepare.

PRE-SCREENING AUDITION

Each applicant submits a pre-screen recording. Successful applicants will be invited to a live audition.

AUDITION PROCEDURE

The live audition lasts approximately 20 minutes, comprised of performance, ear training and an interview. In that time we have to get an idea not only of how the applicant plays, but also a broader understanding of the individual. We are not necessarily looking only for the best players, but for students who will benefit from what the program has to offer, and who will offer something back in return.

TUNES

Students prepare three tunes on which they can improvise. These pieces should exhibit diversity of style and show you off to strong advantage. Some of the things we listen for include sound, time, conception, phrasing, jazz vocabulary, instrumental or vocal ability, and overall musicality. Time constraints are such that we must stop each tune before you get to the end, so don't be surprised when that happens.

An advanced student rhythm section is on hand to play with you. Although you may opt to bring your own accompanists, we much prefer and strongly suggest you use the U of T players so we can see how you interact with them. Although it may seem intimidating to play for the first time with new people, rest assured you will be in good hands, with players who will help you to sound your best and feel relaxed in a tense situation, and can provide insight and advice before and after the audition.

Note: a \$60 cash accompanist fee must be brought to the audition. This is separate from and in addition to your application fee, and is payable by all applicants.

Concert pitch lead sheets must be provided to the rhythm section in your key. The adjudicators do not need separate copies.

EAR TRAINING

You'll be asked to identify various intervals and chords played on the piano. We start with simple intervals, then triads and inversions, followed by progressively more complex chord progressions until we stump you (which sometimes happens quickly). Don't sweat this part of the process unduly; we just want to get an idea of what you are able to hear and recognize. Any time invested in ear training is time well spent.

THE INTERVIEW

The interview is a very important part of the audition process. The first and most important piece of advice is to relax and be yourself. We want an honest picture of who you are and what you are interested in and whether this program is a good fit for you. We ask questions that probe the depths of experience and knowledge of jazz specifically, but also music and life in general. Just answer to the best of your ability. One tip: prior to the interview, research the program. We'll give you an opportunity to ask questions, but we assume anyone who has come this far has tried to find out as much about it as they can. You should, for instance, read the bios of faculty members to get an idea of who will be teaching you. These and a great deal more information can be found at www.uoftjazz.ca

GENERAL AUDITION ADVICE

- An important thing to know is that whether you have a 'good day' or a 'bad day' will not make a big difference in our assessment. We can easily hear where you are in your development. The more you can relax and just be yourself, the better you will come across.
- It is okay to use music if you need it at the audition, but you'll play much better if you focus on your ears rather than your eyes. Memorize!
- Know the correct melodies for the tunes you play. The lyrics are a huge help in establishing natural phrasing.
- Wear clothes that make you feel comfortable, but dress in a manner that suggests maturity and indicates respect for the music and yourself.
- Don't over warm-up! Practice before leaving home for the audition, and then play just a little in the warm-up room.
- Bring a bottle of water.
- Take the opportunity before and/or after the audition to chat with the students who are in the rhythm section or just hanging around. Don't be shy about asking them what life is like at U of T; they will be forthcoming with their answers. They were in your shoes only a short time ago, and can empathize with how you are feeling. Talking with them beforehand will lessen your nervousness when you enter the audition room together.
- Many of our students and faculty accept private students. Consider booking a lesson prior to the audition; that will give you a real boost in confidence on the day of the audition.
- One of the best pieces of advice for any performance situation is to concentrate on the note you are playing now. Don't think about what you have already played or are about to play. Make the note you are playing right now as beautiful as possible. This will focus your mental energy, and allow you to offer a faithful representation of your talents.
- Again, and finally: Relax! We're all just musicians trying to play the best we can, and striving to improve.

Good luck!