



Music Cocurricular Ensembles Program 2025



The Music Faculty plans and delivers experiences to develop student attainment and achievement of all students' performance, composition and listening skills in line with the NSW Music Syllabus for Stages 4-6.

The Music Ensembles Program is the primary cocurricular focus of the Music Faculty, whose purpose is to enhance and extend the listening and performance skills of all students who audition and participate in ensembles. The program works at high potential, extended and sophisticated level, the ensembles achieving professional performance status through peer and public recognition.

This is a unique opportunity for students of Newtown HSPA to expand their music capabilities and collaborate within the wider culture of our school, contributing to the performing arts life of students and providing extension and support in a dedicated musical context. The program provides opportunity for students to explore creativity and imagination; to develop independence as well as ensemble skills; to become musical critical thinkers and problem solvers; and to work in a musically inclusive community of collaboration and mutual respect.

The strength of the program is in the high potential opportunities and expectations the Music Cocurricular Program achieves, with ensembles accessing repertoire in an extended and collegial setting, often above expected outcomes for Stages 4-6. Students can be grouped with others of similar capabilities and developmental levels, including provisions such as acceleration with age peers, groupings of similar or commensurate instrumental skills across years, and genre-based interests such as Tango or Jazz. Students are developed and extended in their technical expressive, stylistic and ensemble judgement.

The quality of ensemble experience is maintained through expert, highly trained and industry-leading musical direction, appropriately challenging repertoire which aims at technical and stylistic sophistication, and quality performance opportunities within and outside of the school setting.

NHSPA MUSIC COCURRICULAR ENSEMBLES

All students who audition and meet the required criteria will be placed in a Large Ensemble as their Core ensemble. To then be considered or selected for an additional Small or Chamber Ensemble they must maintain reliable and committed participation in their Core ensemble.

LARGE ENSEMBLES, CORE: Orchestra, Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Concert Band, Junior, Intermediate and Senior Choirs, Guitar Ensembles (classical and rock), WOMP (Weapons Of Mass Percussion).

SMALL ENSEMBLES: Junior and Senior String Ensemble, Jazz Orchestra, Junior Jazz Ensemble, Extension Choirs (7/8, 9/10, 11/12), Senior Percussion Ensemble, Tango Ensemble

CHAMBER ENSEMBLES: will be formed as the instrumentation and teacher availability arises. This may include string, wind and brass chamber ensembles.

PROJECT BASED PERFORMANCE GROUPS: will be formed for short term goals, such as Grad Band (Yr 12 Graduation), Band Night, the school Musical, etc.

Students **must maintain strong attendance and commitment to their Core/Large Ensemble** in order to be considered for selection into small, project based or chamber ensembles.

PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

To enter the cocurricular program **all** students are welcome to audition, regardless of their mode of entry. All students are assessed to the same criteria at audition.

For **Music auditioned students:** It is a requirement for students who enrolled **via audition** to:

- Participate in annual **auditions** for Cocurricular Ensemble, and
- **Maintain at least one weekly core ensemble** for the duration of their enrolment.

This is to contribute to the performing arts culture of the school, and to develop their instrumental or vocal skills the student has auditioned for at an extended level in line with the Syllabus learning experiences of Performing and Listening.

AUDITIONS

Music Auditions are held in instrumental groups across all years; for example, violinists from Years 7 to 12 will audition together. For all music auditions, students will perform in front of the audition panel (usually two people) and other students of that instrument and stay for the duration of the audition. All students must audition every year.

Selection criteria for the audition

The Music faculty will consider the following in selecting and placing students within ensembles:

- Technical facility including intonation, rhythmic accuracy, tone control, fluency and general technical coherence
- Dynamics and expressive techniques, including phrasing and articulation
- Stylistic understanding appropriate to the piece performed
- The panel will also consider year group, balance of ensembles and prior commitments

When and where will the auditions be held?

Auditions will take place during Weeks 2 - 4 of Term 1 2025 and held in the Music Faculty before (7.30-8.45am) and after school (3.30-5.30pm). Refer to the attached timetable for dates and times.

What do I need to prepare?

Vocal Audition	You will not need to prepare any material for the Vocal Audition as you will be taught a song and perform it in small groups and/or individually
Instrumental Auditions: Woodwind, Brass and Strings including Guitars	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will need to prepare a 2-minute piece of music that represents your technical and expressive abilities A scale of your choice (consider key, tonality and number of octaves) Wind and Brass auditions will require you to attempt a short unprepared sight-reading excerpt.
Keyboard/Piano/ Accordion	<p>You are required to prepare a 2-minute piece in the style of your choice, that represents your technical and expressive abilities</p> <p><i>Please note that the number of places using keyboard/ piano/ accordion in ensembles are limited. Therefore, you are encouraged to audition for voice, percussion or on another instrument.</i></p>
Percussion and Drum Kit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> You will need to prepare a 2-minute piece, that represents your technical and expressive abilities If required you may use those 2 minutes to perform on more than one percussion instrument (e.g. one minute of drum kit, one minute of marimba) Drum Kit/Percussion students may also be required to demonstrate different drumming patterns (e.g. rock, bossa, swing with sticks and brushes) and rudiments (e.g. snare rudiments, single and double strokes, single and double paradiddles, flams, rolls (double stroke or press))
WOMP (Weapons of Mass Percussion)	There is no formal audition for WOMP; instead, the first rehearsal is the audition. If you are interested in auditioning for WOMP (Weapons of Mass Percussion) you are not required to prepare anything as you will be taught several patterns in the ensemble. No prior experience is required for WOMP.

PARTICIPATION

The Music Ensembles within the Cocurricular Program are a commitment for all of 2025 and it is important and expected that students will:

- Attend each week on time and staying to the end of each rehearsal, establishing a reliable and committed pattern of attendance
- Demonstrate excellent engagement by participating fully, following direction/instruction and working collegially with peers
- Demonstrate a respectful working style to directors and peers, with a mindful attitude to the ensemble nature of the groups
- Bring all the required materials including instrument, music and pencil.
- Maintain practice of ensemble parts at home where required to develop piece performance readiness in a timely manner
- Attend all performances as required, whether onsite at NHSPA or offsite
- Communicate any unavoidable absences to the ensemble faculty, contact with at least 24 hours' notice

Students of the Music Cocurricular Program will be required to sign a Commitment Contract annually, which is an affirmation agreeing to and understanding the importance of these requirements. NHSPA's Behaviour Management Plan applies to ensemble rehearsals, events and performances, including HT and DP contracts where appropriate.

Attendance Requirements

In exceptional circumstances or in the case of illness/injury advance notice of absence via email from the parent/caregiver should be given. The student must also discuss the absence with their director. Students who miss rehearsals without reasonable explanation will be followed up by the director and the HT Music.

Students are expected to attend performance events, whether they are within the school (such as Showcase) or at offsite events (such as competitions).

In the event of repeated or significant unexplained absences, this will be followed up with the ensemble director and the Head Teacher Music for an explanation and request for remediation with the student and parent/carer involvement.

Levy

The annual levy for participation is \$400. Fees contribute to meeting expenses such as directors and tuition, accompanists, music, purchase and maintenance of equipment. This one levy covers participation in any number of Music ensembles.

Once levies are received by the school for ensemble participation, students will be placed on the official roll for the ensemble. Non-payment will result in removal from the ensemble roll.

We encourage you to communicate with us if there are financial constraints to consider. Please contact Ms Argyri if you need to arrange for a payment plan to reconcile these fees in instalments.

Faculty contact

Each ensemble has a nominated music faculty member contact. Please communicate with this contact with any attendance variations or questions regarding commitment, events or requirements.

Choirs

- Ynping Mak ynping.mak@det.nsw.edu.au
- Amber Johnson amber.johnson25@det.nsw.edu.au

SWE, Concert Band, Jazz Orchestra

- Philip Podreka philip.podreka@det.nsw.edu.au

Orchestra and String Ensembles

- Deborah McGowan deborah.mcgowan@det.nsw.edu.au
- Emlyn Lewis-Jones emlyn.lewis-jones@det.nsw.edu.au

Percussion Ensemble, Junior Jazz, Tango Ensemble

- Ynping Mak ynping.mak@det.nsw.edu.au

WOMP, Guitar Ensembles

- 2024: Ynping Mak ynping.mak@det.nsw.edu.au
- 2025: Chris Miller christopher.p.miller@det.nsw.edu.au

PERFORMANCES

There will be several performance opportunities provided throughout the year, including our two main Music Showcase Concert seasons, in terms 2 and term 4. Further information on these seasons and other performance opportunities will be provided by directors.

Full ensemble attendance is expected at scheduled performances and technical rehearsals.

The performance schedules shift annually but typically it may be expected that the following may occur.

All Ensembles

- Term 2 Week 6: Music Showcase Season, Big Night Out and Vivo Concerts
- Term 4 Week 6: Music Showcase Season, Animanto and Con Brio Concerts

Other, some ensembles

- Terms 2 and 3, various: ASBOF Competitions
- Term 2 or 3: Band Night
- Term 3: Cantabile Music Festival
- Term 3 Week 10: Spring Prom
- Term 3 Weeks 9-10, holidays: Manly Jazz Festival
- Term 4: Stanmore Music Festival
- Term 4, Week 8: Gala Finale Showcase Concert
- Biannually: Dimitri Basis Greek Festival Concert
- Biannually: school Musical Production

Performance Attire

Music students at NHSPA are required to wear performance blacks in all performances and showcases.

This should include:

- Tie and presentable black collared button-up shirts, blouses (covering the shoulder and past the elbow)
- Long skirts (past the knee) or dress pants
- Black socks or stockings and black shoes
- Clothing must have no noticeable logos
- Leggings are not suitable
- The Arts Unit Uniform shirt is not suitable

EXTERNAL ENSEMBLES

NHSPA has a musically enriching Music Cocurricular program which extends and enriches students, factoring in their development of ensemble skills, like peers and instrumental/vocal type.

Should a student choose to also apply to participate in external organisations that provide performance opportunities (such as AYO and SYO, TAU weekly Instrumental and Vocal ensembles, Schools Spectacular, Talent Development Project, Pulse Alive, Southern Stars, etc.) it is understood that such participation is extra time and commitment to their responsibilities to NHSPA Curriculum and the Music Cocurricular Program. NHSPA Music Ensembles remain as core experiences in students' enrolled school, and additional opportunities extend and add to this but do not replace it.

In the specific case of The Arts Unit's ensembles, TAU's own policy is that any student participating in their weekly Music ensembles must also maintain membership of their school's equivalent ensemble, in order to maintain those skills in many musical and ensemble settings and to grow in collegiality and musicality with their peers.

"It is essential that all members fully support their school music programs... Members of the NSW Public Schools Instrumental Music Ensembles must be a member of their own school's corresponding music ensemble/s and have a good attendance record." (p.3) TAU Music Ensembles Policy 2024

If there is a conflict between a NHSPA event and a TAU event, the NHSPA event takes priority as your primary core ensemble, through which TAU is accessed.

If regular and reliable attendance at NHSPA Ensembles is not satisfactory, NHSPA Music may discuss this with TAU for a review of your participation there.

When considering applying for a TAU ensemble of event, students and parents/carers must check the following: that they:

- Have considered affects to their attendance at school, so as not to fall below the bare minimum 85% attendance required. NHSPA would expect 95% attendance as a standard goal for all students
- Have checked their assessment calendar to ensure they can meet assessment requirements during the period affected
- Have checked Music Ensembles calendar as to avoid conflicts on NHSPA performance and tech dates
- Have discussed with their ensemble director/s impacts to any missed rehearsals
- Have sought application supporting teacher sign off from NHSPA HT Music or a Music faculty teacher at NHSPA, as it is the school that wears the attendance implications

Where an endorsement form is sought from the school by a student for TAU (e.g. a regular weekly ensemble) or TAU on your behalf (e.g. Schools Spec), the Principal must endorse your TAU application. Dr Green will not do so without the recommendation of the Music Faculty.

In order for us to recommend that the Principal endorse your TAU application, you must:

- Be in your core large ensemble/s, as reliable and committed member
- Have had a conversation with your director as to time involved and avoiding clashes. Where there is a clash, NHSPA must be prioritised
- Have had your TAU form endorsed by Music Faculty and HT Music
- Have checked the following
 - Have considered affects to their attendance at school, so as not to fall below the bare minimum 85% attendance required. NHSPA would expect 95% attendance as a standard goal for all students
 - Have checked assessment calendar to ensure they can meet assessment requirements during the period affected
 - Have checked Music Ensembles calendar as to avoid conflicts on NHSPA performance and tech dates
 - Have discussed with their ensemble director/s impacts to any missed rehearsals

