

**BRASS
DEPARTMENT HANDBOOK
2026–2027**

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Manhattan School of Music!

My name is Ethan Bensdorf and I'm privileged to be the Brass Department Chair.

If you need to reach me, please send an email to **ebensdorf@msmnyc.edu** or feel free to call or text me at 847-212-6863.

If you need a signature, you can either request to meet with me or you can email the form to me as either a jpeg or pdf. Please note that all forms must be completed prior to sending them to me including your major teacher's signature.

I hope this handbook answers any questions you may have. The responsibility for knowing the information contained here, as well as all school policies and procedures, rests with you.

I'd like to cultivate an environment here at MSM that is supportive, collegial, and professional, where we inspire each other to maximize our potential. Be the person that you would want to hire. Take initiative and be ambitious. Always remember that kindness should be prioritized, and learning is a never ending process that is the responsibility of both faculty and students. Let us work together to continue the tradition of excellence here at MSM in the brass department.

Consult with me or your major teacher with any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Ethan Bensdorf

APPLIED LESSONS

Your Teacher

This is one of your most important relationships while here at MSM. Many of you have come to MSM to study with a specific teacher—your teacher will be a crucial resource in helping you make career decisions, large and small. Issues may arise from time to time which need discussion and resolution. You are encouraged to discuss problems, as they occur, directly with your teacher. If there are unresolved issues, or you have the sense that you cannot discuss a given problem with your teacher, you should then address me or the Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance (jkane@msmnyc.edu).

You are entitled to and required to have fourteen one-hour private lessons with your major teacher during each semester you are enrolled. Some teachers give these lessons each week. Others teach at differing intervals because of various performance and/or teaching commitments. Make certain that you understand your teacher's lesson schedule plan. If you are concerned that you are not receiving the required number of lessons or have a problem with the frequency of your lessons, please notify the department chair.

Change of Teacher

Teacher assignments are made with great care and consideration for each student. Before considering a teacher change, students should speak with either the Department Chair, Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance, or Dean of Academic Affairs. Students may initiate the request as early as the preceding semester and no later than the end of the add/drop period of the term in which the change is to take place. Requests for teacher change will only be accepted through submission of the Change of Teacher Request Form available on the student portal. After a student changes teachers, the former teacher is excluded from grading the student at subsequent juries and auditions. In general, teacher assignments are subject to change based on teacher availability.

Split Lessons

MSM students are eligible to request having lessons split between two teachers. In order to split lessons between two teacher, they must first receive approval from their current teacher, requested teacher, Department Chair, and Division Dean. After receiving approval from all parties, students must submit a Split Lesson Request petition available on the student portal: my.msmnyc.edu/ICS/STUDENTS/. All students receiving split lessons must fill out the form each semester if they wish to continue splitting lessons.

Students may also request to split lessons between their major instrument and lessons in another division (e.g. classical trumpet and jazz trumpet). The student must receive approval from all parties before submitting the Split Lesson Request petition. Split lessons in an area other than the student's major instrument and division are only permitted one semester per year of study per earned degree, and students may not split lessons in their first semester of study. Students will only participate in juries in their major instrument/degree program and are upheld to the jury requirements as published in their major instrument/degree handbook.

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, in accordance with the faculty member's cancellation policy, the teacher will attempt to 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. Faculty must refer to the Office of the Provost and the Dean of Students any student who has two or more unexcused absences in his or her private lessons.

Limited Leave of Absence

A planned Limited Leave of Absence for personal or professional engagements may be requested through the Office of the Provost.

A Limited Leave of Absence for sudden family or personal situations may be requested through the Dean of Students. A limited leave of absence generally is not granted for a period more than two weeks per semester. 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.

The student remains registered for the semester and is responsible for all missed course work, exams, and juries, and for all fees associated with that semester.

Playing-related Pain

If you experience pain before, during, or after playing your instrument, discuss it immediately with your major teacher. If physical therapy or other help is needed, consult the Office of Student Affairs.

ENSEMBLE REQUIREMENTS

1. Large Ensembles

All Brass Department students must participate in Orchestra, Jazz Philharmonic, and/or Wind Ensemble every semester. For more information, please consult the Orchestra Handbook.

Placement auditions will take place behind a screen at the beginning of each semester, or at the end of the fall semester. A list of required excerpts will be emailed to each student. Students are required to take this audition. Any Brass Department student unable to attend the required audition must contact Hunter Lorelli, Large Ensembles Manager, at hlorelli@msmnyc.edu prior to the audition date.

2. Chamber Music

Undergraduate and graduate students are required to complete four semesters of chamber music. Professional Studies, Professional Performance Diploma, and Doctoral students may be assigned chamber music as well. 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 when the chamber music group assignments are made.

Cultural Inclusion Policy

The MSM Brass Department is committed to including underrepresented composers in its curriculum. We believe an educational environment must be rooted in Cultural Inclusion to achieve academic and artistic excellence. Manhattan School of Music is committed to creating an inclusive environment that permeates every aspect of our students' experience. Cultural Inclusion at MSM includes learning and understanding individual identities and differences of people who constitute our community. Cultural Inclusion also requires the study and performance of works by and creators from a diverse range of backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, able-ness, and/or sexual orientation.

Faculty and students share the responsibility of advancing MSM's commitment to Cultural Inclusion. All students are required to play pieces by underrepresented creators in recitals, and are strongly encouraged to play pieces by underrepresented creators in their juries. A sample list of underrepresented creators and pieces are listed at the end of this Handbook.

JURIES

Every enrolled student is required to take an annual Jury Examination, typically held in May. Students should be aware that the number of juries listed in the Department Major grids is the minimum needed to graduate. Some students may be required to take additional juries as a result of teacher requests, scholarship continuation, or the extension of the normal length of the degree program as the result of illness, leaves-of-absence, or other extraordinary circumstances. Students who are off-sequence as the result of being admitted in January or having taken a semester Leave of Absence take juries in December. There is a Sophomore Continuation Jury to ensure that a student's progress merits continuation in his or her program of study. The Office of the Registrar assigns jury days and times, and also emails jury comments to students two weeks after the end of the jury week.

Sophomore Continuation Jury

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.

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 must submit a Petition for Advanced Standing to the Registrar's Office. This petition must indicate the approval of the major teacher, the Brass Department Chair, and the Dean of Instrumental Studies and Orchestral Performance, and must be turned in no later than March 1st of the academic year in which the Advanced Jury is to take place.

Jury for Graduating Students

Graduating seniors are required to play a jury unless they are accepted into a higher degree program at MSM, in which case their jury is waived. Your senior recital does not take the place of your jury. Please note that OP students are not exempt from juries (please refer to the Orchestral Performance Handbook for details). All graduating students are required to play a piece by an underrepresented creator.

Professional Studies, Professional Performance Diploma, OP, and Doctor of Musical Arts

For PS students: May take a jury or perform a recital..

For PPD students: First year: Jury; Second year: Recital

For DMA and OP students: Please consult your department handbook for jury and recital instructions.

Jury Postponement

The Office of the Registrar will only consider a student petition requesting postponement of a jury in extreme medical conditions (documented by 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 dismissal from MSM. An approved postponed jury must be successfully completed no later than the first two weeks of the subsequent semester.

Jury Repertoire

Freshman Jury

Repertoire is determined by teacher and student. Repertoire used in your entrance exam should be avoided. You are required to study a work of an underrepresented composer. It is your choice of whether to present the work at your jury or to present it at another time. Juries are 10 minutes in length.

Sophomore Continuation Jury

Solo repertoire is determined by teacher and student plus 3-5 orchestral excerpts. Repertoire from your previous jury or entrance exam should be avoided. You are required to study a work of an underrepresented composer. It is your choice of whether to present the work at your jury or to present it at another time. Juries are 10 minutes in length.

All other Juries

A concerto or the like plus 5-8 orchestral excerpts, including a piece by an underrepresented composer. Repertoire from previous juries should be avoided. Juries are 10 minutes in length.

Accompanists for Juries

Accompanists are encouraged but not required. Payment for school accompanists for private lessons and juries is covered by the school. Early planning will avoid last-minute scheduling problems. Please refer to the appropriate policy to request an accompanist. Any extra rehearsal time is the student's responsibility. You are strongly encouraged to speak to your teacher at the beginning of the spring semester about acquiring a school accompanist.

BRASS PERFORMANCE CLASS

Trumpet class, Horn class, and Low Brass class will meet on Tuesday afternoons from 4–6pm. Attendance is mandatory for all Brass students and optional but encouraged for OP students. OP Students who wish to participate in Brass Performance Class must enroll for the class through the Office of the Registrar.

RECITALS

Scheduling Required Recitals

For Seniors and Master of Music Students: your graduation recital must take place within the last two semesters of major lessons. (This recital does not replace your jury.) A date for the recital must be applied for with the Scheduling Office. The recital program must be approved by the major teacher and the Brass Department Chair, and a copy of this program must be submitted in Canvas. All recital programs will need to include a work by an underrepresented composer. Further, the recital repertoire approval form, also available from the Scheduling Office, requires the approval and signatures of your teacher (implies that the student is ready to perform) and the Brass Department Chair (implies approval of the repertoire and programming). Students should be certain that the program is accurately written before submitting it for signatures. This approval form is to be filed with the Scheduling Office at least four weeks prior to the recital date.

Non-required Recitals

Students are encouraged to give recitals in non-graduating years. Consult with your teacher for approval. Most non-graduating recitals are given in the fall semester when recital space is less at a premium. Consult the Scheduling Office for a recital application.

Accompanists for recitals

Reimbursement for school accompanists for recitals is the student's responsibility. Payment to school accompanists for private lessons is covered by the school. Any extra rehearsal time is the student's responsibility.

Repertoire requirements:

All recital programs are required to include a work by an underrepresented composer. Underrepresented repertoire includes works by BIPOC, women, AAPI, Latinx, and LGBTQ+ creators. A list of recommended repertoire can be found on the Cultural Inclusion Initiative Resources site on the MSM website: <https://libraryguides.msmnyc.edu/az/cultural-inclusion>.

A few suggested pieces are listed below:

Trumpet:

Miles Per Hour by Regina Harris Baiocchi
Concerto for Trumpet by Lauren Bernofsky
So What by Miles Davis
Concerto for Trumpet and Orchestra by Vivian Fung
Incantations, No. 1 by Whitney George
The Crucifixion for Trumpet and piano by Charles Lloyd, Jr.
Stardust by Wynton Marsalis

Horn:

Preludes for Horn and Piano by Kenneth Amis
Four Elements by Ann Callaway
The Silent Flame for solo horn and orchestra by Ke-Chia Chen

Songs of the World by Andrea Clearfield
Imaginings by Dorothy Gates (commissioned by Michelle Baker)
Two Eggs Any Style by Kevin Newton (MSM alumni)
Fantasy for French horn by Elizabeth Raum
Sherwood Legend by Elizabeth Raum
Sonata for Horn and Piano by Jane Vignery
Suite for Horn and Piano by Billy Strayhorn
Silver Chants the Litanies by Augusta Read Thomas

Trombone:

Meditations of Sound and Light - Anthony Barfield
Red Sky by Anthony Barfield
Lamento by Elsa Barraine
Extremely Close by Daniela Candillari
Red Dragonfly Sonata for Trombone and Piano by Amy Riebs Mills
Concerto for Trombone and Orchestra by George Walker
Concerto for trombone and orchestra by Melinda Wagner

Bass trombone:

Variations for Bass Trombone by Sally Beamish
Extremely Close by Daniela Candillari
Scribbles (for 1 floppy fish) by Zoe Cutler
Put Me to Rest by Madeline A. Lee
Five Boys I Know by Gudrun Lund
A Quick Trip With Lots of Baggage by Inez McComas
Sonata for Bass Trombone by Alonso Malik
Pirio Concerto for Bass Trombone by Elizabeth Raum
Alternating Currants by Faye-Ellen Silverman
Concerto by Barbara York

Tuba:

Impromptu for Tuba and Piano by Cedric Adderley
Concerto for Tuba by Kenneth Amis
Concerto for Tuba and Orchestra (Wars and Rumors of War)
by Barbara York
Cutler, Zoe- Twenty Tricky Tunes
Day, Kevin- Metallic Figures: Concerto for Tuba
Higdon, Jennifer- Tuba Concerto
Raum, Elizabeth- Romance for Tuba and Piano
Salmonson, Hope- Considerations on a Moonlit Lake