

## CLASSICAL GUITAR AUDITIONS

### Frequently Asked Questions:

#### ***How should I prepare for the audition?***

During the audition, we are trying not only to judge your ability to play but your ability to prepare. Is this a student who is used to regular, systematic practice? Will they understand and act on the suggestions they receive in lessons? Most applicants have had at least one to two years of lessons with a classical teacher to prepare for the audition and at the time of the audition, are working with a teacher on the repertoire to be performed.

Not all of the time allotted for your audition will be spent playing. Although the time for conversation will be very short, we may ask you to tell us a little about yourself and what your goals are. We are always glad to see evidence of an active passion for the classical guitar, and we might ask you if you have favorite players, composers, CDs, and so on, or if you have ever attended a classical guitar recital—the best students are explorers.

Make sure you have done your homework on the music you perform: be able to pronounce the titles and composers of your repertoire correctly and know the meaning of every direction on the notated music.

Finally, applicants very commonly come to audition without having prepared the scales, even though they are clearly stated in the requirements. Make scales part of your daily routine so that at your audition you can rattle them off without hesitation.

#### ***What if I get nervous in the audition?***

Bear in mind that several faculty from the string department may be there to hear you, so don't be daunted by their presence. We listen to all auditions with the utmost sympathy and good will. We recognize that everyone gets nervous and can have a bad day. Even if you do not perform at your best, potential has a way of shining through and we are experienced in listening through mistakes to hear the musician you might one day become.

If time is short or your repertoire is lengthy, we may have to stop you in the middle of a piece to allow time for the other parts of the audition. Be prepared for this possibility so that it doesn't affect you unduly if it happens.

#### ***What are you looking for as you listen to me?***

No one delivers a note-perfect performance in auditions. The candidates who impress the most are the ones who keep the rhythm going and never hesitate or go back. If you stop and correct a mistake you are making two mistakes instead of one—a technical mistake and a rhythmic mistake! Above all, avoid restarting a piece unless within a few seconds of starting you find you didn't tune as well as you thought you did.

Whether or not you play from memory, we are looking for a sense that you are not playing mainly from muscle memory—by rote. As you approach the audition date, ask yourself whether you can play from any point in the music or if you always have to start from the beginning.

It is good if you have memorized the repertoire to be performed, but it is not a requirement. If you do plan to play from memory, bring the music to your audition in case we want to ask you a question about it.

Take care not to abandon the score too early in your preparation for the audition. Have the music on the stand in front of you when you practice, and look at it frequently away from the guitar.

***My sight-reading is weak: what should I do?***

We hear a lot of auditions by students who have not developed their sight-reading as well as their other skills. It is only one component of the audition: if you perform the rest of the audition well, you will likely get the benefit of the doubt on your sight-reading. Certainly, though, a good sight-reading performance will help your application considerably. The last two pages of this document consist of sight-reading examples to give you an idea of the level of difficulty. Get hold of some big books of easy guitar repertoire and practice sight-reading from them for a few minutes every day.

In the audition, you will be given about thirty seconds to look the test over (without playing) and then you will be asked to play. Use the time to note the key signature and the meter, and hear mentally the rhythm at the beginning. Scan the whole piece for any left-hand shifts and try to see them in your mind's eye. Make this procedure into a routine and practice it at home.

As you play the test, focus chiefly on maintaining a steady rhythm. Do not go back and correct wrong notes; just try to play through without hesitation.

***Can I contact you directly with my questions?***

You are very welcome! Applicants often have many questions about the guitar program or are unsure if their chosen repertoire is appropriate. If you send me an email, I would be glad to advise you on these or any other matters.

***Can I arrange a meeting and play for you?***

You are welcome to come and talk in person. Once you have applied to the College of Music and have been given an audition date, you may ask to schedule a thirty-minute lesson with me at no charge; I will try to accommodate you, but bear in mind that if my schedule is full we may not be able to arrange a lesson. Contact me directly with any requests for lessons, as the Admissions Office will not be able to.

**Mail:**

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Please allow up to five business days for my response.

Note that everything I have written in this section reflects my own priorities and experience. I hope that these thoughts will help you in your audition for the guitar program at CU-Boulder. Keep in mind that studios or other institutions may have different priorities and requirements.

- Nicolò Spera

GRADE 4

Andante

1

*mf* *f*

II

*f* *pp*

Allegretto

2

*mf*

*mp*

Pastorale (andantino)

3

*p* *mp* *p* *mf*

*pp*

Tranquillo

4

*p*

*f*

Scherzando

5

*mf*

*p*

*mf*

*f*

Maestoso

6

*f*

*m*

*p*

*f*