

1. Why are you adding scales to the PYP blind audition?

It has been my experience as a professional musician that scale practice leads to excellence in all areas of musical performance. I would estimate that 95% of the music I have played in my career is tonal. Tonal music is based mostly on major and minor scales and patterns, with whole tone scales and octotonic scales and various modal scales thrown in as well.

Practicing scales regularly and intelligently leads to better technique of course, but it also develops sound production, intonation, sightreading, transposition, rhythm and many other important fundamentals.

I am sure right now it feels like a huge assignment to have all of your major and minor scales memorized by the end of August. I promise you that if you play your scales and arpeggios slowly enough so that they always sound perfect and go through all of them at least once every day between now and then, they will sound fine when you play them for us.

Please remember that you are playing a musical audition, not the musical Olympics! I want to hear you play cleanly, in tune and in an absolutely steady tempo. What tempo that is is up to you. I would much rather hear a perfect scale played slowly than a sloppy one played very fast! Ideally, you will want to strike a balance, but hypervirtuosity will not earn you any extra points on my scorecard.

Let me re-emphasize: play your scales so that they sound perfect. You will be amazed over the course of a few months how much faster this tempo will be than where you start. Even if you have very little

time to practice, try to find 10-15 minutes at some point every day to play all your scales and arpeggios. **ALWAYS USE A METRONOME!**

We'll only hear your major and minor scales and arpeggios in August, but don't neglect the other scale patterns in your scale books! Returning scales, interrupted scales, 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, 6ths, 7ths, octaves, etc etc etc! Practicing these will only enhance how you sound on the regular major and minor scales.

2. How will the process work?

When you come into the screened audition room, one of us on the committee will reach into our scale box and pull out a letter. Let's say you get a-flat. You will play an a-flat major scale and arpeggio, then the relative minor which would be an f minor scale and arpeggio.

Horns will play horn in f, clarinets will play clarinet in b flat. The trumpets and everyone else will play in concert pitch. Percussionists will play on bells or xylophone.

3. How many octaves will I need to play?

Violins, violas and cellos will play three octaves. Basses two octaves. Woodwinds at least two octaves. Brasses will play two octaves except where not practical. In those cases, you may play one octave or whatever is in your preferred scale book.

4. Is there a particular method book you prefer to hear scales from?

No. Every instrument has several excellent scales books and you may choose your teacher's or your own if you like. As long as the number of octaves is correct, it will be fine. Whether you play all 16th notes or have an 8th note every octave is not important to us.

5. How many variations of the minor scales do you expect us to play?

You may choose EITHER the harmonic or melodic minor. If you play natural minor, no one will deduct any points, but I would prefer the harmonic or melodic minor. It is your choice.

6. I heard you say the rehearsal will be until 9 PM, why?

I have requested the extra time with you because I want to get to know you and work together with you as much as possible. Your commitment as individuals to PYP is truly extraordinary and I realize that I am asking a lot from you. I feel that the extra time will allow us to avoid constantly running out of time together.

Although I consistently emphasize fundamentals, what is really important to me is the inspiration that lies beyond the notes. You already play in a remarkable and inspiring manner. I was very moved by your playing at the spring concert as well as at my audition. I feel that as we work together on good fundamentals and ensemble values, the inspiration behind the notes will become even more apparent to us as well as to our audiences.

In addition, I believe you should get a chance to do some sightreading nearly every week. I hope to use 15 minutes or so of the extra time I am requesting whenever possible to read part of a work we will not actually perform. For instance, on our first concert we will be playing Dvorak's Symphony #6 in D major. Interestingly enough, Brahms's 2nd Symphony, written just before the Dvorak, is also in D major. The two pieces have an awful lot in common, and it isn't a coincidence. I hope we will be able to read through most if not all of the Brahms during the first concert period.

In addition, we will be able to 'read ahead' in our own season. Some of the works on the 2nd half of the season are very demanding, like

Silvestre Revueeltas's *Sensemaya* and Lutoslawski's *Concerto for Orchestra*. I think it would be helpful to go through them at readable tempos using some of our extra time. That way, we'll all know in advance what we have coming up.

7. In years past we had music history, conducting, composition, advanced theory, and ear training for 50 minutes during rehearsal. Will we have that this year?

This is something I will consider during the first half of our season.

8. What attributes do you look for in a PYP student?

This is a hard question to answer, because musicians are all individual artists and bring different strengths in their own individual ways. I think the main positive attribute anyone could bring to PYP is the desire to be a better musician every single time they come to play.

My observation so far is that many of the most important attributes are already possessed by all of you. Intelligence, discipline, loyalty, etc.

I would love to have students who commit to being as prepared as possible to perform at every rehearsal as well as every concert. When you really know your own part, you start to listen to how your part fits in to the organic whole of the composition. For me that is when playing becomes the most exciting. Everyone in the ensemble is then contributing on more than one level. It is one thing to perform the 1st violin part to a symphony. It is another when, while performing it, you notice the melody happening in another section and automatically adjust your playing to allow the section or person playing the melody to be heard clearly. That's the true essence of orchestral playing; chamber music played by 100 musicians.

One thing all of you can do to help accomplish this is to listen to recordings of the repertoire we play, when available. Recordings are

wonderful tools. You can become familiar with great music and, often, great artists as well. I believe, with the exception of Henry Cowell's *Ancient Desert Drone*, that there are multiple recordings available for every piece we are playing this year. Looking at scores while hearing recordings is even better!