

**PIANO
DEPARTMENT
HANDBOOK
2025–2026**

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WELCOME

Dear Student:

Welcome to the Manhattan School of Music! These are very important years in your development as an artist and as a person. We wish you every success in your endeavors and are here to assist you in any possible way. This document is designed to answer frequently asked questions about the Piano Department. The responsibility for knowing the information contained in this handbook, as with all school policies and procedures, rests with you. Consult your major teacher or the Co-Heads with any questions or concerns about the department.

With all best wishes,

Alexandre Moutouzkine and Inesa Sinkevych

Piano Department Co-Heads

APPLIED LESSONS

Your Teacher

Your teacher is among the most vital sources in helping you to make career decisions, both large and small. As in any relationship, issues may arise which require discussion and/or resolution. You are encouraged to discuss problems as they occur directly with your teacher. Unresolved issues and/or the sense that you cannot discuss problems with your teacher need to be addressed with the Department Co-Head or the Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance. You are entitled and required to have twenty-eight one-hour private lessons with your major teacher in the course of the school year. Some teachers give these lessons each week. Others, given the nature of other performance and teaching commitments, offer two-hour lessons and/or lessons at differing intervals. Others still have teaching associates or substitutes to give lessons at times when they are unable to do so. Make certain that you understand your teacher's lesson schedule plan. Applied lesson faculty have created a course syllabus that describes the objectives, grading, attendance, and other policies related to your lessons. Please be sure to read over the syllabus carefully and discuss any questions you have with your teacher. If you are concerned that you are not receiving the requisite number of lessons, or have a problem with the frequency of your lessons, notify the Department Co-Head.

Change of Teacher

Students may request a change of teacher. This is an important decision to be thought over carefully and thoroughly. Student decisions to change teachers are often the result of miscommunication with the current teacher. You are therefore encouraged to discuss the matter with your teacher and/or with the departmental co-head, Dean of Instrumental Performance and Orchestral Studies, or the Dean of Academic Affairs. If you wish to change teachers you must obtain a Change of Teacher Request Form from the Office of the Provost. Complete instructions are on the form. Please act responsibly, professionally and sensitively.

You must inform your current teacher of the planned change before you contact a new prospective teacher. School policy prohibits any action against a student by a former teacher.

Attendance Policy

Private lessons constitute the core performance study for every student. If a student needs to cancel a studio lesson for any reason, the student should immediately inform the studio teacher. In cases of documented illness or other emergency, the teacher will make up missed lessons at a mutually convenient time. The studio teacher is not obligated to adjust lesson times or make up lessons that were canceled for non-illness, non-emergency reasons. Students who have two or more unexcused absences in his or her private lessons will be reported to the Office of the Provost and Dean of Students.

Professional Leave

No student may be absent from the school for professional engagements unless permission for such absence is granted by the Office of the Provost well in advance of all such engagements. Students may request to be excused from school for professional engagements for periods not longer than two weeks. A planned limited leave of absence requires that the Limited Leave of Absence Form be submitted at least four weeks in advance of the requested limited leave unless opportunities or situations are truly unforeseen. The form requires review and approval by the Dean of Academic Affairs, the Academic Division Dean, Office of the Provost, and approval from each of the student's instructors. International students also require the approval of International Student Services.

Playing-related Pain

If you experience pain before, during or after playing, discuss it immediately with your major teacher. Physical pain is a sign that you are not using your body properly. There are referral sources available to help you with this before it becomes chronic or serious. If physical therapy or other help is needed, consult the Office of Student Affairs.

TECHNICAL STANDARDS

In order to maintain the integrity of the educational process at Manhattan School of Music, the school has developed a set of criteria for entrance to, and graduation from all the degree programs offered at MSM. These standards include a combination of both technical and musical skills and they are the result of consultation with faculty, administration and professionals throughout our musical community.

All piano students graduating from Manhattan School of Music will have demonstrated the following abilities:

Technical Skills:

- * Control and coordination of both hands including a substantial degree of dexterity and consistency
- * A strong sense of rhythm with an understanding and ability to play both standard and complex rhythms and meters
- * The focus and endurance to perform a full-length solo recital from memory

Musical Skills:

- * An understanding of musical notation and familiarity with common musical terminology in Italian, German and French
- * An understanding of musical structure and harmony
- * An understanding of musical styles including those of the Baroque and Contemporary eras
- * An understanding of musical nuance as applied to a variety of styles

The Evaluation of Technical Standards at Juries

An annual jury is conducted to allow the faculty to assess the growth and progress of each student in all the above areas. All standards are judged in relation to the student's degree program and level of study. For BM students, the sophomore jury is a critical moment to evaluate the progress and potential of students to ensure that they are on the correct path to a successful completion of their Bachelor's

degree. Each year at MSM, students are required to present specific repertoire at their juries (all contained in this handbook) so that at the end of their degree program they will have demonstrated that they have attained the necessary skills for graduation.

Ensemble Requirement

Undergraduate piano students are required to participate in four semesters of ensembles. Ensembles that may be requested or assigned will be:

Piano-Strings Chamber Music

Piano with Winds or Brass

Instrumental Studio Accompanying

Two-Piano Ensemble

Participation in any Large Ensemble

Master's degree students must participate in two semesters of ensemble chosen from the list above.

Ensemble classes beyond the required number may be assigned in rare cases but may not serve as substitutions for academic requirements.

Professional Studies and Doctoral students may include an ensemble class as an elective.

The Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance makes assignments in consultation with the Chairs of strings, winds and piano. *Students are strongly advised to fill out a chamber music request form each semester.* Specific requests for type of ensemble, fellow players and coach are given serious consideration and are generally honored.

Piano Literature

Undergraduate students are required to attend two semesters of piano literature classes, preferably in sequence. The classes include a general survey of standard piano repertoire. As with any required course, an examination for exemption may be requested from the teacher.

Graduate students are required to take four semesters of piano literature, including one semester studying concerti and one studying 20th and 21st century works.

JURY EXAMINATIONS

Juries for Non-Graduating Students

Every student **must** play a jury during the May jury period of each school year until all jury and recital requirements have been fulfilled. Juries are a vital part of your training as a performer and the resultant scores have bearing on your academic record, scholarship, chamber music assignments, and other aspects of your standing within the school.

The jury performance times allotted are:

Freshman—15 minutes

Sophomore—15 minutes

Junior—18 minutes

First-year graduate students—20 minutes

First-year PPD students—20 minutes

No jury is required of graduating students. The live recital performances of seniors, second-year masters students, professional studies students, second-year PPD students, and doctoral candidates will be judged by the department (see Graduation Recitals).

Students are to present a jury program representing at least four of the six style periods listed below. At least one work must be from the Modernist or Post-1960 categories.

Baroque

Classical

Romantic

Post-Romantic/Impressionistic, e.g., Debussy, Ravel, Scriabin, Albeniz, et al.

Modernist, e.g., Bartok, Prokofiev, Hindemith, et al.

Contemporary—Post-1960

Total playing time of the program should be approximately 40-50 minutes.

In addition to pieces from the standard repertoire, we require that you include a work or works written by underrepresented creators such as women (e.g., Clara Schumann, Tania Leon), composers from Asia (e.g., Toru Takamitsu, Isang Yun), African Americans (e.g., George Walker, Florence Price), the LGBTQ+ community (e.g., John Corigliano, Lowell Liebermann), or others. Specific repertoire choices are left to the student and major teacher within the stated guidelines.

The Office of the Registrar assigns jury days and times. Because of the demands made on our concert halls' space and staff, we are not able to provide rehearsal time to any student.

Sophomore Continuation Jury

This jury, conducted at the end of the sophomore year of study, establishes that a student's progress has been sufficient to reasonably ensure completion of the program of study. The evaluation will determine whether or not a student may continue in that program.

Advanced Standing Jury

In rare cases, undergraduate students may accelerate their program in performance by means of an Advanced Standing jury. A successful Advanced Standing jury will allow a student to graduate early, provided all other academic requirements are also met early. Advanced standing can only be granted for one semester. To start the process, the student submits a petition for advanced standing to the Registrar's office. This petition must indicate the approval of both the major teacher and the Department Co-Head, and must be turned in no later than March 1 of the academic year in which the advanced standing jury is to take place.

Students must satisfy the following conditions in order to be considered for advanced Standing:

- * Have received a 7.5 or higher on their prior jury
- * Be in good academic standing and have a cumulative GPA of 3.70 or higher

Please review the Academic Catalog for complete information regarding Advanced Standing.

Jury Comments

Students can expect to receive their jury comments and scores via email one week after the end of the jury week.

Grading System

All juries are graded on a 10-point scale. The student's jury grade is the average of all scores received at the jury (excluding those of the primary teacher and any teacher who has previously taught the student at MSM).

Jury Postponement

The Office of the Registrar will only consider a student petition requesting postponement of a jury in extreme medical conditions (documented by a physician), sudden family emergencies, or other exceptional circumstances. In all other cases, any student who fails to play a scheduled jury will receive an F for that jury. A failed jury will result in academic probation or dismissal from MSM. A postponed jury must be successfully completed not later than the first two weeks of the subsequent semester.

January Admits

Graduate students beginning their course of study in January have the following two options regarding their first jury examination:

1. Ideally, a student should perform in May of their first year of study. The co-head will announce to the faculty that the jury performance represents only four months of study and the jurors will take that fact into account when issuing grades.

2. Students may petition to postpone their first jury examination until December of the same year. The Piano Department Co-Head will support such requests.

RECITALS

Graduation Recitals

All undergraduate, masters, professional studies and professional performance diploma students must perform one full-length solo recital. All works, except very demanding contemporary pieces, must be performed from memory. Playing time should range from 55-70 minutes of music

Three style periods must be represented and work or works written by underrepresented creators, including at least one work written within the past seventy-five years. The Department Co-Head will assign one faculty member to attend and judge the recital. The adjudicator may pass the recital, fail the recital or request that specific works be replayed. If a student fails their recital, the chair will organize a new panel to hear another performance of all failed works.

Students must be enrolled for major lessons during the semester that they perform their recital. It is strongly suggested that students have their recitals recorded, particularly those scheduled on weekends. In the rare cases when no faculty member is able to serve as a judge, a recording of the recital will be evaluated. The recital must be successfully completed before the last day of the spring semester.

Scheduling Recitals

A graduation recital must take place within the last two semesters of major lessons. A date for the recital must be requested from the Scheduling Office. The recital program must be approved by the major teacher and the Department Co-Head, and a copy of this program must be uploaded onto the canvas course as part of the student's graduation requirement.

Recital Approval Forms require signatures from the major teacher and the Department Co-Head. The major teacher's signature implies that the student is prepared to perform. The co-head's signature signifies approval of the repertoire and programming. The co-head will not sign any program that has not already been signed by the major teacher. Students should be certain that the program is accurately written before submitting it to the co-head.

Non-Required Recitals

Students are encouraged to give recitals in non-graduating years. Consult with your major teacher for approval. Most non-required recitals are given in the fall semester when there is more available time in the concert halls. The scheduling coordinator is responsible for the assignment of recital space and other related details.

Doctor of Musical Arts Recitals

Consult the Assistant Dean for Doctoral Studies for procedures and requirements.

CONCERTO REQUIREMENT

All undergraduate and master's candidates must perform one complete concerto from memory with an accompanist or with orchestra. Any piano faculty member, excluding their own major teacher, may judge the performance. Students and their major teachers are welcomed to make their own arrangements with another faculty member without assistance from the Department Co-Head. Any time and place amenable to all parties is appropriate. The Piano Performance Classes provide another convenient forum for satisfying this requirement. If the performance warrants, the adjudicator signs a Concerto Requirement Evaluation Form on Canvas. It is then recorded as a Pass on the student's permanent record. No letter grades are issued, although comments from the judge are encouraged.

All students must be registered for major lessons during the

semester that they complete this or any other performance requirement. No student will be allowed to enter a higher degree program until the concerto and all other performance requirements have been completed. All performance requirements must be complete, with all adjudication forms uploaded to the appropriate Canvas assignment, before the last day of the semester classes. Students with outstanding performance requirements must again register for major lessons.

REPERTOIRE GUIDELINES

The following guidelines list examples of representative repertoire within each style period. As students progress within and between degrees, they are expected to present works of increasing complexity, scale and sophistication. Final repertoire choices are made by the teacher and student.

Baroque:

BM—Preludes and Fugues of J. S. Bach, Scarlatti Sonatas

MM—Suites and Partitas of J. S. Bach, Handel or others

DMA—"Goldberg Variations" or other large-scale works

Classical:

BM—Sonatas of Haydn, Mozart or early Beethoven

MM—Sonatas of Middle Beethoven or Schubert

DMA—Late Beethoven Sonatas

Romantic:

BM—Character Pieces of Mendelssohn, Chopin or Brahms

MM—Larger-scale collections of small works,
e.g., Brahms Op. 119

DMA—Sonatas of Liszt, Chopin or Brahms

Post-Romantic:

BM—Preludes of Debussy, Scriabin or Rachmaninoff

MM—Larger-scale collections, e.g., Debussy’s “Images”

DMA—Scriabin Sonatas 5-10, Ravel’s “Gaspard”

Modernist:

BM—Character Pieces of Bartok or Prokofiev

MM—early Prokofiev Sonatas, Hindemith Sonatas

DMA—Carter Sonata, Boulez Sonatas

Post-1960:

BM—Takemitsu Rain Tree Sketches, Philip Glass Etudes

MM—Ligeti Etudes, Carl Vine Sonata

DMA—Large-scale works such as Corigliano Etude Fantasy

SPECIAL EVENTS

Throughout the school year, there are special events such as the Koch and Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competitions, master classes and other performance opportunities. Pertinent information for these events will be posted online as well as on the piano department bulletin board. **Participation in all competitions and master class auditions requires the written approval of your major teacher.** Full-time, matriculated college students who have studied with their teachers for at least one semester are eligible to enter competitions and master class auditions. In order to give opportunities to a larger number of young artists, students may perform only once with orchestra during their time at the school. Likewise, students may perform in master classes only once per two seasons.

Below are our events for the 2025–26 school season:

COMPETITIONS

2025–26 Eisenberg-Fried Concerto Competition

Preliminary Round: Monday, February 2, 2026,
Neidorff-Karpati Hall

Final Round: Thursday, February 5, 2026,
Neidorff-Karpati Hall

Prize: An appearance with orchestra during the 2025–26 season, plus an honorarium

Repertoire: Any work from the standard repertoire for piano and orchestra, with the exception of concerti performed by previous winners within the past three years, is eligible for submission.

Concertos not eligible for the 2025-26 Eisenberg–Fried Competition:

- Beethoven's Concerto No. 2
- Brahms Concerto No. 2
- Rachmaninoff's Concerto No. 4
- Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, Op. 43
- Ravel's Concerto for the Left Hand
- Prokofiev's Concerto No. 2
- G. Bacewicz's Piano Concerto
- Schnittke's Concerto for Piano and Strings

2025–26 Dora Zaslavsky Koch Competition

Competition: Monday, October 6, 2025,
Neidorff-Karpati Hall

Repertoire:

- Rachmaninoff Concerto No. 4 in G Minor, Op. 40 (1941 version)

MASTER CLASSES

Alexander Korsantia—

Date: Wednesday, October 1 from 4–7 PM in Greenfield Hall

Douglas Humpherys—

Date: Monday, October 27 from 4–7 PM in Greenfield Hall

Corey Hamm—

Date: Tuesday, December 2 from 4–7 PM in Greenfield Hall

Richard Goode—

Date: Friday, March 27 from 5–7 PM in Greenfield Hall

SEMINARS

Artists, Dates, and Times TBD

ELIGIBILITY (for competitions, master classes, and seminars): Any full-time, matriculated college student who has studied with their current teacher for at least one full semester.

JURY EXAMINATIONS

Make-up Juries: September, 2025, date and time TBD

Year-End Juries: Tuesday–Monday, May 12-18, 2026

Cultural Inclusion Initiative

Every student will study a work or works by a composer of color, a woman, or an LGBTQ+ composer during their tenure at Manhattan School of Music. After a preliminary discussion with their major teacher, students will be encouraged to research and discover pieces on their own.

Each faculty member will track the students' choices and will discuss with each student his/her/their responses to the works.

Piano Department Bulletin Board

This is located on the third floor. Check it periodically for special departmental notices, the department's season schedule, upcoming concerts and events, and information about competitions and master classes.