

Summer Music Program Comparison Checklist

Bonus Material #3

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Bonus #3: Summer Music Program Comparison Checklist

Part of The Music Scholarship Success Guide Package

How to Use This Checklist

Summer music programs are a significant investment (typically \$2,000-\$8,000 per program). Use this checklist to:

1. Compare programs systematically
2. Make data-driven decisions
3. Ensure the program aligns with your goals
4. Track application deadlines and requirements

Print multiple copies - one for each program you're considering.

Program Evaluation Worksheet

Program Name: _____ Location: _____

_____ Dates: _____

_____ Application Deadline: _____

1. PROGRAM BASICS

| Criteria | Details | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Age/Grade Requirements** | Min: _____ Max: _____ | Am I eligible? Yes No |

| **Length** | _____ weeks | Ideal length for my goals? Yes No |

| **Format** | Residential Day Hybrid | Preference met? Yes No |

| **My Instrument Offered?** | Yes No Limited slots | |

| **Program Focus** | Orchestra Chamber Solo Mixed | Matches my goals? Yes No |

2. COST ANALYSIS

| Item | Amount | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Tuition** | \$ _____ | |

| **Room & Board** (if residential) | \$ _____ | Included? Yes No |

| **Application Fee** | \$ _____ | |

| **Travel Costs** (estimate) | \$ _____ | Round-trip to/from program |

| **Instrument Rental/Shipping** | \$ _____ | If applicable |

| **Spending Money** | \$ _____ | Estimate for extras |

| **Other Fees** (list): | \$ _____ | |

| | | |

| **TOTAL COST** | \$ _____ | |

Financial Aid Available? Yes No Unknown **Scholarships Available?** Yes No Unknown

If yes, how to apply: _____

Financial aid deadline: _____

Estimated out-of-pocket cost after aid: \$ _____

3. ACADEMIC QUALITY & FACULTY

| Criteria | Rating (1-5) | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Faculty Quality** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Faculty names I recognize: |

| **Faculty for My Instrument** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Specific teacher I'd study with: |

| **Student-Faculty Ratio** | _____ : 1 | Acceptable? Yes No |

| **Program Reputation** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Known by my teacher? Yes No |

| **Alumni Success** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Do alumni attend top colleges? |

Faculty of Interest:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

Do these faculty teach at colleges I'm interested in? Yes No

4. PROGRAM OFFERINGS

Check all that apply and rate importance to you:

| Activity | Offered? | Importance to Me |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Private lessons** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |

| **How many lessons?** | _____ per week | Enough? Yes No |

| **Orchestra** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |

| **Chamber music** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |

| **Master classes** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |

| **Performance opportunities** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |

- | **How many performances?** | _____ concerts | Enough? Yes No |
 - | **Theory/ear training** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |
 - | **Composition** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |
 - | **Jazz program** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |
 - | **Music technology** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |
 - | **College prep/audition prep** | Yes No | Critical Important Nice to have |
-

5. SELECTIVITY & COMPETITIVENESS

| Criteria | Details | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Acceptance Rate** | _____ % | How competitive? |

| **Audition Required?** | Yes No Recording | |

| **Audition Format** | Live Video Either | |

| **Audition Repertoire** | | Can I prepare this? Yes No |

| | | |

| | | |

| **Teacher Recommendation Required?** | Yes No | |

| **Application Essay?** | Yes No | |

| **Competition Level** | Beginner-friendly Intermediate Advanced Elite | Am I competitive?
 Yes Maybe No |

My teacher's assessment of my competitiveness:

- Safety (very likely to be accepted)
 - Target (good chance if I prepare well)
 - Reach (would be lucky to get in)
-

6. PEER QUALITY & ENVIRONMENT

| Criteria | Rating (1-5) | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Overall Student Level** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Will I be challenged? |

| **Collaborative vs Competitive** | 1 2 3 4 5 | 1=very collaborative, 5=very competitive |

| **Diversity of Students** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Geographic, musical backgrounds |

| **Social Opportunities** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Will I make friends/connections? |

Typical student profile: _____ **Will I**
fit in? Yes Not sure No

7. FACILITIES & RESOURCES

| Item | Available? | Quality (1-5) | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| **Practice rooms** | Yes No | 1 2 3 4 5 | Enough rooms? How many hours/day? |

| **Performance hall** | Yes No | 1 2 3 4 5 | |

| **Recording studio** | Yes No | 1 2 3 4 5 | |

| **Music library** | Yes No | 1 2 3 4 5 | |

| **Quality instruments available** | Yes No | 1 2 3 4 5 | (Piano, percussion, etc.) |

If residential:

| Item | Quality (1-5) | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Dorms** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Room type: Single Double Suite |

| **Food** | 1 2 3 4 5 | Dietary accommodations? Yes No |

| **Safety/Supervision** | 1 2 3 4 5 | 24/7 supervision? Yes No |

8. COLLEGE PREP VALUE

Does this program help with college admissions/scholarships?

| Criteria | Yes/No | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Held at a college I'm interested in** | Yes No | Which college: |

| **Faculty from colleges I'm interested in** | Yes No | Which faculty: |

| **Known/respected by college admissions** | Yes No | How do I know? |

| **Provides performance recordings** | Yes No | Useful for applications |

| **Certificate or credit** | Yes No | Looks good on resume |

| **Networking opportunities with college faculty** | Yes No | Can I schedule sample lessons? |

| **Alumni attend my target colleges** | Yes No | Which colleges: |

Strategic value for scholarship pursuit (1-5): 1 2 3 4 5

9. LOGISTICS & FIT

| Criteria | Assessment | Notes |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Travel distance/time** | _____ miles / _____ hours | Manageable? Yes No |

| **Dates conflict with other commitments?** | Yes No | Conflicts: |

| **Health/dietary accommodations** | Available Not available | Needs: |

| **Parent involvement allowed/encouraged** | Yes No Limited | Preference: |

| **Communication with home** | Daily Weekly Limited | Acceptable? Yes No |

10. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

Rate overall fit (1-10): 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 **Top 3 Pros:**

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Top 3 Cons:

- 1. _____
- 2. _____
- 3. _____

Deal-breakers (if any): _____ **My gut feeling about this program:**

- Very excited - this is a top choice!
 - Interested - want to learn more
 - Neutral - could go either way
 - Not excited - probably not applying
 - Definitely not applying
-

11. APPLICATION TRACKING

| Item | Status | Date |

|-----|-----|-----|

| **Application opened** | Complete | ____ / ____ / ____ |

| **Audition video recorded** | Complete | ____ / ____ / ____ |

| **Teacher recommendation requested** | Complete | ____ / ____ / ____ |

| **Essay written** | Complete | ____ / ____ / ____ |

| **Application fee paid** | Complete | ____ / ____ / ____ |

| **Application submitted** | Complete | _____ / _____ / _____ |

| **Financial aid application submitted** | Complete | _____ / _____ / _____ |

| **Acceptance/rejection received** | Yes | _____ / _____ / _____ |

| **Financial aid offer received** | Yes | _____ / _____ / _____ |

| **Final decision made** | Attending Declining | _____ / _____ / _____ |

12. DECISION FACTORS WEIGHTING

Rank these factors by importance to YOU (1 = most important):

_____ Cost/affordability

_____ Faculty quality

_____ Connection to target colleges

_____ Peer quality/competitiveness

_____ Performance opportunities

_____ Private lesson quantity/quality

_____ Location/travel convenience

_____ Program reputation

_____ Social/fun factor

_____ Facilities/resources

FINAL DECISION

After comparing all programs, this program ranks # _____ on my list. DECISION:

Applying - Application deadline: _____ / _____ / _____

Not Applying - Reason: _____

Waitlist/Maybe - Need to: _____

Notes & Questions

Use this space for additional notes, questions to ask the program, or things to research:

Comparison Summary Sheet

Use this to compare multiple programs side-by-side:

| Program Name | Total Cost | Faculty Quality (1-5) | Strategic Value (1-5) | Overall Fit (1-10) |
Applying? |

|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|

| 1. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

| 2. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

| 3. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

| 4. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

| 5. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

| 6. | \$ | | | | Yes No |

My top 3 choices:

1. _____

2. _____

Summer Program Selection Strategy Tips

For Elementary/Early Middle School (Ages 8-12):

Priority:

1. Focus on fun and building love of music
2. Local or regional programs preferred (less expensive, less intimidating)
3. Non-competitive environment
4. Emphasis on chamber music and ensemble playing

Budget: \$500-\$2,000

For Late Middle School (Ages 13-14):

Priority:

1. Balance fun with skill development
2. Programs with solid faculty but not ultra-competitive
3. Mix of orchestra, chamber, and solo opportunities
4. Start building resume/experience

Budget: \$1,500-\$3,500

For High School (Ages 15-18):

Priority:

1. Strategic selection based on target colleges
2. Programs with faculty from target colleges
3. Highly competitive if student is competitive
4. Resume-building and networking focus
5. Performance recording opportunities

Budget: \$2,000-\$8,000

Red Flags to Watch For

- ✗ **No clear information about faculty** (who will actually be teaching?)
- ✗ **Vague about practice room access** (limited practice time is a problem)
- ✗ **Very low acceptance rate but unknown reputation** (may be inflating selectivity)
- ✗ **Hidden fees** (check what's NOT included in tuition)
- ✗ **Poor communication** (if they don't respond to inquiries, that's a warning sign)
- ✗ **No performance opportunities** (what's the point?)
- ✗ **Too expensive with no financial aid** (don't go into debt for summer programs)

Resources for Finding Summer Music Programs

Databases & Lists:

1. National Association for Music Education (NAfME)
2. American String Teachers Association (ASTA)
3. Your private teacher's recommendations
4. College music department websites (many host summer programs)
5. State music teacher associations

Ask:

1. Your private teacher (best source!)
2. Advanced students at your school
3. Alumni from your youth orchestra
4. College music students

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