



Study with Yolanda Kondonassis Frequently Asked Questions

The following are answers to many of the questions that I am asked most often. I regret that there is not always time to answer each email that I receive directly, but I hope that this document will help clarify issues that arise most frequently.

For all further questions, please contact the admissions office at either The Cleveland Institute of Music or Oberlin Conservatory and they will do their best to help you. You may also contact my assistant at YKAssistant@gmail.com.

1. How do I schedule my audition?

If you are applying to CIM only, your audition must be scheduled through the CIM Admission Office. You will need to attend one of CIM's official audition days so that you may participate in testing and other activities. Please note that all listed audition days may not be harp audition days, so please check with the admission office to make sure that harpists will be heard on your requested date.

If you are applying to Oberlin only, your audition must be scheduled through the Oberlin Admission Office.

If you are applying to both CIM and Oberlin, your audition must be scheduled through the CIM Admission Office. You will need to attend one of CIM's official audition days so that you may participate in testing and other activities. Please note that all listed audition days may not be harp audition days, so please check with the admission office to make sure that harpists will be heard on your requested date. Your audition at CIM will be considered your audition for Oberlin as well. Please notify the Oberlin admission office of your scheduled audition date at CIM.

2. What will my audition be like?

Auditions are scheduled for approximately twenty to thirty minutes each so that there is plenty of time for listening to prepared repertoire and getting acquainted. A harp-applicant orientation session is also scheduled on audition days at both CIM and Oberlin. At the session, I will give an overview of the programs at both CIM and Oberlin and there will be time for Q&A. Please note that both students and parents are welcome at the orientation session.

3. Is there a harp that I can use for my audition?

Yes. CIM and Oberlin own an assortment of harps, several of which are made available to auditioning applicants. A warm-up harp will be available for your use in a nearby practice room one half-hour before your scheduled audition time. The admission staff will let you know where to go for your warm-up.

4. Is there a harp I can use for practice before or on my audition day at times other than my scheduled warm-up?

For booking inquiries: Colbert Artists Management, Inc.
Charlotte Schroeder, 212.757.0782, schroeder@colbertartists.com

Unfortunately, we are not able to provide harps for practice at times other than your scheduled warm-up period just prior to your audition. School-owned harps and practice facilities are in constant demand by currently enrolled students and must be reserved for their use. We suggest that you plan to arrive no earlier than the day before your audition so that practice time will not be an issue. Applicants are also welcome to audition on their own instruments, but CIM and Oberlin are unable to provide storage or practice space.

5. May I send a tape instead of auditioning live?

In cases where students live outside the U.S., or when extreme circumstances exist, I do allow applicants to audition with a DVD. Audio tapes without an accompanying DVD will not be accepted. Please include a spoken introduction on your DVD, telling me a little about yourself and your background. While DVDs will be accepted, it is always to the applicant's advantage to schedule a live audition.

6. May I schedule a visit and lesson with you prior to my audition year or date?

I do my best to accommodate anyone who wishes to schedule a lesson in the year(s) or months prior to an audition. I cannot, however, schedule a lesson with an applicant in the days before or on the day of an audition. Since I receive so many requests for lessons from out-of-town students, I have created a system of scheduling periodic "Open Teaching Days." If you would like to learn more about Open Teaching dates and availability, please contact my assistant at YKAssistant@gmail.com. My fee for a one-hour lesson is \$150.

7. What repertoire is appropriate for my audition?

I ask that all applicants prepare the following repertoire for their auditions:

- 1) Advanced/Professional Warm-Up from my book, *On Playing the Harp* (published by Carl Fischer and available through all harp music retailers or my website: www.yolandaharp.com)
- 2) Two solos of contrasting style. I prefer that the two solos be memorized.
- 3) One orchestral excerpt of choice

Music may be used for the Warm- Up and the orchestral excerpt. There are no other guidelines regarding repertoire other than the expectation that music prepared should accurately reflect the applicant's level and ability.

8. I know that harp students at CIM and Oberlin are trained in the Salzedo tradition of technique. I have not been trained in the Salzedo method up to this point. Do you accept such students and/or is this a problem?

I encourage students of all training backgrounds to audition. Applicants should keep in mind, however, that technical training is an essential part of a conservatory education since one's technique is a critical tool in achieving artistic results. Students who come to CIM or Oberlin from other traditions of study must be open to making technical adjustments that are appropriate to individual needs and are informed by the Salzedo method of playing. If this is not the case, CIM or Oberlin might not be the right fit.

9. I am planning to major in another field at Case Western Reserve University or Oberlin College. May I still study with you?

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Unfortunately, I only have time in my schedule to teach conservatory harp performance majors. However, it is often possible to arrange lessons with CIM's preparatory harp instructor or in Oberlin's Secondary Harp Program.

10. Are scholarships available?

Yes. Scholarship awards - both merit-based and need-based - are available at CIM and Oberlin. To qualify for either type, you must complete the financial aid paperwork with your application and submit it by the indicated deadline. Final decisions on financial aid awards are made by the financial aid committees at both schools. My involvement in this process is limited to recommendations only.

11. What is the difference between the Cleveland Institute of Music and Oberlin Conservatory?

Since all harp majors at Oberlin and CIM study with me privately and have a weekly harp class with me, the harp education at both schools is very much the same. The harp department syllabus and repertoire requirements are the same at both schools, and the music and academic course requirements are very similar as well. While both institutions have excellent facilities, the primary difference between CIM and Oberlin is probably the most noticeable in terms of atmosphere and environment. The Cleveland Institute of Music is located in a city-centered atmosphere in the heart of an area called University Circle that is also home to The Cleveland Museum of Art, The Cleveland Orchestra, Case Western Reserve University, and several other museums, hospitals, and cultural institutions. Oberlin's campus is situated in a lovely small town with a collegiate, campus-oriented atmosphere. After visiting both campuses, most prospective students tend to have a pretty good idea of where they would feel the most at home.

12. What are some of the accomplishments that your students have achieved?

I am very proud of my current and former students' accomplishments. My students have won Silver and Bronze Medals at the USA International Harp Competition, Grand Prize and Division Prizes at the ASTA National Solo Competition, First Prize in the American Harp Society's National Solo Competition (Advanced Division), the American Harp Society's Grandjany Prize and Anne Adams Prizes (multiple winners), Lyon & Healy Awards Prize, First Prize in the WAMSO Young Artists Competition, First Prize in the Corpus Christy National Young Artists Competition, and First Prize in the Midland-Odesa National Young Artists Competition. My students repeatedly win auditions for all the major summer music festivals, including Tanglewood, National Repertory Orchestra, Pacific Music Festival, National Orchestral Institute, Festival Hill at Round Top, and Spoleto, among others. My students have won Principal Harp positions with the New World Symphony, The Melbourne Symphony, The China Philharmonic, the Youngstown (OH), Symphony, The Tacoma (WA) Symphony, the Chicago Lyric Opera, the Baton Rouge (LA) Symphony, the Spokane (WA) Symphony, the Milwaukee Symphony, the San Diego Symphony, and the Sarasota (FLA) Orchestra, among others.

13. What is your philosophy of teaching?

Playing the harp well is very important to me. Teaching my students to play the harp well is equally important to me. I strongly believe in a disciplined, creative, and organized approach to making progress and reaching one's potential.

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I approach technical concerns from the viewpoint of the Salzedo technique and by applying common sense and experience in each situation. I approach musical concerns in a “whole-thinking” manner through many means. The two elements of the equation, technical and musical, must be thoroughly and attentively cultivated in order to achieve great results. Teaching and learning are opposite sides of the same coin and, as in any effective partnership, success depends on good communication, trust, and mutual respect.

For a more detailed discussion of my philosophies on playing and teaching, please refer to Part I of my book, *On Playing the Harp*. For more information on my background, recordings, and publications, please visit www.YolandaHarp.com.