

What Top Music Schools Are Looking For

A Report for Students, Parents and Teachers

The following tips came directly from faculty and administration at ten of the highest ranked music schools in the country.

- *Make contact with the schools.* Schools are more likely to choose students that visit their campus and meet with the professors. If you can't visit in person, at least call to establish a personal connection with the faculty and let them know who you are.
- *Get your foot in the door.* Even if you don't get accepted for the major of your choice, it is much easier to transfer majors once you are accepted into the school. You may have the option of switching to a more desirable major if you prove your dedication.
- *Be Unique.* Schools want you to bring something distinct and special to their community. Work on cultivating your unique talents and show the schools what sets you apart from everyone else.
- *Keep your grades up.* Music majors must get accepted in two different areas - the general university based on academic standing *and* the music department based on musical talent. The University of Miami's minimum academic requirements are: SAT - 1285, ACT - 30, GPA - 3.7
- *Get involved.* Participate in every music related extra-curricular activity possible. There are many options: private lessons, high school bands, after school programs, summer camps, starting your own band, music competitions, etc.
- *Know your music fundamentals.* The biggest weakness for incoming music students is lack of training in theory, ear training, sight reading (especially guitarists), and piano proficiency. If you want to set yourself apart from the competition, start working on these skills **now**. Find a teacher that will help you.
- *Perform for an audience.* It makes you a better musician, gives you more experience to list on your school application and helps prepare you for the nerve-racking live audition.
- *Prepare for your audition.* Schools said they are often surprised at how under prepared some of their applicants are. Make sure you know exactly what is expected of you at each audition and start preparing months in advance – it is the most important part of the application process.

David Irelan helps guitar students prepare for music school auditions and college level classes.

He is a graduate of The New School Jazz Guitar program and professional working musician.

Cultivate Your Talent • Challenge Yourself • Audition Brilliantly

Join me May 15th, 2010, 2-4pm for an open studio event where you'll have the chance to play vintage Fender gear, make a recording to take home, and learn how I can help you get into music school.

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