

The Counterpoint Club

A Chamber Music Podcast

Opus 4 Episode 4 - I Know What You Did Last Summer: Chamber Music Edition

How to Choose a Chamber Music Program/Workshop for Students and Adult Learners

Guidelines for directing decision making on type of program, and resources for finding and applying to programs:

1. Keep some kind of chart or spreadsheet and take notes as needed from the beginning of the process to avoid wasting time re-researching programs or searching for links. Have a system in place to process the pros and cons of each program and how many attributes it has that are important to you. This will help you narrow down the list and keep you focused on what is most important to you while choosing programs to join/audition for.
 - a. Make notes of the organization name and contact information, web links, and relevant scholarship information to save time later. Leave space for personal notes like “emailed X on X date”, “check back on X”, “highly desired teacher alert”, “includes group hikes”, etc.
 - b. If auditioning for programs: make sure a column of the chart/spreadsheet is dedicated to audition requirements. This will be a huge timesaver later and will help narrow choices to fit what you can feasibly prepare well for auditions.
2. How to choose the type of program to attend:
 - a. What attributes are personally the biggest draw for you? There are myriad festivals, workshops, and programs and many different formats, strengths, and objectives to choose between. Before looking at the abundant lists of choices available, make a list of the top learning, interpersonal, and/or networking goals important to you. This will help you filter the options down more quickly.
 - b. Here are some possible attributes to think about and decide what is most important to you (this is just a jumping off point-if you think of more please let us know in the comments of the blogpost!):
 - offerings of financial aid/merit or need based scholarships
 - the balance of activities and classes offered throughout the day and the length of the event
 - student/learner to staff ratios
 - opportunities for exercise/outdoors time/off campus activities
 - mission of the program and history of excellence
 - collaborative environment versus competition
 - options and accommodations when necessary
 - networking possibilities with staff or with peers for further learning opportunities (e.g. colleges) or concert tours, ensemble forming, etc.



- finding a teacher to study with long term
- competition elements or non-competitive environment
- interpersonal time built in with activities or ensemble playing
- practice focused for technique development
- specific teacher instruction and connection building
- when affiliated with a college program: to get to know a certain city, campus, and faculty
- successes of the past student body
- receptiveness/ability to cater to special needs
- location
- time of year

3. Here is a list of website resources to help you research programs:

- a. Adult Learners: Associated Chamber Music Players, ACMP (a sponsor of this podcast!), is a fantastic place to start a search for adult workshops.

<https://acmp.net/find-workshops>

- b. A great string players resource for both adult workshops and student festivals that is constantly being updated is on the Johnson String Instrument website:

<https://www.johnsonstring.com/resources/summer-music-camps/#top>

- c. Here are some websites to help you search for student summer music festivals and summer opportunities:

<https://www.pugetsound.edu/school-music/current-music-students/summer-music-festivals-summer-opportunities>

<https://musicschoolcentral.com/25-best-summer-music-programs-festivals-camps-high-school-musicians>

https://www.musicalamerica.com/pages/?pagename=camps2021_additional2#Washington

<https://majoringinmusic.com/summer-music-camps/#1516059305587-ee045422-6669>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/summer-music-programs-high-school-students-788419>

4. Lastly, something to always consider are ways to fund attending a summer music program. Here is a helpful article from the Eastman School of Music on planning costs for tuition, housing and meals, travel, and even pocket money. There's also information about how to apply for financial aid and scholarships, and where to search in local communities for more scholarship opportunities:

<https://www.esm.rochester.edu/blog/2021/12/how-to-fund-your-summer-music-camp-a-guide-for-students-and-parents>

