



2018-19 Season

What Makes Curtis Unique?

Curtis's disproportionate influence on musical life since its founding in 1924 can be traced to its unique approach to education and training.

Curtis limits enrollment to about 175 students. Curtis accepts just enough students to maintain a full symphony orchestra and an opera program, plus select programs in piano, guitar, composition, conducting, and organ, plus a string quartet in residence.

Low acceptance rate. Limited enrollment allows Curtis faculty to be extremely selective at auditions. With an average acceptance rate around 4 percent, Curtis is among the most selective schools in the United States, consistently ranked as among college-level institutions with the lowest acceptance rates by *U.S. News and World Report*. Its high standard of admissions ensures that students rehearse and perform alongside musical peers.

All Curtis students receive merit-based full-tuition scholarships. As a result, artistic promise is the only consideration for admission. Generous financial aid likewise ensures that no student accepted to Curtis will be unable to attend because of financial need.

All Curtis students receive personalized attention throughout their studies. Students receive personalized attention from an extraordinary faculty of around ninety top-tier musical artists and highly credentialed classroom teachers. Most students have access to multiple teachers on their major instrument. There are no teaching assistants at Curtis. Class sizes are small and curricula are tailored to the needs of individual students.

Curtis students “learn by doing.” All students are encouraged to perform frequently. Curtis students present more than 200 public performances each year to critical acclaim and enthusiastic audiences. The Curtis Opera Theatre offers four productions per season, casting all voice and opera students repeatedly. The Curtis Symphony Orchestra, in which all but the very youngest students of orchestral instruments participate, gives a three-concert season in Philadelphia's Verizon Hall and performs often in Carnegie Hall. All instrumental students participate in chamber music, and Curtis offers more than one hundred student recitals each season.

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Curtis's celebrated faculty includes a high proportion of successful performing musicians. Because their livelihood is not derived primarily from teaching, performance faculty members are free to accept students on merit alone. Their practical performing experience provides Curtis students with a direct link to life as a successful professional musician today.

Curtis's high standards attract remarkable visiting artists. Frequent master classes and residencies give students in all disciplines exposure to today's leading musical artists, some of whom participate in performances alongside students. Recent visiting artists include composer Unsuk Chin, violinist Miriam Fried with pianist and faculty member Jonathan Biss, cellist Gary Hoffman, the Borromeo and Johannes quartets, and contemporary music ensemble eighth blackbird. Well-known stage and music directors work with the Curtis Opera Theatre on fully staged productions every year to create fresh interpretations of standard repertoire and contemporary works. And ever since 1924, when Leopold Stokowski was instrumental in Curtis's founding, the school has enjoyed close ties with the music directors of the Philadelphia Orchestra. Philadelphia Orchestra Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin was named first mentor conductor of the school's new conducting program in the 2013–14 school year.

There is no minimum or maximum age to audition for Curtis. The majority of Curtis students are of college age. However because admissions are based solely on artistic promise, some students enter Curtis while in elementary or high school, while others come to Curtis after earning bachelor's or master's degrees elsewhere. Younger students receive training from the same teachers, at the same intensive levels, as do their older colleagues. The length of a student's stay is open-ended, and students graduate when their teachers decide they are ready. In most cases this occurs after three to five years at Curtis; it may be as few as two or as many as twelve years.

All keyboard, conducting, and composition students are lent grand pianos for use throughout their studies at Curtis. Curtis currently owns 104 Steinways.

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