



**Mead Witter School of Music**  
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

## Percussion

This document contains the recording and audition requirements for the Percussion area. Please refer to the “Graduate Application Guide” for detailed instructions about the application process and general requirements for admission to the School of Music.

When filling out the Graduate School application, please select  
“Music: Performance MM” or “Music: Performance DMA”

### Portfolio (due on December 1)

As part of your application, you will submit a portfolio of recordings. Your portfolio must be submitted as a single URL link to a YouTube channel or another file sharing site (Google Drive, etc.). You may submit a single video or a folder containing multiple videos. Please be sure that your video(s) are set to “public” or “unlisted” so that they are accessible to our faculty.

Your portfolio will be used for audition prescreening within the Percussion area as well as potential funding consideration within the entire School of Music.

The portfolio should include:

1. Spoken Introduction: Please introduce yourself, tell us where you are from originally, where you are currently studying, your current degree program and the repertoire to be performed.
2. Four-Mallet Keyboard Percussion Solo: A significant solo work that demonstrates musical and technical command (an excerpt of a work of is also acceptable).
3. Snare Drum: A concert style snare drum solo/etude of your choice (an excerpt of a work is also acceptable).
4. Timpani: A solo/etude that demonstrates a musical approach to basic tone production, rolls, intonation, etc. at various dynamics (an excerpt of a work is also acceptable). As an alternative, two orchestral/band excerpts of contrasting style can be chosen to fulfill the timpani requirement.
5. Choice: Choose one or more of the following:
  - a. Drum Set – Demonstration of various styles that include appropriate time keeping and soloing. This may be accomplished in various ways, including solo playing, live group(s), play-along recordings, etc.

- b. Global Percussion - Stylistically appropriate performance of a chosen style(s) found in non-Western musical cultures. In choosing this area, the student is expected to understand the cultural and historical context of the music being performed.
- c. Various Orchestral Excerpts - Orchestral excerpt(s) performed on a variety of instruments. This might include excerpts performed on xylophone, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, cymbals, snare drum, etc.
- d. Multiple Percussion – Work or movement(s) of a work from a mature solo composition (an excerpt of a work of is also acceptable).

Note: In consultation with the Percussion faculty, you may supplement your portfolio with additional recordings/materials later in the process to be used for school-wide fellowship competitions.

## Auditions

Candidates who pass the prescreening round will be invited for a full audition. Auditions will be held on Saturday, January 18, and Saturday, February 8. Candidates may choose one of the following options:

### Option 1

**Travel to the UW-Madison campus and perform a live audition.**

Prepare an audition recital following the requirements outlined below. The audition slot will be 30 minutes for MM and 45 minutes for DMA and will include the live audition recital plus an interview with the Percussion faculty.

Please make a list of your prepared repertoire (title & composer) and bring 2 copies of the list to your audition, which the faculty will use to select excerpts and take notes. Please also bring at least one copy of your sheet music so that our faculty can follow along with your recital.

### Option 2

**Stay at home and submit a final portfolio of recordings.  
Meet the faculty in a Zoom interview on the audition day.**

The recorded audition should be at least 20 minutes for MM and 30 minutes for DMA and must follow the requirements outlined below. The final portfolio is due no later than one week before your selected audition date. A submission template will be sent along with your audition invitation.

Please also send scanned copies of your sheet music in PDF format. On the audition day, you will have an interview with the Percussion faculty on Zoom. The interview will be 20 minutes for MM and 30 minutes for DMA.

## Master's candidates

The MM applicant is required to perform on at least FOUR percussive instrumental areas. Four-mallet marimba (or vibraphone) and snare drum are required areas, with the remaining two areas chosen by the student from the list of "Choice Areas" below based on his/her abilities and future career goals. Memorization is neither required nor discouraged.

Required MM areas:

- i. Marimba (4-mallet) – Repertoire should be of significant maturity to represent musical and technical command. A significant 4-mallet vibraphone solo (in the Western classical music tradition) can be performed in place of the marimba solo.
- ii. Snare Drum – Concert style etude or solo of significant musical and technical maturity.

## Doctoral candidates

The DMA applicant is required to perform on at least FIVE percussive instrumental areas. Four-mallet marimba (or vibraphone), two-mallet marimba (or xylophone), and snare drum are required areas, with the remaining two areas chosen by the student from the list of "Choice Areas" below based on his/her abilities and future career goals. Memorization is neither required nor discouraged.

Required DMA areas:

- i. Marimba (4-mallet) – Repertoire should be of significant maturity to represent musical and technical command. A significant 4-mallet vibraphone solo (in the Western classical music tradition) can be performed in place of the marimba solo.
- ii. Marimba or xylophone (2-mallet) - Composition demonstrating 2 mallet keyboard percussion technique. A work from the ragtime era or other works that demonstrate advanced 2 mallet technical/musical skills can be used to fulfill this requirement.
- iii. Snare Drum – Concert style etude or solo of significant musical and technical maturity.

Choice areas to complete the four (MM) or five (DMA) percussive areas:

- a. Timpani – Significant etude, solo or 3-4 major orchestral excerpts. If orchestral repertoire is chosen, at least two style periods should be represented.
- b. Multiple Percussion – Work or movement(s) of a work from a mature composition for multiple percussion.
- c. Various Orchestral Excerpts - Significant orchestral excerpts performed on a variety of instruments. This might include excerpts performed on xylophone, snare drum, tambourine, triangle, glockenspiel, cymbals, etc.
- d. Drum Set – Demonstration of various styles and forms to include stylistically appropriate time keeping and soloing.
- e. World Percussion – Stylistically appropriate performance of a chosen style(s) found in non-Western musical cultures. In choosing this area, the student is expected to understand the cultural and historical context of the music being performed.

### Further thoughts on audition repertoire

Applicants may choose to perform on more than four/five percussive areas. Performance examples such as jazz vibraphone, chamber music or non-culturally based hand drumming can be used to augment the four/five areas.

If submitting a recorded audition: Multiple videos can be submitted, but there should be no edits within any single composition. Multi-movement works should be recorded in a single take.

Percussive diversity is a core principle of the UW-Madison percussion program, though under unique circumstances (based on the student's career goals), a more focused approach to the audition and degree process can be discussed. If you would like to pursue a more focused audition and degree process, please contact Dr. Anthony DiSanza: [adisanza@wisc.edu](mailto:adisanza@wisc.edu)

Last revised: September 3, 2024