Music Student Handbook 2020-21
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**Questions?** Contact the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities
[augdept@ualberta.ca](mailto:augdept@ualberta.ca)
# University Applied Music Program Schedule

## Fall Term 2020
- **Mon. Sep. 14 @ 7:00 PM**: UAMP Student Meeting, Students schedule lessons with instructor/s
- **Mon. Sep. 21 - Fri. Sep. 25**: Fall-term lessons begin
- **Wed. Sep. 30**: Last day to add/drop lessons *for credit*
- **Mon. Oct. 5**: Practice Room Sign-Up Sheets posted outside practice rooms - 8:15 am
- **Mon. Oct. 12**: Thanksgiving — no lessons offered
- **Mon. Nov. 9 - Fri. Nov. 13**: Fall Break — no lessons offered
- **Wed. Dec. 9**: Last day of Fall-term university classes
- **Thur. Dec. 10 - Fri. Dec. 11**: Possible make-up lessons, juries (prior to final exams)

## Winter Term 2021
- **Mon. Feb. 1**: New Practice Room Sign-Up Sheets posted outside practice rooms - 8:15 a.m.
- **Wed. Feb. 3**: Last day to add/drop lessons *for credit* as a full-year/winter course
- **Mon. Feb. 15**: Family Day Holiday - no lessons offered
- **Mon.–Fri., Mar. 1-5**: Winter Break — no lessons offered
- **Friday, April 2**: Good Friday— no lessons offered
- **Monday, April 5**: Easter Monday —no lessons offered
- **Monday, April 19**: Last day of Winter-term university classes
- **Tues - Thurs., Apr. 21, 22**: Possible make-up lessons, juries (prior to final exams)

## Number of Available Teaching Days, 2020-21
(students entitled to 22 scheduled lessons)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mon</th>
<th>Tue</th>
<th>Wed</th>
<th>Thur</th>
<th>Fri</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fall Term</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Term</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Students and teachers must organize lesson schedules to satisfy the 11-lesson requirement.*
Applied Music Lessons

Lessons are taught once a week in the Fall and Winter 11-week terms.

- Student attendance is a factor in determining final marks. Four (4) **unexcused** absences from your lessons will result in an automatic cancellation of the remaining lessons in your music performance course and you will be assigned a failing mark in the course.

- If you are unable to attend a lesson, inform your instructor, ideally at least 24 hours ahead of time.

- If the reason for absence is not acceptable, instructors are not obliged to provide make-up lessons.

- In the event that an instructor is unable to teach, you will be notified.

- If you wish to withdraw from your lessons, please contact your instructor, the Fine Arts & Humanities Department ([augdept@ualberta.ca](mailto:augdept@ualberta.ca)), and your student advisor.

- All add/drop deadlines apply.

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During the COVID-19 pandemic, university music programs around the world have elected to provide hybrid models to instruction.

**Fall 2020 Lesson Format**

- Private lessons for piano and strings (including guitar) will be delivered in-person or in online formats; voice and wind instrument lessons will be delivered online.

- You will be notified in November 2020 as to the mode in which Winter Term lessons will be delivered.
Practice Room Protocols

There are nine practice rooms available at Augustana, located on the lower level of the Faith and Life building.

KEYS - Practice room keys can be requested through the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities (augdept@ualberta.ca). Upon receipt of your key, you will receive a punch code for entrance to the building when locked. Keys must be returned to Facilities and Operations at the end of the academic year. A charge will be applied to your Augustana account for each unreturned key.

BOOKING - Practice rooms are available to all students registered in the University Applied Music Program (UAMP) with the following maximum booked practice times per day:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson Length</th>
<th>Maximum per day</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 hour</td>
<td>150 minutes</td>
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<tr>
<td>¾ hour</td>
<td>90 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>½ hour</td>
<td>60 minutes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensemble</td>
<td>additional 60 minutes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Practice rooms are available on weekends/holidays and prior to 8:00 a.m. and after 9:00 p.m. weekdays on a first-come-first-served basis.

- To reserve guaranteed practice time between 8:00 am and 9:00 pm, Sign Up timetables will be sent to you via Google Forms the first Monday after lessons begin.

NOTE: The grand piano practice rooms are reserved for advanced piano students.

ETIQUETTE - Practice rooms are shared spaces and the following rules of etiquette should be observed:

- Activities in practice rooms should be limited to those which are practice-related (they are not intended for use as study carrels)
● As pianos are expensive instruments to replace and maintain, food/beverages other than water bottles are not permitted in practice rooms. Water bottles should be placed on a table or floor; NEVER on top of a piano.

● Students leaving the practice room for more than 15 minutes are asked to remove their belongings and allow others to practice.

● If you are not in the practice room 10 minutes after the start time listed on the timetable, your time will be forfeited.

● Please only post notices on the bulletin boards provided.

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**COVID-19 Practice Room Protocols (2020/21)**

**Health Check:** Use the COVID-19 Alberta Health Daily Checklist. If you are feeling sick, stay home and follow Alberta Health Services advice.

**Stay Informed:** Visit [ualberta.ca/covid-19](https://ualberta.ca/covid-19) regularly to learn what resources or safety protocols apply to you.

**Practice Good Hygiene:** Wash or sanitize your hands before entering the Practice Rooms and after leaving. Sanitizer will be provided on site.

**Ensure a Clean Space:** wipe down touch surfaces (doorknobs, chair, stand, piano keyboard) with the approved wipes provided in each room both upon entry and exit.

**Keep Your Distance:** Stay at least 2 metres (about the length of a hockey stick) from others.

**Wear a Mask:** Face masks are mandatory in all common areas and everywhere 2 metre distancing is not possible (i.e. in the hallways outside the Practice Rooms).

**Voice and Wind Instruments:** Students studying these instruments will be assigned designated practice rooms. Breaks between practice sessions will be built into the schedule in order to ensure clearing of aerosol particles and adequate ventilation.
Recital Attendance Requirement Events (RAREs)

To be a successful musician, it is essential to develop excellent listening skills and to become familiar with a wide variety of musical literature, principal eras, genres and cultural sources. Under normal circumstances, Bachelor of Music students and B.A. Music majors are required to attend a minimum of ten (10) recitals or concerts per year. A recital or concert, for these purposes, must be at least forty-five (45) minutes in duration and are designated R.A.R.E. (Recital Attendance Requirement Event).

Attendance credit is given for all official Augustana student recitals, faculty and guest artist recitals, and ensemble concerts. Attendance credit is not given for a recital in which you participate or which represents a non-Augustana sponsored event.

To receive credit for attendance, enter your name and the name of the event, the date and time you arrived in the attendance binder (R.A.R.E. books) when you enter the concert venue. Only when you leave should you indicate the time out and provide your signature. Attendance signatures are not accepted at any time other than at the end of the concert. You must arrive on time and remain for the entire performance to receive attendance credit.

[Unless special arrangement has been made, any violation of the above procedure will be considered to be inappropriate academic behaviour and will result in disciplinary action.]

Note: A student in arrears of the minimum ten (10) recitals/concerts per year must make them up the following year (in addition to claiming the ten (10) required for that year). A student in arrears for a 2nd consecutive year may be asked to leave the music program in which they are currently enrolled.

COVID-19 RARE Protocols (2020/21)

Students will be provided with diverse possibilities for R.A.R.E. events in virtual formats throughout the academic year. Stay informed for regular updates.
Juries

A jury is a solo performance for a panel of musicians/instructors which serves as part of the evaluation of your progress in your applied music studies.

- All University Applied Music Program (UAMP) applied music students are expected to perform a jury. Any student missing a jury without a legitimate documented excuse will automatically receive a failing grade in the course. *[In exceptional circumstances you may be exempted from a jury at the discretion of your instructor.]*

- First year applied music students are exempt from December juries and perform at the end of academic year. Returning students must perform a jury at the end of each term.

- Under normal circumstances, juries take place between the last day of classes and the first day of exams in any given term. Check the Applied Music Program Schedule in the Music Handbook for general jury dates. After the middle of term, you will be notified as to specific dates and times.

- The UAMP will pay for jury accompanists twice during the academic year.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVID-19 Jury Protocols (2020/21)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juries (In-Person)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Required juries will take place in the UofA Augustana chapel.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Juries will be evaluated either in-person (piano, guitar, violin) or through video recorded versions (voice &amp; winds).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Aside from the accompanist, no audience can be present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Juries (Remote)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In remote contexts, juries will be recorded.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The performance must be recorded in one take on a USB file; files must be shared with your instructor via a private YouTube channel, DropBox, or other platform.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Designated accompanists will be asked to record accompaniments as needed. These will be shared with you for practice and recording purposes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Information regarding recording formats and requirements will be shared by your instructor.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Recitals & Performance Opportunities

Several opportunities for performance will be provided throughout the academic year in the form of in-person or online studio recitals and music area sponsored performances. You are invited to take advantage of these opportunities, as a performer, listener and/or assistant.

- Solos recitals are a required means of evaluation for all Bachelor of Music performance majors enrolled in AUMUS 397/497. All solo recitals should be prefaced by a dress rehearsal.

- UAMP recitals will be held in the Faith and Life Centre Chapel.

- Group lessons or repertoire class performance opportunities are determined by each individual studio instructor. Accompanists for these events will be paid for by the UAMP.

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<td>- Aside from the accompanist, no audience can be present.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- In-Person recitals may be live-streamed</td>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Recitals (Remote)</strong></th>
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<td>- In remote contexts, recitals will be recorded.</td>
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<tr>
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BOOKING YOUR RECITAL: Booking for recitals and dress rehearsals is organized via your instructor and the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities Office (augdept@ualberta.ca). Completed application forms (link below) must be received a minimum of 1 month prior to the proposed event.

STUDENT RECITAL APPLICATION FORM

POSTERS: Posters and programs will be designed by students and are NOT supplied by the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities. Posters should be prepared at least 10 days before your recital.

Poster information should include:
- “The Department of Fine Arts & Humanities of the University of Alberta presents…”
- Your name and instrument
- Names of assisting musicians with their respective instrument
- Date, time and location of recital
- UofA Augustana logo (supplied by the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities (augdept@ualberta.ca)
- RARE designation

SAMPLE POSTER
**RECITAL PROGRAM:** You are required to prepare and print your own program or PowerPoint Slides.

Program content should include:
- your name and instrument
- the name of any assisting musicians with their respective instruments
- what kind of recital [“Third-year Student Recital” or “Graduating Student Recital” - for BMus piano or voice majors; “Student Recital” for non-compulsory or 1st or 2nd year recitals]
- date, time, location of recital (include University of Alberta, Augustana Campus, Camrose, AB)
- your repertoire and historical background, including origin (if part of a larger work), the composer (and arranger, if applicable), and composer dates [Acquire full title, composition and composer dates from sources such as Oxford Music Online or in the reference section of library.]
- indicate intermission, if applicable.
- translations (for vocalists and if desired)
- program notes (if required)

*Your instructor must thoroughly proof-read your slides or program before printing.*

**SAMPLE PROGRAM**

The Department of Fine Arts and Humanities of The University of Alberta presents

**Chantel Schultz,** voice

with **Roger Admiral,** piano

Wednesday, April 8, 2020, at 7:30 p.m.

Faith and Life Chapel, Augustana Campus, Camrose, Alberta, Canada
Program

Smanie implacabili, from Così fan tutte................................. W. A. Mozart
(1756-1791)

Sechs Deutsche Lieder, Op. 103......................................... Louis Spohr
(1784-1859)
Sei still mein Herz
Zwiegesang
Sehnsucht
Weigenlied
Das heimliche Lied

Intermission

Four pieces from the Italienisches Liederbuch ..................... Hugo Wolf
(1860-1903)
  Auch kleine Dinge
  Du denkst mit einem Fädchen
  Wie lange schon war immer mein Verlangen
  Ich hab’ in Penna einen Liebsten wohnen

Nuit d’étoiles............................................................... Claude Debussy
(1862-1918)
Beau Soir

Hark! The Echoing Air.................................................. Henry Purcell
(1659-1695)

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the Bachelor of Music (Vocal Performance Major) degree.

AUDIO or VIDEO RECORDING: Audio & video recordings of student recitals
are mandatory. Recitals can be recorded on recording equipment available in the
chapel on a USB memory stick (minimum 16 gigs) provided by each student.
Consult with your instructor regarding appropriate USB quality.

STAGE MANAGER: Secure a Stage Manager responsible for proper set-up and
front of house duties.
• Unlock main doors to the Faith & Life Centre approximately 45 minutes prior to the concert; dim lights appropriately, switch off font and chapel fans.

• Signal audience to return after the intermission.

• The Stage Manager should record the recital.

• Ensure proper clean-up after the recital (gather programs, trash, other debris; tidy sacristy; lock up and cover the Steinway; switch on the font and fans; lock all Faith & Life doors and the sacristy once audience has left).

**CHOOSING A HEAD Usher:** Head Ushers are responsible for handing out programs, monitoring the RARE books, and maintaining proper concert decorum in the lounge-and-chapel area.

• The Head Usher arrives 30 minutes prior to the concert and remains at the door throughout the concert, allowing people to enter and be seated only during applause breaks (i.e., between works, not between movements).

• Because of traffic passing through the lounge area, the Head Usher may be required to silence disruptive individuals and activities.

**ACCOMPANISTS:** It is your responsibility to pay an accompanist if one is needed. Your instructor will assist.

**CHAPEL SET-UP:** The Chapel may need to be prepared for the recital. All arrangements should be kept simple with a minimum of chair movement from usual chapel settings.

**RECEPTIONS:** Receptions are neither required nor expected and the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities does not provide them. Details for receptions are entirely the responsibility of the performer in question.
Student Recital Checklist

PRIOR TO RECITAL:

☐ Facilities and chapel setting instructions - book early early in the academic year and confirm with the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities (FAH)
☐ Food services request - submit minimum of 2 weeks prior to recital. [If applicable]
☐ Concert Program / Power Point slides - proofread by instructor and printed (responsibility of recitalist).
☐ Posters (vet with FAH completed/posted (responsibility of recitalist). Ideally, posters should be up for at least 10 days.
☐ Bring memory stick for recording concert and alert Stage Manager to this responsibility.
☐ Recital "Quiet" signs, programs, and appropriate keys picked up from Department of Fine Arts & Humanities
☐ Faith and Life Main Doors - unlock 45 minutes before recital begins
☐ Tape up door latches with duct/electrical tape to ensure no extraneous noise during performance.
☐ Turn off font and chapel fans before concert starts (Stage Manager duties).

AFTER RECITAL:

☐ Programs and debris collected in chapel and chapel lounge.
☐ Recording equipment and USB sticks collected.
☐ All Faith and Life doors locked (front and side).
☐ Piano locked/covered; piano and/or organ key replaced in sacristy.
☐ Sacristy left tidy and all personal items removed....lock sacristy!
☐ Refreshments cleared away and equipment taken back to cafeteria door, any tables that were used cleaned and replaced to original location.
☐ Font and chapel fans turned back on.
☐ Chapel lights and lounge lights extinguished before leaving.
☐ All keys, signs, etc. received from the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities returned the next working day.
1. Use of the Steinway 9-foot model D concert grand piano is restricted as such:

   *For recital purposes; recitals and master classes for piano performance majors; piano faculty; guest pianists sponsored by the university; vocal classes, instrumental master classes and most recitals; choral concerts and rehearsals; campus ministry events and services; public rentals and the like.*

2. Only individuals who have permission from the Music division (contact the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities at augdept@ualberta.ca) may make use of this instrument. (Campus Ministry for worship purposes, Conference Services in the summer.)

3. When taking off the cover, make sure to lift the cover up and remove it without dragging it across the body of the piano as this may damage the
finish. **Please do not place cover on the floor.** If the cover is dirty, please place a clean cotton sheet over the piano before replacing the cover.

4. The instrument should remain locked and covered at all times unless it is being used for recital or rehearsal purposes.

5. The piano should **never** be moved out of the Chapel unless express permission has been given by the Music Division. Contact the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities at augdept@ualberta.ca.

6. Please avoid placing anything on the piano, with the exceptions of music on the music shelf and the cover. Setting anything on the piano can damage the finish. **Food and beverages are not permitted near the Steinway.**

7. If there is any problem or concern with the performance of this instrument, please contact the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities at augdept@ualberta.ca. The piano is serviced only by Jim Hough of Camrose Piano and Organ or by another technician under his direct supervision. Under no circumstances should an unauthorized individual service the piano.

8. Only advanced performance students preparing for any university public performances and/or juries may book practice time one to two weeks prior to the performance or jury date. Student bookings are done through the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities (augdept@ualberta.ca).

9. The piano should NOT be cleaned by anyone without the permission and supervision of the Music Division (contact the Department of Fine Arts & Humanities at augdept@ualberta.ca). This instrument requires rigid cleaning guidelines so that the finish is not damaged. A slightly damp soft cloth, a tiny amount of vinegar, are the only items needed. Rubbing should take place in long strokes with the grain of the finish (which is to say long strokes along the length of the piano).
Hello, students! We hope you have had a good summer despite the challenging times we live in. This letter comes to you from instructors and staff that has been working this summer to collect and review various technology options for the different kinds of courses you will be taking in the coming academic year.

Your instructors will have software and hardware solutions that will help them give you the best experience possible for classes, lessons, or rehearsals. This document will give you an idea of what you will need for online lessons. On this page we summarize your software needs; hardware recommendations start on p. 2.

Software: Zoom, Cleanfeed, & WeVu

It is recommended that instructors use a combination of Zoom and Cleanfeed for teaching online lessons. Zoom provides the video, but Cleanfeed is necessary for clear, undistorted reproduction of the sounds you produce with your instrument or singing voice.

1. **Zoom:** If you haven’t used Zoom before, you can sign up for a free account here: [https://zoom.us](https://zoom.us). If you are new to U of A, many of your courses will require Zoom so be sure to sign up for an account before the term starts.

2. **Cleanfeed:** You can download Cleanfeed for free at [https://cleanfeed.net/](https://cleanfeed.net/). You will need the Chrome browser to use this program, so if you don’t already have it then you can download it here: [https://www.google.ca/intl/en_ca/chrome/](https://www.google.ca/intl/en_ca/chrome/).

3. **WeVu:** Some instructors and ensemble directors may use a program called WeVu. You can read about how WeVu is useful for music instruction here, but **don’t sign up until your instructor or director has provided you with their course code.** [https://wevu.video/wevu-music-cases/](https://wevu.video/wevu-music-cases/)
Hardware: Computers, Microphones, Speakers, Headphones, Cameras, Keyboards

Below, we provide recommendations on hardware that you may need to purchase for best results in your lessons. However, you may already have equipment that will work perfectly well, so if whatever equipment you already own isn’t listed below, don’t feel you have to rush out and spend money on something new. You may want to try out what you have first, and then if it doesn’t work as well as you and your teacher would like, you can order whatever upgraded equipment you can afford.

1. **Desktop/Laptop Computers:** The software we have listed above works best when you are using a laptop or desktop computer. If you already have a laptop or desktop you can use, great. If you don’t have one and can’t afford to buy one right now, don’t worry--it will still be possible to have online lessons but the sound quality may not be perfect.

2. **Microphones:** Although it’s possible for your instructors to hear you sing or play your instrument over Zoom and Cleanfeed using the built-in mics of a computer, the quality of the sound will be substantially better if you can use an external microphone during lessons. Most USB mics will offer an improvement in sound. They are relatively inexpensive, convenient and usually simple to set up since they plug directly into the computing device.

   We provide a table of suggestions for mics in Appendix 1 (p. 10). You do not need to purchase an expensive, studio-grade mic; in fact, if you will be playing or singing in a small room during online lessons, professional-level mics may be too sensitive.

3. **Speakers & Headphones:** For listening, the best solution might be to have both headphones and speakers, for adaptability in different situations. Many students already have headphones or earbuds that will work perfectly well. Most laptops or computer monitors have built-in speakers but some of these can be inadequate in terms of sound quality.

   For applied instrument lessons, you will likely need headphones of some type. Audio clarity will be much better when using headphones with web-based communication applications such as Zoom and Skype. If Cleanfeed is used, headphones are required. You can find specific suggestions in Appendix 2 (p. 11).

   Speakers are a nice alternative for meetings or classes, providing a comfort break from wearing headphones. Speakers can be adequate in some lesson situations, and do allow you to sing or play without having to manage headphones. External speakers designed for computers (as opposed to speakers built into laptops or computer monitor screens) are often inexpensive and generally adequate in sound quality and volume capability.
See FAQs and Tips below for more information about microphones, headphones and speakers. Your instructors may provide more information specific to certain courses.

4. **Cameras:** Most recent model laptops, and certainly smartphones, will include an integrated camera that can be used for meetings, lessons, etc. If you are using a desktop computer, a camera might not be included. There are many options for external USB cameras. See our suggestions in Appendix 3 (p. 12).

5. **Keyboards:** If you do not have a keyboard at home you may need some kind of keyboard instrument on which to practice and perform your lessons and tests with your instructor. Your instructor will be able to tell you specifics such as whether you need a full, 88-key instrument or something smaller will do, whether it matters if you have an acoustic or digital keyboard, whether your instrument should have weighted action (which allows students to play with dynamic variation), or whether your keyboard needs to be MIDI-compatible. You can find a table of options at a range of prices in Appendix 4 (p. 13).

You may be able to find lower prices on Amazon, Costco, or various internet sites. However, demand may be high so be sure to check availability before you order, and if you do opt to order keyboards online, remember to also consider the costs of GST, shipping, and any cross-border duties if you’re ordering from outside Canada.

**Other Considerations**

Regardless of what equipment you use, here are some basic points to keep in mind:

- As you have no doubt learned through experience, the speed and reliability of your WIFI network will directly affect your online education experience. If possible, using a hard-wired ethernet cable connection to your home internet router can make a big difference.

- Consider arranging for a test recording/Zoom session with a friend, family member, or technician to work out the bugs in advance of precious lesson times. Things to consider:
  
  o If you aren’t satisfied with the sound or image quality, try adjusting your microphone/camera position. Also consider your position in relation to windows or lighting (for example, if you are in front of a window you won’t be seen clearly).

  o Test your dynamic range. That is, when you play or sing at your softest dynamic level, can the person on the other end hear you? When you play at your loudest volume, is the sound distorted? Remember to test how your
speaking voice is heard on the other end as well. If the sound is distorted, try adjusting the placement or settings on your mic.

- **IMPORTANT!** When considering any equipment purchase, remember to carefully check the compatibility between devices to make sure they will work with your operating system.

**FAQs and Tips**

**Can I just use the built-in microphone and speaker of my computer/tablet/smartphone for applied instrument lessons?**

Yes, technically it is possible, but it will likely not be ideal. There are subtle aspects of the sounds produced by you or your instructor that might be harder to discern clearly if using relatively low quality built-in microphones and speakers. Making improvements to monitoring (headphones vs. speakers) first, as well as the microphone, will likely significantly improve the teaching and learning experience.

Note: The choice of software platforms and their settings are also factors affecting sound quality.

**Do I really need to buy equipment? If so, how can I be sure that I make the right purchase?**

The whole purpose of this document is to bring awareness of methods and possible equipment to optimize the online teaching and learning challenges of music instruction. Equipment purchases are a part of *possible* solutions.

It is difficult to predict whether or not devices with certain features will be a good fit for your particular needs.

Local vendors, such as Long & McQuade, Memory Express, London Drugs, Best Buy, who all have good return policies are a better approach than buying via Amazon and similar online vendors. Long & McQuade, in particular, is a highly recommended vendor as the staff are usually very knowledgeable about equipment for musicians.
The reality for Fall term 2020 will be that many items will be on backorder. In some cases, making do with what one has on hand may be the only choice. **Wait! What was that?**  
**Note:** Many students already own Zoom Handy Recorders or similar devices. Many of these can be configured as decent quality USB microphones and/or cameras - see below.

Spending more does not necessarily equate to better sound or utility. If you’re thinking that a better microphone or camera or other device is a worthwhile pursuit, we recommend doing research beyond what is presented here. If a purchase is made, ensure that you test it out thoroughly. Preserve the original packaging, as you might need to return it.

**What’s the best position for my microphone?**

Generally, for conversation, your voice will be clearer if you are 10-20 cm from the microphone. Depending upon your instrument, you can increase this distance to about a meter in a typical small room, or slightly more if the ergonomics of playing are a factor. Greater distances are employed in recording situations in order to capture the characteristics of acoustics and how the instruments blend in the room; this approach **doesn’t** apply to a single instrument in a small room, picked up for the purpose of internet communications. The type of microphone is also a factor, but the basic principles are the same: proper microphone proximity and proper input level.

If your distance to the microphone with your instrument is within 1 meter, it will be easier to “lean in” for conversation.

If you are using video as well, consider your camera and microphone positions in relation to where you typically will be positioned for best audio pickup.

Thorough testing before the first lesson is essential.

**How do I adjust my microphone input level?**

First, determine the range of physical proximity to your microphone. See above for mic positioning.

Second, adjust the input level of your microphone so that it does not overload when you speak or play your instrument loudly within your determined physical zone. If there is a physical input level control, such as on a USB microphone, adjust this first (with computer
input level at maximum). Further adjustment if necessary can be made in the audio settings of your computer, or within your communications software (Zoom communications, etc.)

Test your input level with a friend over the internet. Alternatively, test the range of your instrument and/or voice by making a brief recording using Audacity or other recording software. Be aware that computer speakers or earbuds can distort easily. Listen back at a low level. Digital overload is obvious—-if you hear a buzzy or raspy characteristic during the loud moments, try reducing your microphone input level and test again.

**My input level is set correctly, but the sound quality during applied instrument lessons over Zoom is poor/distorted/inconsistent/cutting off, etc. How do I improve this?**

First of all, it is usually better to use *headphones*, as this will isolate what you hear from what goes into your microphone. Zoom and other programs, by necessity, dynamically employ “echo cancellation” to reduce or eliminate the effects of a feedback loop from your speakers back into your microphone. The integrity of the audio signal may be adversely affected in the process. The use of headphones greatly reduces or eliminates the need for the software to manipulate the signal.

Cleanfeed web-based communication software is completely free of such processing, and thus requires the use of headphones. See the section on Cleanfeed for more information.

Other factors are the quality of your internet connection, the condition/age of your computing device, etc.

**My instructor and I can hear each other’s instruments just fine, but conversation is hard to hear. How can this be improved?**

Quite simply, you might need to move closer to your microphone when speaking vs. when playing your instrument, and possibly speak louder and clearer. See the points above regarding microphone placement and input level setting.

**I have an electronic keyboard. How do I include this along with my microphone?**

The simplest approach is to use the built-in speakers of the keyboard, or connect the keyboard output to an external amplifier. In some cases an external bluetooth speaker is supported. Optimize the balance between your voice and the keyboard as both are captured by your one microphone.
Can I use a Zoom Handy recorder as a USB microphone?

The microphones of a Zoom handheld audio or video recorder (such as the H4n, Q2HD, Q2n 4k, and others) are likely of better quality and flexibility than the built-in microphone of a laptop computer. Each of these devices, and likely many other similar devices from other manufacturers can function as a USB interface for a windows or mac computer. By extension the recorder’s built-in mics, or plugged in external mic(s) then become USB mics. Setup details can be found in the manuals, downloadable from manufacturer websites.

My external USB microphone or USB camera/microphone does not provide direct audio monitoring. How can I hear myself better through headphones during applied instrument lessons?

In this case, closed-back or sealed headphones do not work well. Choose an open-back design which allows external sound to reach your ears, blending with the sound from the computer. Or use earbuds that don’t seal out external sound. Optionally, remove the headphones when you play your instrument, or wear only one side of the headphones.

USB Microphones: General Notes

Better USB microphones include a headphone output on the casing of the microphone which allows you to more clearly hear your own voice or instrument in real time while wearing headphones. As well, the headphone output of a USB mic will include the computer sound, such as that of instructors or meeting participants.

This also applies to devices configured as a USB mic, such as the portable recorders noted above.

Some camera devices with good mics, such as the Zoom Q2n-4k, provide direct monitoring of audio when the device is configured as a USB mic, but not when used as a USB webcam.

When connected, the USB microphone and its integrated headphone output should be set as the default input and output devices for your computer.

Software platforms such as Zoom Communications and Cleanfeed should automatically choose the system default input and output, although you might still need to specify these as the input and output devices within Zoom, Cleanfeed, etc.
**Zoom optimization**

If you are using Zoom for instrumental lessons, the “Original Sound” setting is recommended; this minimizes audio treatments that can sometimes distort the audio quality of instruments, and impede two-way conversation somewhat.

If you’re using a microphone with a stereo pattern, such as Blue Yeti, M-Audio Uber, or the stereo microphones of a portable recording device, *stereo sound* can be enabled in Settings/Audio of the Zoom client software. Stereo sound can provide a more realistic image of voice/instrument, especially when the listener is using headphones. As it uses more bandwidth, stereo sound is not ideal for meetings or lectures.

See instructions on the Zoom communications website regarding how to make these settings. Note that if you make a change to your input devices, the Original Sound might revert back to non-original (treated) status.

**Fine adjustments: sample rate matching, latency compensation**

In some cases there’s a mismatch between the digital sample rates of a USB microphone or similar device and the sample rate of the host computing device. You’ll hear what sounds like radio static or a steady clicking sound when monitoring your microphone input. Consult the manual of your USB device.

If you’re involved in a recording project that uses software such as Reaper, Cubase, ProTools, Logic, or programs such as OhmStudio, the device latency of a USB mic might cause a timing discrepancy between existing content and the recording that you add to it. There are often ways to compensate for this via adjustments in the application software. Consult manuals or other resources such as YouTube for workarounds that apply to your setup.

**How can I improve my internet connection?**

- If possible, plug your computing device directly into your internet router via an ethernet cable, vs. using wireless.
- If roommates or family members are concurrently active with online gaming, movie streaming, etc., this might adversely affect your personal bandwidth - negotiate?
- Consider turning off video streaming and participating with audio only.
- The Stereo Sound setting in Zoom Communications is nice to use, but it requires more bandwidth. (See Zoom optimization above). Disabling Stereo Sound won’t change the audio quality drastically, but it might improve communication stability.
- Ensure your computer’s CPU is not bogged down with other processes or programs.
I need more specific help!

Please contact Augustana's Technology and Learning Services if you have more specific questions: tls@ualberta.ca
### APPENDIX 1. MICROPHONES.

**NOTE:** The **SPECIFIC PRODUCTS** listed in this document are only examples, based on what we’ve actually tested or read about. There are many similar devices on the market, so as long as you have fully assessed your needs and you know a product provides all the necessary features, it should be fine.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EQUIPMENT / SPECIFIC PRODUCTS</th>
<th>IMPORTANT FEATURES / NOTES</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Microphone: built-in to the computing device</td>
<td>Simple solution Nothing to connect Zero or low extra cost Sometimes simple is good enough!</td>
<td>Usually lowest audio quality Least flexible for placement Least flexible for routing of audio signals Supports only very basic audio recording</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External USB mics: M-Audio Uber USB microphone ($150) Blue Yeti USB microphone ($200 - $400)</td>
<td>Both of these are selectable multi-pattern, including stereo capture Integrated headphone output, provides direct monitoring so that you can hear yourself along with audio from the computer Physical controls for mic level and headphone level</td>
<td>Better audio capture than a built-in mic Somewhat more flexible for mic placement No external audio interface is required</td>
<td>USB cables can be short, therefore reducing placement options A separate camera is still needed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB microphone: Blue Snowball not tested by us</td>
<td>Not expensive Simple to use Likely decent audio quality</td>
<td>No direct monitoring option. Device latency will be apparent (a slight delay) if monitoring through computer attached headphones.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USB microphone: Shure MV88 microphone</td>
<td>Designed to pair with Apple iOS or Android phones. Kit includes a mount for a smartphone (as the video capture device). An optional USB-A cable is needed for Windows computer. Headphones can be directly attached for direct monitoring.</td>
<td>Reviews are good.</td>
<td>Possible drawbacks of using a tiny smartphone screen, in comparison to using a computer.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 2. HEADPHONES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EQUIPMENT / SPECIFIC PRODUCTS</th>
<th>IMPORTANT FEATURES / NOTES</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Headphones: Audio Technica ATH-M50x (~$200) Tested by us</td>
<td>Closed-back design - isolates from external sounds</td>
<td>Good sounding headphones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Headphones: Beyerdynamic DT990 ($300)</td>
<td>Open-back design - allows some sound from the room, such as an instrument being played, to blend with the audio from the computer.</td>
<td>Good sounding headphones</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>various earbuds</td>
<td>Inherently usually an open design</td>
<td>Inexpensive</td>
<td>Might lack clarity, range or isolation for a focused session</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless earbuds: iQ Podz (~$40) Tested by a friend</td>
<td>Bluetooth Somewhat open design Comfortable and secure ear mount</td>
<td>inexpensive No cables Very reliable connection in one ongoing test</td>
<td>Lasts only 2.5 hours before needing a recharge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wireless / wired noise-cancelling headphones Sony Noise Cancelling Headphones WH1000XM3 (~$450) Previous model tested by us</td>
<td>Bluetooth, or plug-in Noise-cancelling, with ambient sound option Latest model has a built-in mic for speaking (not tested)</td>
<td>Good sound and isolation and decent ambient sound feed No cables if via Bluetooth</td>
<td>Expensive This type of headphone possibly not ideal for applied music teaching</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 3. CAMERAS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TYPE OF EQUIPMENT / SPECIFIC PRODUCTS</th>
<th>IMPORTANT FEATURES / NOTES</th>
<th>PROS</th>
<th>CONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zoom Q2n 4K Handy Video Recorder (~$300) Tested by us</td>
<td>Functions as a live webcam with stereo audio capture on most platforms.</td>
<td>Excellent image and audio capture. Has a physical microphone level control on the side of the unit. Small and lightweight, and mounts easily on a camera tripod or a flat surface. Can serve as a flexible good quality webcam with good stereo audio (see note at right regarding direct audio monitoring) Also is a good standalone video recorder, capturing audio and video onto a micro-SD card.</td>
<td>mic and camera together means less flexibility for separate placement, however the video lens field of vision is adjustable (digitally), and allows the camera to be placed near the subject, putting the forward facing stereo microphone ports in good proximity to the sound source. Direct audio monitoring is only available when configured as a USB mic, not as a USB camera</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative Labs Live! Cam (~$70) Not tested by us</td>
<td>Typical external USB webcam - there are many like this, but availability might be a challenge.</td>
<td>Cameras such as this one include microphones that might be of reasonable quality. Look for reviews, and if you purchase, make sure you can return it.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX 4. KEYBOARDS

Note: Many of these keyboards were on sale earlier in the summer. We’ve listed the regular prices since the sale prices may no longer be valid, but if you’re interested in a keyboard but worried about the cost, it’s worth checking with the store to see if it’s on sale.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Make/Model</th>
<th>Long &amp; McQuade Price</th>
<th>Piano Centre Price</th>
<th>Giovanni’s Music Price</th>
<th>Calvin’s Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>BASIC: No MIDI, not weighted</strong></td>
<td>Casio S200 - 61 Key portable keyboard (5 octaves)</td>
<td>$149.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 1: MIDI-capable, non-weighted</strong></td>
<td>Yamaha NP12B - digital piano (61 keys) w/adaptor Click here for details</td>
<td>Purchase: $249.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Please note, these types of keyboards are typically non-weighted, but can work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rent: $12/mo.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>really well for theory/transposition exercises. These models are very simple,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>and don’t have too many bells &amp; whistles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha PSR-EW410 (76 keys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$770.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TIER 2: Basic weighted keyboards</strong></td>
<td>Yamaha P45B 88-key digital piano Click here for details</td>
<td>Purchase: $629.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>(graded hammer action)</td>
<td></td>
<td>Rent: $40/mo.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yamaha P125B 88-key digital piano w/spkrs Click here for details</td>
<td>Purchase: $799.99</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1,120.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Rent: $49/mo.</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roland FP10 (88 keys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$759.00</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roland FP30 (88 keys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1049.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Roland F140R (88 keys)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>$1599.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>