

Charleston School of the Arts Instrumental Music Senior Thesis

Seniors in the Instrumental Music Program at the School of the Arts are expected to complete a Senior thesis or project. This is to complete the performance requirements that make our program of study unique. Students may choose from the following areas of study: Music Performance Music Composition, or Music Education. The requirements for successful completion of each are listed below. Both theses/projects require writing a supporting paper. The MLA Style manual will be the standard for this paper.

PERFORMANCE THESIS:

Students choosing this project will prepare and perform selections from the standard literature for their instrument. These will be selections commonly accepted as an audition requirement by the best colleges and schools of music in the country. The musical selection will be performed in its entirety. For example, if the required piece is an excerpt or movement from a concerto, the entire concerto must be prepared. Thesis candidates will undergo a series of three juried auditions to be held near the end of each grading period. Candidates must pass each jury in order to receive thesis credit. A Senior recital will be held the last month of school.

In addition to the recital performance, students will write a supporting paper that includes background on the recital composition. This paper will include information on the composer, background on the composition and discussion of performance techniques and practices for the solo.

COMPOSITION THESIS:

Students choosing this project will create an original composition that they must be able to perform themselves. The composition must feature the composer performing on their major instrument. The composition may also be written to be performed by and with other instruments, but it must include a major section that features the senior's original instrument (as Mr. Kerr says, "your money horn", the one that got you in SOA). The minimum performance time for the composition is 3 minutes. The basic outline of the composition (thematic material, construction, instrumentation, etc.) must be presented to Mr. Kerr by the end of the first semester.

The composer/performer will submit the final printed copy of his/her composition at least 1 week prior to the thesis concert.

EDUCATION THESIS:

Students choosing this project will teach beginning students how to play their instrument. The “student teacher” will design an instructional plan for the students, including interim goals and objectives. The student teacher will keep a journal that includes weekly assignments, a record of lessons, and comments on their student’s progress. The project will culminate in a “studio recital” given by the beginning students under the supervision of their teachers. This recital will be given in April.

All students in this program will turn in their journals, sample handouts (as needed) and a recording of their student’s performance in order to receive credit. The student will write a final summary of their work. The student teachers will also be evaluated by the Director at least twice during their lessons with the beginners. These evaluations will be included in the final rating of this project.

JURIES:

All thesis candidates will have regularly scheduled juries, where their preparations are evaluated by members of the music faculty. Students who are not progressing satisfactorily will not be allowed to complete the thesis.

Thesis recital is tentatively scheduled for May.

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL THESIS CANDIDATES:

1. Earn a grade of 90 or above in all performance major classes (Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Jazz Ensemble, Symphony Orchestra, Performance Ensemble Techniques) In which the candidate is enrolled;
2. Attend all dress rehearsals, performances, of every ensemble, in their entirety. Early departures will be a penalty.
3. Earn a minimum of 100 points for the following:
 - a. Audition for All-County (15 pts.)
 - b. Audition for Region Band (30 pts.)
 - c. Make call backs for All-State (15)
 - d. Audition for All-State Band (30)
 - e. Audition for All-State Jazz (30)
 - f. Fully participate in the clinic for any of the above: 30 pts. each clinic.
 - g. All-State Orchestra Clinic (30)
 - h. Special Honor ensembles (Bands of America, USC Band Clinic, other college honor band clinics, etc.) (20)
4. Service credit (40 points minimum):
 - a. Set up and/or take down the stage for concerts: 10pts per event
 - b. Assist with setup and take down for County Band Clinic: 15pts
 - c. Assist with MS Concert Festival (after school hours only): 10 Pts per day
 - d. Assist with special outreach programs (concerts at other schools, assist with SOA auditions): 10 pts each activity

TIMELINE FOR EACH THESIS MAJOR:

Performance candidates, Composition/arranging candidates and Education candidates-

Week of October 19-

Performers: Present your solo to Mr. Kerr for approval. ONLY STUDENTS PRESENTING A SOLO TO MR. KERR AT THIS TIME WILL BE APPROVED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THE PERFORMANCE THESIS! The selection may be changed at any time until the end of the first semester, but no 1st selections may be submitted after this first deadline.

Composers/arrangers: Present your initial sketch to Mr. Kerr for approval. This should include the main theme and rhythm concepts you are planning to use. ONLY STUDENTS PRESENTING A SKETCH TO MR. KERR AT THIS TIME WILL BE APPROVED TO MOVE FORWARD WITH THEIR THESIS! The composition may be modified at any time until the end of the first semester, but no compositions or arrangements may be submitted after this first deadline.

Education candidates: Notify Mr. Kerr of your intent to work the Education thesis. You will tell him where you live and whether you can provide your own transportation to a local school in your area, or in the North Charleston area. There are parental permission forms and also forms from the school that will be given to you to complete and turn in by October 30. The Ed. Thesis will begin in January after the semester break.

November-

Performers: Perform the first third of the solo, without accompaniment. Be prepared to discuss the technical and musical challenges for this section of the music.

Composers/arrangers Present a simple score of the opening section of your arrangement or composition. This will include the main melodic ideas and harmonic structure. Some instrumentation ideas are also a good idea to include at this time.

January-

The Semester Jury will consist of the solo in its entirety. It doesn't have to be a polished performance. It does, however, have to show substantial progress. For Composers/arrangers, a full rough draft of the score must be submitted.

Education Thesis: you will perform the regular jury audition, then you will be assigned to your school and given the contact information for the supervising teacher at that school. You are to make arrangements to meet with that teacher the week after the semester break.

February and March—

All candidates: Set up a regular schedule with Mr. Kerr so he can see your progress. Ed Thesis students will begin their regular teaching assistant schedule at the sponsoring school. Weekly reports will be provided to Mr. Kerr by the Education Thesis candidates, and validated by the host teacher.

April—

Perform with accompanist for the final check before the recital. Composers present the finished score and parts, and set up a rehearsal schedule, including an initial reading of the piece by the first week after spring break.

Education candidates will wrap up their teaching schedule and submit their portfolios to Mr. Kerr before the Thesis Recitals begin.

THE THESIS RECITALS ARE MAY 2 & 3!

ALL CANDIDATES MUST ALSO COMPLETE A SUPPORTING PAPER (see below):

ABOUT THE SUPPORTING PAPER/DOCUMENTS FOR BAND SENIOR THESIS:

All thesis projects in the music majors at the School of the Arts include a supporting paper or research requirement that demonstrates scholarly accomplishment. This can take many forms depending on the kind of thesis being attempted.

For Education thesis candidates, the written research requirement includes a description of the demographics of the class or classes being taught, copies of lesson plans, written evaluations of student performance, and an essay that reflects on the experience of teaching. Additional documentation is also required for education thesis candidates, including samples of student work, assignments, programs, and photos/videos of teaching in action. The candidate will also be observed while teaching and evaluated by the host teacher as well as Mr. Kerr.

For Performance Thesis candidates, a supporting paper must be written based on the music being performed. The paper will include research on the composer, the composition and the context in which the piece was created. A second section will discuss the technical challenges to a successful performance of the composition. The final section will be a reflection by the performer that includes the specific challenges the soloist discovered/faced in preparing the performance, and how he/she overcame the musical challenges to render a successful result.

For Composition/Arrangement Thesis candidates, a clean, well-organized score created by the performer must be presented to Mr. Kerr. (Finale or Sibelius scores are preferred; clean manuscript arrangements are also acceptable.) In addition, a brief essay (1-3 pages) describing the creative process (how you chose the tune to arrange, or what inspired you to write your original work, etc.) must be submitted with the final copy of the score.

ALL PAPERS MUST BE IN MLA FORMAT, TYPED IN "TIMES NEW ROMAN", 12

pt TYPE, DOUBLE SPACED, WITH 1" MARGINS. If needed, proper citations and

source listings must be included at the end of the paper. The paper must be between 3

and 10 pages in length. (The exception is for the composition/arrangement thesis as explained earlier.)

ALL SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS ARE DUE MAY 15!!