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 MCM’s flagship orchestra. Every year there are four major public performances in prestigious Melbourne venues. The orchestra also tours annually, either interstate or internationally, and recently toured to Singapore and Shanghai. Entrance is by audition, at the beginning of the year, and the finest musicians will be allocated seats in this ensemble. Rehearsals are spread over three weeks, before each performance (12 calls per program). Repertoire highlights for 2019 include Bartok’s Concerto for Orchestra, Sibelius Symphony No. 2, Brahms Symphony No. 1, and Berlioz’s Symphonie Fantastique.

The Philharmonic Orchestra, whilst essentially an in-depth training-ensemble, will give 2-3 performances throughout the year. In addition to concert-giving, the ensemble may also hold 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. The ensemble also may, on occasion, assists the training of aspiring conductors at MCM by providing valuable podium time for those conductors to practice their conducting gestures and rehearsal techniques. Entrance is by audition at the beginning of the year.

The Wind Symphony is the primary wind ensemble of the Conservatorium. It is for students whose interest and skills fall within the wind or brass family and consists of auditioned undergraduate and postgraduate students from the MCM and other Faculties of the University of Melbourne. This senior-level group performs a range of contemporary works for wind ensemble as well as the cornerstone historic works of the genre. It performs concerts in Melbourne and visits regional centres to provide workshops and share concerts. In recent years the Wind Symphony has visited Launceston, Bendigo, Geelong, Ballarat and Albury and will be looking to tour internationally in the future. Entrance is by audition and rehearsals take place once a week in Semester 1 and then twice a week from Semester 2.

The MCM Concert Band consists of undergraduate and breadth students from the MCM and other Faculties of the University of Melbourne. It rehearses and performs a range of standard repertoire works for the wind ensemble genre and, like the Philharmonic Orchestra, aims for its participants to develop ensemble skills and improve their performance technique. The ensemble, like the Philharmonic Orchestra, also assists the training of aspiring conductors at MCM by providing valuable podium time for those conductors to practice their conducting gestures and rehearsal techniques. The ensemble currently performs once a semester with rehearsals occurring once a week. Breadth students currently do not need to audition but do need to be an equivalent of AMEB Grade 7 or high grade for VCE Solo Performance.

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.

V1 Dec18