

Master of Arts in Liturgical Music

ENTRANCE EXPECTATIONS

AUDITION AND INTERVIEW

An audition and interview are required for admission to the program. It is strongly recommended that the applicant come to St. John's for this purpose. In exceptional cases where this is not possible (to be determined by St. John's in conjunction with the applicant), other arrangements will be made, including the submission of an audition CD and/or video. Editing or electronic enhancement of an audition CD is unacceptable.

If the applicant communicates or demonstrates to the committee any deficiencies, the committee will advise the applicant if the deficiencies may be made up, and the procedures for doing so.

Students major in one of three areas: organ, voice/choral conduction, or composition. The expectations for the audition and the interview in each of these three areas are as follows:

I. ORGAN MAJOR: AUDITION AND INTERVIEW

Admission as an organ major requires a background equivalent to an undergraduate organ major or strong minor or demonstrated equivalency.

Organ Performance

- A. Performance of three works in contrasting style from different periods:
 - 1. A substantive Baroque work of J.S. Bach or a North German composer.
 - 2. Two selections in contrasting style demonstrating technical ability and expressiveness, one by a Romantic and one by a contemporary composer. Individual movements of a lengthy work are acceptable.

The selections should not exceed 20 minutes total playing time; a portion of each work may be requested to accommodate audition playing time. Candidate will be evaluated for technical accuracy and well-informed stylistic approach. Applicants will receive a specification list of the audition organ.

- B. Service Playing:
 - 1. Performance with pedals of one hymn (e.g., "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" /ST. ANNE) with variety in registration on each stanza.
 - 2. Performance of one brief piece of service music (e.g., a responsorial psalm, or a Sanctus). Applicant selects one piece from several options by contacting a faculty member.
- C. Ability to sight-read with basic accuracy a four-part hymn with or without pedals.
- D. An interview covering the following areas:
 - 1. Basic knowledge of principal types of organ action, design, specifications.
 - 2. Basic knowledge of organ literature.

Organ majors audition in voice and choral conducting as follows:

Voice

- A. Ability to sing the melody of one hymn of applicant's choice (e.g., "Come, My Way" / THE CALL) with basic accuracy of pitch and rhythm, and with good tone production.
- B. Ability to sight-read with basic accuracy a moderately easy melody.

Choral Conducting

Ability to demonstrate basic conduction patterns, cues, and dynamics.

II. VOCAL/CHORAL CONDUCTING MAJOR: AUDITION AND INTERVIEW

Admission as a vocal/choral major requires background equivalent to an undergraduate major or strong minor in voice or conducting.

Vocal Performance and Choral Conducting

- A. Performance of three songs in contrasting style from different periods and in three different languages including English. Accompanist (piano or organ) will be provided. Candidate will be evaluated for the following:
 - 1. Vocal technique: intonation, breath support, vocal flexibility.
 - 2. God vocal range (compass and dynamics).
 - 3. Ability to interpret artistically and stylistically.
- B. Ability to sight-sing a melody with basic accuracy.
- C. Demonstration of choral-conducting ability .
 - 1. The applicant will be asked to submit a video of 10-15 minutes showing rehearsal and conducting ability.
- D. An interview covering the following areas:
 - 1. Ability to verbalize an understanding of basic vocal pedagogy.
 - 2. Experience in choral conducting and vocal training.
 - 3. Knowledge of the historical development of choral forms.

Keyboard

Vocal/choral conducting majors audition in keyboard as follows:

- A. Ability to play a moderately easy piece of the candidate's choosing on either piano (e.g., Bach Two-part inventions; any piece from Classics to Modern vol. 37 or from Bastien, Piano Literature, vol. 3 or 4) or organ (e.g., from Eighty Chorale Preludes, Peter's edition, Method of Organ Playing by Harold Gleason, Organ Technique by George Ritchie and George Stauffer).
- B. Ability to play on either piano or organ with or without pedals one standard congregational hymn of the candidate's choosing (e.g., "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" / ST. ANNE).
- C. Ability to sight-read with basic accuracy on either piano or organ with or without pedals one four-part hymn.
- D. Ability to play on piano an anthem accompaniment or vocal solo accompaniment of the candidate's choosing.

III. COMPOSITION MAJOR: AUDITION AND INTERVIEW

The major has as its purpose fostering of compositional skill in writing or arranging music for liturgical use. The compositional work done by the student also serves to develop critical awareness and methods to evaluate music composed by others past and present. The analytical skills necessary for composition also aid in fostering performance competency.

- A. Submission of a portfolio including the following:
 - 1. Recordings and scores of a representative sample of compositions and arrangements completed to date, total recording not to exceed 30 minutes.
 - 2. A brief essay (1-2 pages) describing compositional background and future goals.
- B. An interview covering the following:
 - 1. Evaluation and discussion of the portfolio.
 - 2. The applicant will be presented two or three scores of varying styles and periods. The applicant will be asked to evaluate and critically discuss the scores, displaying a working knowledge of basic music analysis.
 - 3. Discussion of possibilities for studying composition on campus.

Composition majors audition in keyboard, voice, and choral conducting as follows:

Keyboard

- A. Ability to play a moderately easy piece of the candidate's choosing on either piano (e.g., Bach Two-part inventions; any piece from Classics to Modern vol. 37 or from Bastien, Piano Literature, vol. 3 or 4) or organ (e.g., from Peters Eighty Chorale Preludes or Gleason Method of Organ Playing).
- B. Ability to play on either piano or organ with or without pedals one standard congregational hymn of the candidate's choosing (e.g., "O God, Our Help in Ages Past" / ST. ANNE).
- C. Ability to sight-read with basic accuracy on either piano or organ with or without pedals one four-part hymn.

Voice

- A. Ability to sing the melody of one hymn of applicant's choice (e.g., "Come, My Way" / THE CALL) with basic accuracy of pitch and rhythm, and with good tone production.
- B. Ability to sight-read with basic accuracy a moderately easy melody.

Choral Conducting

Ability to demonstrate basic conducting patterns, cues, and dynamics.

MUSIC THEORY AND MUSIC HISTORY PROFICIENCY

Two examinations, one in music theory and one in music history, are taken during the first week of the student's first semester (or summer term) of study, in order to demonstrate proficiency equivalent to an undergraduate music degree. Review sheets for these examinations will be sent to the student for preparation purposes. If exam results are unsatisfactory, consultation with faculty advisor and faculty member administering the examination will determine whether a student may take the examination a second time or is advised to enroll in undergraduate makeup courses. Satisfactory performance in each examination is required for full graduate standing in the program.

Music Theory

This exam evaluates the student's knowledge of music theory as represented by a two-year undergraduate theory course. The test covers these areas:

- Rudiments of music (scales and modes, chords, key signatures)
- Ear-training (identification of intervals and chords)
- Dictation of a single melodic line.
- Harmonic analysis of a four-part chorale
- Completion of a four-part chorale with proper voice-leading

Music History

This exam evaluates the student's knowledge of music history as represented by a one-year undergraduate course. General historical/musical developments in five eras are covered in the exam;

- Medieval – late Middle Ages, ca. 500-1400
- Early – Late Renaissance, ca. 1400-1600
- Baroque – Classical, ca. 1600-1800
- Romantic, ca. 1800-1900
- 20th Century, ca. 1900-present