Orchestral Ensembles at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music

The Orchestral Ensembles subject includes four large ensembles that are appropriate for different levels of individual performance ability:

The University of Melbourne Symphony Orchestra is the MCM’s leading orchestra. Every year there are four major public performances in prestigious Melbourne venues. The orchestra recently performed in Singapore and Shanghai and another tour to Asia is planned for 2020. Entrance is by audition, at the beginning of the year, and the finest orchestral musicians will be allocated seats in this ensemble. Rehearsals are spread over three weeks, before each performance (12 calls per program) and the orchestra is also involved in other projects, for example the launch of the Ian Potter Southbank Centre in 2019. Repertoire highlights for 2020 include Mahler’s Symphony No. 5 and Berlioz’s Symphony Fantastique.

The University of Melbourne Wind Symphony is the flagship wind ensemble of the Conservatorium. The ensemble includes auditioned undergraduate and postgraduate students from the Conservatorium and other Faculties of the University of Melbourne. This senior-level ensemble performs a range of contemporary works for wind ensemble as well as the cornerstone historic masterworks of the wind band genre. The Wind Symphony continues to promote the wind band as a large instrumental ensemble of legitimate artistic expression. The Wind Symphony performs four concerts in Melbourne venues in addition to regional centres, and will be looking to tour internationally in the future. The 2020 season highlights include Bach’s Toccata and Fugue in D minor, Ingolf Dahl’s Sinfonietta, and additional works by James Barnes, Jodie Blackshaw, and John Williams.

The MCM Philharmonic Orchestra, whilst essentially an in-depth training-ensemble, will also give three public performances throughout the year. In addition to concert-giving, there will be additional training sessions, including mock auditions and sectionals. The philosophy of the Philharmonic Orchestra is to encourage potentially gifted musicians to develop their ensemble skills with a view to joining the Symphony Orchestra or participating in Symphony Orchestra events during the year. Highlight’s for 2020 include a performance of Ravel’s Mother Goose Suite alongside a specially animated film, as well as performances of Beethoven’s 2nd and 8th symphonies. Entrance is by audition at the beginning of the year.

The MCM Concert Band of the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music consists of undergraduate Conservatorium members and breadth students from other Faculties of the University of Melbourne. The Concert Band rehearses twice a week and performs a range of standard repertoire for the wind ensemble genre and, like the Conservatorium’s Philharmonic Orchestra, aims for its participants to refine ensemble skills, elevate musicianship, and improve live performance quality. Composers featured in 2020 include Malcolm Arnold, Erika Svanoe, and Camille Saint Saëns. Entrance is by audition at the beginning of the year.

The Conservatorium also has separate subjects for Brass Ensemble, String Ensemble and Big Band. Please contact your Instrumental Head of Department for more information on other ensembles.