Dear Students,

The school year is about to ramp up. Audition materials are posted, new students will be arriving on campus, and many of you have explored new musical ideas or new parts of the world. It is truly exciting to come back to your musical home with newer, fresher ideas. Please take the rest of this summer to incorporate useful strategies to prepare for this semester’s auditions.

Please take a moment to read through this letter to familiarize yourself with what you need to give your best audition in August.

MUSIC MAJORS:

• All Music Majors must prepare an audition for the Fall Semester Concert Ensembles.
• Visit bands.ou.edu to download the prescribed excerpts for your audition.
• Sign up electronically for your audition time.

NON-MAJORS:

Non-Music Majors interested in performing with the Symphony Orchestra, Wind Symphony, and Symphony Band, must prepare and perform an audition.

  o Please visit bands.ou.edu to sign up electronically for your audition time for your instruments’ allotted time and date.
  o You may prepare the prescribed examples included with your audition packet for the audition; OR

  ▪ you may prepare 2 musical pieces that demonstrate your musical abilities in contrasting styles (i.e. phrasing and melody, paired with a technical excerpt).
  ▪ You may also choose to prepare parts of the prescribed audition along with a contrasting musical example of your own choosing.
TIPS for a SUCCESSFUL AUDITION

The following tips are offered to help you to be prepared to your fullest, and allow you to have your most successful audition. Remember that the reason that you are auditioning for an ensemble is because you love music. You have either chosen to follow it as your vocation, or you simply love to play music as a dedicated hobby. This excitement and love will show in your performance, provided that you prepare adequately.

Mental and Physical Preparation:
   a. Enter the audition preparation process with a positive frame of mind.
   b. Develop a love for the music and your creative opportunity to express yourself—have something to say with your music-making, but say it with an understanding of the discipline of art.
   c. Mentally focus on the musical product—you are in control of how you perform. You are not in control of the audition results.
   d. You “win” by preparing and doing your best, whether or not the posted results match your expectations.
   e. Sleep! Try to get a week’s worth of good sleep leading up to your audition date.
   f. Eat well – Know what foods work best with your system. Don’t starve yourself before an audition thinking it will make you play better – it just deprives your brain of the nutrients it needs.
   g. Know that we are rooting for you and want to hear you perform at your best!

Musical Preparation:
   a. Priorities for musical excellence
      i. Strive for a resonant tone on each note.
      ii. Practice for a steady pulse with accurate rhythm (evidence of subdivided practice).
      iii. Clean articulation/note changes in the appropriate style.
      iv. Use expression (i.e. forward or regressive emotion) in your playing.
   b. Use the Metronome
      i. Practice with the metronome on the smallest practical subdivision of the etude (usually eighth-notes).
      ii. Begin your preparation by using slow tempos that allow you to learn the rhythm in the context with a steady pulse.
      iii. Use the metronome in every practice session.
      iv. Practice performance runs without the metronome to simulate the performance environment – but record yourself to hear inconsistencies in rhythm and pulse.
   c. Learning Notes
      i. Practice SMALL chunks of the music first. Focus on a resonant tone, accurate rhythms, and correct notes to start each isolated passage. – Be Patient – practicing slowly accurately will lead to faster gains later.
      ii. Target trouble spots to more efficiently utilize your time—focus intently on technical passages, intervals, and intonation challenges.
      iii. Sing your audition music when you are not able to physically practice. Try to get the correct intervals and rhythms into your ear without the assistance of your instrument.
   d. Using a Recording Device
      i. Record yourself every session.
      ii. As you listen to playbacks mark your music in pencil with reminders of what you can improve.
iii. Save the recordings of your best takes to measure your progress.
e. Gaining Audition Confidence
   i. Play for others—family, friends, pets, etc.
   ii. Get used to how you sound by performing in differing acoustical settings. (i.e. Tiled rooms vs carpeted rooms, big rooms vs. small rooms)
   iii. Understand your limitations—pick tempos at which YOU can be successful regardless of the metronome markings.
   iv. Your personal tempos should allow you to maintain rhythmic integrity (the correct mathematical proportions of rhythmic notation), and play complete musical sentences without breaks.

**Audition Etiquette**

a. Dress and act appropriately. Avoid wearing jeans, shorts, T-shirts and sandals. Try to dress in a manner similar to how you would dress if you were applying for a job interview. Even though it is a blind audition, dressing up will help keep you in “performance mode.”
b. Be on time. Showing up on time tells the committee that you respect them and that you value their time.
c. Be considerate and supportive of your colleagues.
d. Be polite and attentive to the monitor’s instructions.
e. Eagerly sign the audition list—1 minute or 30 minutes will not make a difference in your preparation.
f. All questions should be directed to the monitor—no talking to the panel of judges in the audition room. We should not know your identity from your voice.
g. Be ready to play immediately without the panel prompting you to begin.
h. Pause just enough between the excerpts to regain your focus for the next musical excerpt.
i. Don’t panic if the audition committee stops you before the end of your excerpt. If this occurs, it just means that the committee feels it has heard an accurate representation of your playing. Keep in mind there is a limited amount of time for the audition. Practice for this by starting and stopping in different places in your music.