Instrumental Music Ensembles Audition Information – String Instruments

Auditions will take place on Saturday 24 and Sunday 25 October 2026 at The Arts Unit Lewisham.

The Arts Unit offers 6 weekly instrumental ensembles:

3 advanced ensembles:

- Symphonic Wind Ensemble (SWE) – Mondays 4.30pm – 7pm
- Symphony Orchestra – Thursdays 4.30pm – 7pm
- Jazz Orchestra – Tuesdays 4.30pm – 6.30pm

3 intermediate ensembles:

- Symphonic Wind Orchestra (SWO) – Mondays 4.30pm – 7pm
- String Sinfonia – Thursdays 4.30pm – 7pm
- Stage Band – Tuesdays 4.30pm – 6.30pm

There are 2 sets of audition requirements: Set A (advanced) and Set B (intermediate).

Instrumental Ensemble applicants are required to prepare either 'Set A' OR 'Set B'. Please choose the set that best demonstrates your current playing ability. It is highly recommended that you discuss this with your instrumental teacher.

The audition will consist of:

1. Scales
2. Prepared piece – own choice
3. Prepared piece – set excerpt
4. Sight reading

String Audition Requirements

1. Scales – Scales are listed in a table on the next 2 pages

You are required to prepare **4 scales only** (2 major and 2 minor) of your choice from the following 'set A' or 'set B' list. Accuracy, fluency and tempo will be assessed.

Violins and Violas preparing Set A please note you must prepare your scales in both articulations as the panel will choose which articulation to play.

Viola's are asked to prepare all scales.

2. Prepared Piece – Own Choice

Please prepare **1 piece or excerpt** of your own choice (approx. 3 minutes long or less). This piece should demonstrate your technical and musical ability on your chosen instrument.

3. Prepared Piece – Set Excerpt

An excerpt for your instrument will be made available on The Arts Unit website two weeks prior to your audition – a link will be emailed to you to access this.

You are required to prepare this excerpt as part of your audition submission. The intention of this part of the audition is to ascertain your ability to prepare a difficult excerpt in a short period of time. Again, this will demonstrate technical and musical ability on your chosen instrument.

4. Sight reading

This will be provided during the audition.

SET A – Advanced Ensembles

Choose 4 scales only (2 major and 2 minor), play each in 1 bowing pattern of your choice from the list below. Violas and are asked to prepare all scales listed.

Bowing patterns:

- all slurred: 4 Quavers per bow (Crotchet = 85)
- detache: one quaver per note (Crotchet = 120)
- spiccato: three triplets per note (Crotchet = 100)

CELLO	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• C (4 Octaves) • Ab (3 Octaves) • F# (3 Octaves) • Db (3 Octaves)	• C (4 Octaves) • Ab (3 Octaves) • F (3 Octaves) • Db (3 Octaves)

DOUBLE BASS	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• A(2 Octaves) • Bb (2 Octaves) • B (2 Octaves) • C (2 Octaves)	• A (2 Octaves) • Bb (2 Octaves) • B (2 Octaves) • C (2 Octaves)

VIOLA	
Articulations: Detache and Spiccato – the panel will choose which articulation you will play	
Major Scales	Minor Scales
• Eb Major (3 Octaves)	• Eb Harmonic and Melodic Minor (3 Octaves)

VIOLIN	
Articulations: Slurred in 4s and Spiccato, 3 bows per note. – the panel will choose which articulation you will play.	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• G (4 Octaves) • B (3 Octaves) • F# (3 Octaves) • Eb (3 Octaves)	• G (4 Octaves) • Ab (3 Octaves) • F (3 Octaves) • Eb (3 Octaves)

SET B – Intermediate Ensembles

Cellos and Double Basses are expected to choose 4 scales only (2 major and 2 minor), play each in 1 bowing pattern of your choice from the list below. Violas and Violins are asked to prepare all scales listed.

Bowing patterns:

- all slurred: four notes to a bow (quavers at crotchet = 80)
- detache: one quaver per note (quavers at crotchet = 100)
- spiccato: three triplets per note (quavers at crotchet = 80)

CELLO	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• C (3 Octaves) • Eb (2 Octaves) • D (2 Octaves) • C Chromatic (2 Octaves)	• C (2 Octaves) • Eb (2 Octaves) • D (2 Octaves)

DOUBLE BASS	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• E (2 Octaves) • F (2 Octaves) • G (2 Octaves) • A Chromatic (1 Octaves)	• E (2 Octaves) • F (2 Octaves) • G (2 Octaves)

VIOLA	
Major Scales	Minor Scales
• F (2 octaves in 3rd position) • C Chromatic (2 octaves)	• C Melodic Minor (2 octaves)

VIOLIN	
Major Scales	Harmonic Minor Scales
• G (3 octaves) • G Chromatic (2 octaves)	• E (2 octaves in 4th position)