



SCHOOL ORCHESTRA

Money for Nothing? or Orchestra: The Big Payday

by J. David Arnott

So you have spent all the years of your youth practicing the (insert your stringed instrument here) and now you want to find out what it is worth, right? Besides a life-long satisfaction of wallowing in the ability to play beautiful music and impress relatives, your musical talent might just get you a substantial discount on your college education.

My “disclaimer statement” is that I work for a college in Minnesota that appears on the following chart. I found the scholarship information for my school the same way I did for each of the other schools in this essay — via the internet, through email correspondence (though not identifying myself as a faculty member of another institution), and via telephone conversation. In addition, though I asked the kinds of questions a prospective student might ask, I never actually said I was interested in attending any of the listed institutions — and several respondents did assume that I was a prospective student. To them I apologize in the name of research.

As this is a Minnesota publication, the focus of this article will be on specifically Minnesota schools, both public and private that offer music scholarships to string players. Many colleges and universities in Minnesota offer tuition discounts for music participation in the form of “music scholarships” or “performance awards.” When comparing offers from different schools, you should consider a music scholarship as a percentage of the overall cost of tuition, and by tuition, I refer specifically to tuition alone, not room and board or other related costs. For example, a \$2,000 scholarship at a \$10,000/year school goes a lot farther than a \$3,500 scholarship at a \$28,000/year institution. It does not take a math major to figure out the difference between a 20% of tuition scholarship versus a 12% of tuition scholarship. This, of course, leads to other considerable factors which might include the “dream school” factor (“I have always wanted to go to school in the big city”); the

“legacy” factor (“all the male cellists in my family have always gone to Rookery State”); or even the “flight” factor (“it’s as far away from home as possible and I still qualify for in-state tuition”).

Another issue to consider must be what strings, if any, may be attached to a music scholarship award. Will you be required to major or minor in music? If you start out with a major in music and switch majors after discovering a love of ancient Greek rhetoric, will your scholarship be rescinded? Are the scholarships renewable for four years or are they just there for your first year to get you in the door? Will you be required to do any more than just play in an ensemble? Will you be required to take studio lessons? It always pays to ask a lot of questions. Most of the answers I found for my charts came from web pages and, where necessary, from direct questioning of admissions representatives as well as music department contact people. Some information was readily available and presented in a very succinct manner; some information was difficult to glean; and some was not readily available at all. Several emails I sent requesting information went unanswered.

One major consideration is whether or not there is a lesson requirement. Most schools charge a “lesson fee” as a way to recoup the cost of individual attention by a professor. These lesson fees range in amounts anywhere from \$75/semester to over \$250/semester. If a lesson is required in fulfillment of a scholarship obligation, you must take into account that amount as well (don’t forget it is a semester fee rather than a yearly fee!).

All schools require a certain grade point average to retain a scholarship, most in the 2.5-3.0 range. As we are all Minnesotans here, I believe the school abbreviations in these charts will be clear to all (my e-mail address is at the bottom of the article if you have any questions).

A Google search revealed several web pages that provided a wealth of information

as a basis for this article:

- private colleges in Minnesota <http://www.mnprivatecolleges.com/ourcolleges/index.php>
- the Universities of Minnesota <http://www.umn.edu/twincities/index.php> and <http://www.metronet.lib.mn.us/mn/mn-ed.html>
- the Minnesota State Universities and Colleges <http://www.mnscu.edu/System/VisitACampus.html>

The charts, though as complete as possible, may still contain errors. They are intended as a guide to get you started on your path to choosing a school. In a way, it is intended more for students who might not necessarily intend to major or minor in music who might not even think to inquire about a music scholarship. It pays to ask! To those students intending to major in music, you should also ask a lot of questions, particularly about scholarship renewal after the first year.

The tuition figures listed are for a full year and are based on information found on web pages of each school as well as from direct contact with music departments and financial aid offices. The amounts in the tuition column represent what each institution listed on their web pages. Some of the figures represent tuition and fees, and some of the figures exclude such things as “fees,” “technology access fees,” and other incidental costs that must be factored into any educated decision regarding the choice of a college. The tuition figures are there solely as a reference point and should certainly be examined more closely when determining your choice of institution.

The charts include the name of the institution, the range of scholarship amounts offered (and the number of scholarships available in some cases), the amount of tuition, whether majoring (maj) or minor-ing (min) in music is required (req), and whether participation in an ensemble (ens)

Universities of Minnesota Offering String Scholarships

School	Amount	Tuition	Maj/Min	Ensemble
The "U"	\$1,000-10,000	\$7,316	Maj	Ens & lsn
Duluth	\$500-2,000	\$7,362	No req	2 Ens
Morris	1 st yr, free lessons; 2 nd yr and up \$500-4,000	\$6,908	Maj for freshman; no req for upper class	Lsn

Minnesota State Universities Offering String Scholarships

School	Amount	Tuition	Maj/Min	Ensemble
Bemidji	\$500-1,500 (2 given per year)	\$5,049	No req	Ens & lsn
Mankato	\$600-1,500	\$4,506	Maj/Min	Ens
Moorhead	\$400-1,000 (1 st yr), \$250-500 "upper class"	* \$5,288	No req	Ens & lsn
St. Cloud	\$800-1200	* \$4,775	Maj	Ens & lsn
Southwest	\$400	\$3,664	No req	Ens
Winona	up to \$4,000 (less for non-majors)	\$4,014	No req	Ens & lsn
Normandale	\$800	\$3,072	Maj	Ens

* based on 36 credits, resident

Minnesota Private Colleges Offering String Scholarships

School	Amount	Tuition	Maj/Min	Ensemble
Augsburg	\$2,500 (10 given each year)	\$19,398	No req	Ens & lsn
Bethany Lutheran	\$1,900 (music academic area)	\$14,482	3 credits/yr in an academic music class	Ens
Bethel	\$1,000-\$3,000 scholarship or paid lsn stipend	\$18,700	Lesson stipend is for 1 st and 2 nd yr only	Ens & lsn
Carleton	Based on need	\$28,362	Maj	Ens & lsn
Crown	\$200-2,000 (1 st yr); \$500-1,000 (2 nd -4 th yr)	\$13,168	No req	Ens
St. Benedict	\$2,000	\$20,685	No req	Ens
St. Catherine	\$5,000 (This scholarship ends in 2004)	\$19,520	Maj	Ens
St. Scholastica	Studio lesson fee covered	\$19,192	Maj	Ens
Concordia, Moorhead	\$1,500-3,500	\$16,560	No req	Ens & lsn
Concordia, St. Paul	\$500-2,500	\$17,326	No req	Ens & lsn
Gustavus	\$3,000 + \$460 lesson fee (40 given each yr)	\$21,330	No req	Ens & lsn
Hamline	\$3,000	\$20,582	No req	Ens & lsn
North Central University	\$1,000 and up	\$9,840	No req—but more likely if Maj	Ens, recital class, conducting lab
Northwestern College	\$500-2,500	\$17,400	No req	Ens
St. John's	\$2,000	\$20,685	No req	Ens
St. Mary's	\$750-2,000	\$16,315	No req	No req
St. Olaf	\$1,500-\$6,000	\$23,650	No req	Ens & lsn

or a lesson (lsn) is required.

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