



VANDERBILT
Blair Academy
at Vanderbilt

Music education for children, youth, and adults

COURSE OFFERINGS | SPRING 2025



WELCOME TO BLAIR ACADEMY

Blair Academy has something for everyone. This year, we are celebrating the 60th anniversary of the Blair Academy! From our humble beginnings in a former fraternity house on 18th Avenue,



Blair Academy has grown into an integral part of Nashville's musical community, instructing hundreds of students every year from Middle Tennessee and beyond!

REGISTRATION STEPS

STEP ONE: CREATE AN ACCOUNT ON VUPACE

Registration for all courses, lessons, classes, and ensembles can be accomplished on [VUPACE](#). If you have not taken a course at the Blair Academy before, you will need to create a VUPACE account for the student and complete the [New Student Application](#). Once this application is approved, you will receive confirmation via email, and you can then register for courses.

STEP TWO: FIND YOUR COURSE

You can visit the [Blair Academy Programs Page](#) on VUPACE for a complete listing of our offerings. Alternatively, you can search for your chosen course via the search bar in the upper-right corner.

STEP THREE: CHECK OUT

Once you have found your course, you can add the correct section to your cart and click the cart icon to begin the checkout process. Any additional required forms can be completed during checkout.

Trouble registering? [Here's a helpful video outlining registration on VUPACE](#). For further questions, contact Elm Stephenson, the Blair Academy registrar, at elm.a.stephenson@vanderbilt.edu or 615-322-7655.

SCHOLARSHIPS

Blair Academy at Vanderbilt is committed to making the study of music possible for all qualified students. Robust scholarships are available to qualified students based on merit and financial need.

MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

Students in 12th grade and under are eligible to audition for scholarships based on musical ability. Auditions for merit based scholarships are heard in the spring each year to receive awards for the following academic year. Students must be placed with a Blair Academy private lesson instructor before applying for scholarship.

TIMELINE FOR MERIT SCHOLARSHIPS

FEBRUARY: Scholarship applications open

MARCH: Scholarship applications due (including tax documentation from the previous year and at least one teacher recommendation)

APRIL: Auditions take place with Blair Academy faculty

SUMMER: scholarships for the upcoming school year are awarded

NEED-BASED SCHOLARSHIPS

Students in 12th grade and under are eligible for need based scholarships based on income. Most need based applications for private instruction are accepted in the spring semester, but they can be accepted on a rolling basis.

Vanderbilt Youth Orchestras and Vanderbilt Youth Choirs scholarships are awarded separately from private lesson scholarships. Please contact your ensemble instructor for further information about these awards.

For more information on scholarship applications and auditions, visit [Blair Academy's Scholarships and Financial Aid page](#). Contact Elm Stephenson, the Blair Academy registrar, to apply or for any questions about Blair Academy scholarships.

VANDERBILT YOUTH CHOIRS

The tiered program of seven choirs for children in grades 1–12 is classically based, with strong emphases on healthy vocal production, music reading skills, and performance.

Artistic Director: Mary Biddlecombe
(615) 343-3167 or mary.biddlecombe@vanderbilt.edu

Administrator: Julie Claverie
(615) 343-3167 or julie.claverie@vanderbilt.edu

Tucker Biddlecombe, Decani (formerly the Nashville Boychoir) **and Cantori** (formerly the Young Men's Chorus) **director**

Sarah Bronchetti, Training Choir and Young Singers of Blair director

Spring auditions for all groups are on Monday, December 16 from 5:00–7:30 p.m., and on Tuesday, December 17 from 5:00–7:30 p.m. in room 1109A at the Blair School of Music. Please sign up for an appointment time on our website at <https://blair.vanderbilt.edu/blairacademy/youth-choirs/>

Tuition: Concert Choir and Cantori \$469; Blair Choristers and Decani \$379; Young Singers of Blair and Training Choir \$299

NOTE: Families with more than one child in this ensemble program receive a 25 percent discount for the second child.

The VYC semester begins with Concert Choir on **Monday, January 6.**

TRAINING CHOIR

Boys and girls in grades 1–3

Singing, music fundamentals, and music activities form the core of this program.

Thursday, 5:00–6:00 p.m., Room 2192

YOUNG SINGERS OF BLAIR

Boys and girls in grades 3–5

Healthy vocal techniques, music reading skills, and music activities make this choir rewarding and fun.

Thursday, 5:00–6:00 p.m., Room 2192

CHORISTERS

Girls in grade 5 and older

Intermediate choir that sings in parts, performs regularly, and attends fall choral camp.

Monday, 6:30–7:30 p.m., Choral Hall

DECANI

Boys in grade 3 and older

Formerly the Nashville Boychoir, boys in grade 3 and older explore vocal technique and music reading skills.

Tuesday, 5:45–6:45 p.m., Choral Hall

VANDERBILT YOUTH Choirs



Photo by Kurt Heinecke

VYC CHOIRS, CONTINUED

CHORALE

Chorale is open to all students already in one of the VYC choirs. They will sing SATB music. For advanced students with excellent musicianship.

**Wednesday,
4:45–6:15 p.m.**, Choral Hall

Tuition: \$69/semester

CONCERT CHOIR

Girls in grades 8–12
This select choir performs regularly and takes a mandatory tour each summer.

**Monday,
4:45–6:15 p.m.**, Choral Hall

CANTORI

Formerly the Young Men's Chorus, boys with changed or changing voices learn how to use their emerging voices in harmony with other young men.

**Thursday,
6:10–7:20 p.m.**, Choral Hall

KINDERMUSIK

Amy Alley, Family Time instructor
amy.alley@vanderbilt.edu

This nationally acclaimed music program is designed for children from infancy to 5 years old and their caregivers. Participants enjoy singing, listening, dancing, interacting socially, and playing simple instruments. The program offers a variety of classes and summer camp programs that focus on the child's emotional development as confidence, curiosity, self-control and communication begin to take shape.

15 sessions: Begins January 9
Room 1197

Tuition: \$549 per family

FAMILY TIME

A curriculum designed for everyone!

Engaging for the youngest child yet challenging for the preschooler. Musical and developmental learning in a fun environment. One child or two...mom, dad, caregiver or grandparent...all are welcome! Tuition is priced per family.

**Thursday,
4:30-5:15 and 5:30-6:15 p.m.**

Kindermusik®





VANDERBILT YOUTH ORCHESTRAS (VYO)

Craig Madole, director • craig.a.madole@vanderbilt.edu

Visit blair.vanderbilt.edu/blair-academy/youth-orchestras for audition requirements and information.

Email craig.madole@vanderbilt.edu to schedule an audition or for questions about Vanderbilt Youth Orchestras.

Tuition: Curb Youth Symphony-\$339; Philharmonia-\$319; Repertory Orchestra-\$309; Youth Strings Orchestra, Reading Orchestra and Beginning Reading Orchestra-\$259

NOTE: Families with more than one child in VYO ensembles receive a 25 percent discount for the second child. **New this year:** students enrolled in private lessons through the Blair Academy receive a 50 percent discount on VYO ensembles.

REPERTORY ORCHESTRA

Tiffany Turner, director
tiffany.turner@vanderbilt.edu

A full orchestra experience for advancing student musicians exploring arrangements of masterworks and exciting educational orchestra literature.

Tuesday, 6:30–8:45 p.m.
Instrumental Rehearsal Hall

Begins Tuesday, January 21

CURB YOUTH SYMPHONY

Ernesto Estigarribia, artistic director and conductor
ernesto.estigarribia@vanderbilt.edu

The most prestigious youth orchestra of Middle Tennessee. Performing professional level repertoire and whole symphonic works, this orchestra rehearses weekly and will have at least 3 additional required sectional rehearsals each semester on Sunday afternoons. A side by side experience with the Nashville Symphony occurs during the spring semester.

Monday, 6:35–9:05 p.m.
Instrumental Rehearsal Hall

Begins Monday, January 6

VANDERBILT YOUTH ORCHESTRAS

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

Craig Madole, director

This full orchestra performs great masterworks of symphonic literature.

Sunday, 2:00–4:30 p.m.
Music Rehearsal Hall
(124 28th Avenue South)

Begins Sunday, January 12



STRING ORCHESTRAS

Aurora Foster, director • aurora.foster@vanderbilt.edu

Visit blair.vanderbilt.edu/blair-academy/youth-orchestras for audition requirements and information. **Orchestras begin Tuesday, January 21.**

BEGINNING READING ORCHESTRA

**Tuesdays, 5:30–6:15 p.m.,
Room 2190**

This course allows students to build reading skill in a fun environment and is best for students that have studied with his/her private teacher through most of Suzuki Volume 1.

READING ORCHESTRA

**Tuesdays, 6:15–7:00 p.m.,
Room 2190**

Students expand reading skills and build upon their musical foundation in a string orchestra environment. Students should be working in Suzuki Volume 2 or above.

YOUTH STRINGS ORCHESTRA

**Tuesdays, 7:15–8:15 p.m.,
Room 2190**

This string orchestra experience builds ensemble communication skills while expanding bow technique and advancing musicianship. Students are typically working in Suzuki Volume 3 or above.

BEGINNING AND PARTNER PIANO

Ages 4 and up, 16 weeks

Students in Partner Piano receive a combination of private and group piano instruction. In the group lesson, students learn rhythm, pitch, musical terms, and notation, using a variety of activities. Each student has a private lesson and a group lesson weekly.

Please email or call to schedule an interview with **Derek Hartman, program coordinator** derek.hartman@vanderbilt.edu • (615) 322-7651 • Room 1170

PARTNER PIANO I — \$1,239
20-minute private lesson and
30-minute group lesson weekly

PARTNER PIANO II — \$1,529
30-minute private lesson and
30-minute group lesson weekly

PARTNER PIANO III — \$2,039
45-minute private lesson and
30-minute group lesson weekly

PARTNER PIANO IV — \$2,549
60-minute private lesson and
30-minute group lesson weekly



VANDERBILT SUZUKI PROGRAM

Ages 4 and up, 16 weeks

Suzuki instruction develops musical skill and sensitivity, using listening and imitation, the same process used in learning language. Students gain poise and read music notation as they progress. New students as young as age 4 are welcome.

The Vanderbilt Suzuki Program offers instruction in violin, cello, and trumpet.

Contact the **Suzuki Program director, Zachary Ebin**, for information about joining this renowned program. zachary.ebin@vanderbilt.edu • Phone: (615) 322-7665

VANDERBILT SUZUKI PROGRAM

SUZUKI I

\$1,529

30-minute private lesson
and weekly group lesson

SUZUKI II

\$2,039

45-minute private lesson
and weekly group lesson

SUZUKI III

\$2,549

60-minute private lesson
and weekly group lesson



VANDERBILT FIDDLE PROGRAM

Crystal Plohman Wiegman, director

Ages 5 and up, 16 weeks

The Vanderbilt Fiddle Program offers a holistic approach in teaching, using the Suzuki philosophy to build solid technique and tone, along with the "Fiddle and Song" curriculum to teach traditional fiddle music. Introductory classical and historical folk styles, including old-time, bluegrass, Irish, Scottish, Texas swing, and other world styles are taught.

Beginning students have 30-minute weekly private lessons and small group experience. Second-year and above students participate in the Fiddle Frenzy performance group, which gives students the opportunity to have fun playing and learning with peers.

Please contact Crystal Plohman Wiegman to be placed with an instructor and join in the fun! crystal.plohman@vanderbilt.edu • (615) 343-6360

VANDERBILT FIDDLE Program

30-MINUTE LESSONS

\$1,529

30-minute private lesson
and weekly group lesson

45-MINUTE LESSONS

\$2,039

45-minute private lesson
and Fiddle Frenzy group
class

60-MINUTE LESSONS

\$2,549

60-minute private lesson
and Fiddle Frenzy group
class



CHAMBER MUSIC

All ages

Christina McGann, coordinator

christina.mcgann@vanderbilt.edu • (615) 322-4911

Visit blair.vanderbilt.edu/blair-academy/chamber-music for requirements and information.

This course offers weekly coaching sessions of small instrumental groups culminating in a final performance. Students will be active participants in the collaborative process, gaining a greater knowledge of ensemble techniques and widening their musical perspective.

All ages are encouraged to participate.

Tuition: \$429/semester



COLLABORATIVE PIANO

Grade 7 and up

Amy Dorfman, instructor

amy.dorfman@vanderbilt.edu
(615) 322-7688

This class will help you develop skills to work with different instrumental partners. Learn how to develop teamwork and confidence in making music with others. Pianists in grade 7 and up are welcome.

Room 2180

15 sessions

Tuition: \$449



JAZZ INSTRUCTION

ACADEMY JAZZ LISTENING

Marc Widenhofer, instructor

Have you ever wanted to learn more about jazz without the pressures of performance? This course will focus on some of jazz's major contributors through selected listening, all while studying what makes them unique.

Wednesday, 4:30–5:30 p.m., Room 2192

Begins January 8

Tuition: \$439/semester

ACADEMY JAZZ COMBO

Marc Widenhofer, instructor

Provides focused laboratory training for performance of composed and improvised small combo jazz traditions. Discussion and application of techniques associated with solo, sectional, and ensemble performance in jazz.

Sunday, 5:30–6:30 p.m., Room 1192

Begins January 12

Tuition: \$439/semester



MUSICIANSHIP STUDIO (AURAL SKILLS)

Grades 8–12, younger students with permission of instructor

Fred Sienkiewicz, instructor • fred.sienkiewicz@vanderbilt.edu

Join us to discover the secrets of sight-reading, rhythm, phrasing, and expression through an interactive and fun performance class open to all musicians. Develop deep knowledge of intervals, rhythms, scales, arpeggios, and harmonies through listening, playing, singing, and conducting while using solfège, scale degrees, or the takadimi rhythmic solfège system. Assignments for class will include melodies, etudes, patterns, and improvisation tasks to be prepared for in-class performance as well as application of class ideas to practicing and performing on your primary instrument.

Musicianship Studio is a mixed level group class offered in both fall and spring semesters and designed to be repeated and to continually challenge students to grow their musicianship skills.



MUSICIANSHIP STUDIO

Monday, 4:30–5:20 p.m., Room 2192

15 sessions: Begins January 6

Tuition: \$299/semester

INTERACTIVE MUSIC THEORY



Grade 8 to adult

Kevin Rilling, instructor • kevin.a.rilling@vanderbilt.edu

Understanding how music is put together can inform our performing ability, as well as our personal satisfaction we get from the music we listen to. Each student's learning and understanding is personally guided through weekly class meetings and regular worksheets and tests. Classes on Zoom allow for more personalized instruction. Students are able to develop collegiality and community.

A placement test is required for all new students. Be sure to register early, as space is limited. Contact Kevin Rilling at kevin.a.rilling@vanderbilt.edu.

Monday, 4:00–4:50 p.m.
(Zoom, intermediate/
advanced)

Thursday, 4:00–4:50 p.m.
(Zoom, intermediate/
advanced)

Thursday, 6:00–6:50 p.m.
(in-person, room 2133
intermediate/advanced)

Monday, 5:30–6:20 p.m.
(in-person, room 2175,
beginner students only)

Thursday, 5:00–5:50 p.m.
(in-person room 2133,
intermediate/advanced)

Monday classes begin January 6; Thursday classes begin January 9

15 sessions, Tuition: \$319/semester

MUSICOLOGY AND ETHNOMUSICOLOGY

Grade 9 to adult

Melanie Lowe, instructor
m.lowe@vanderbilt.edu

MUSIC HISTORY I (YEAR 1)

History and culture come alive in this year-long overview of music from the Middle Ages to the present.

Tuesday, 4:35–5:25 p.m., Room 2175
15 sessions: Begins January 7

Tuition: \$319/semester

MUSIC HISTORY II (YEAR 2)

Special topics will be explored in depth in this year-long course, including specific composers, genres, styles, and historical concepts.

Tuesday, 5:35–6:25 p.m., Room 2175
15 sessions: Begins January 7

Tuition: \$319/semester



ADULT COURSES

HIT SONGWRITERS SERIES

Deanna Walker, instructor • deanna.walker@vanderbilt.edu

Special guest artists each week make this class sparkle. From Nashville, Los Angeles, Atlanta, and beyond, guests include the music industry's finest songwriters, publishers, producers, performers, and experts. Connect, ask questions, hear the stories behind the songs, and get your songs critiqued by Professor Walker and industry guests. The class is open to audiences worldwide, presented on Zoom, and limited to 18 full participants (those who can get their songs critiqued), with an unlimited number of observers (observers can participate in every way other than submitting material for critique).



Tuesday, 7:00–9:00 p.m., Zoom

15 sessions: Begins January 7

Full Participant Tuition: \$339 | Observer Section Tuition: \$149



CREATIVETS



CreatiVets has partnered with Vanderbilt's Blair School of Music to create a songwriting course exclusively for veterans. CreatiVets mission is to empower wounded veterans to heal through the arts and music. The class, hosted by veteran Rick Beresford and Deanna Walker, and is free to veterans around the country on a first-come, first-served basis. It's presented entirely on Zoom and is limited to 12 participants. The class will cover a range of topics, including songwriting craft, creativity, an introduction to production and recording, and will include song critiques with the hosts and major music industry publishers.

For more information, contact info@creativets.org.

Monday, 6:30–8:30 p.m. CST, Zoom

Begins January 13

Tuition: \$100

BUSINESS OF MUSIC

Dustin Kovacic, instructor • dustin.kovacic@vanderbilt.edu

This course will explore the music business in-depth, with a focus on understanding how music is protected and monetized. We will break down the rights associated with music and music creators and will explore key music industry agreements, from recording and publishing deals to management and live performance contracts and the rights implicated in each. We will also discuss how royalties are generated and ways in which music creatives can properly collect and utilize these resources.



Thursday, 7:00-9:00 p.m., Room 1167

6 Sessions: Begins January 9

Tuition: \$159/semester

VANDERBILT COMMUNITY CHORUS

David B. Williams, director • david.b.williams@vanderbilt.edu

The VCC is an auditioned chorus composed of singers from throughout the middle Tennessee community, and performs some of the most challenging music in the repertoire. Programs are diverse and are just as likely to include music of JS Bach as they are Stephen Sondheim, Jake Runestad or Moses Hogan. The group performs 2-3 concerts per year and tours internationally every 3-4 years. During the 2024-25 season, the choir will celebrate its 25th anniversary with commemorative performances.



Concert dates this season are **January 26 and May 3.**

Auditions are held by appointment with director David Williams:
(615) 322-7164 • <https://www.vanderbilt.edu/community-chorus/>

Tuesday, 7:00–9:00 p.m., Choral Hall

Begins January 7

Tuition: \$110/semester



SIGN UP FOR PRIVATE LESSONS

Every new student must contact the area contact faculty member for a placement interview before registering for lessons. Faculty are happy to answer questions about lessons, procedures, and expectations.

BRASS INSTRUMENTS

Horn: Leslie Norton

Trumpet: Fred Sienkiewicz

Trombone: Nick Laufer

Tuba/Euphonium: Bethany Wiese

Area Contact: Fred Sienkiewicz • (615) 322-7651 • fred.sienkiewicz@vanderbilt.edu

FIDDLE

Crystal Plohman Wiegman • (615) 343-6360 • crystal.plohman@vanderbilt.edu

GUITAR (Classical)

Richard Todd • (615) 322-7651 • richard.todd@vanderbilt.edu

HARP

Rachel Miller • (615) 322-7651 • rachel.miller.1@vanderbilt.edu

JAZZ INSTRUMENTS

Jazz Guitar: Jerry Kimbrough

Jazz Piano: Pat Coil

Jazz Brass: Nick Laufer

Jazz Drum Set: Marc Widenhofer

Jazz Bass: Rob Linton

Jazz Saxophone: Jimmy Bowland

Jazz Voice: Vinéecia Buchanan

Area Contact: Marc Widenhofer • (615) 322-7651 • marc.widenhofer@vanderbilt.edu

PERCUSSION

Ji Hye Jung • (615) 322-7669 • ji.h.jung@vanderbilt.edu

PIANO (for students with one year or more of previous study)

Jama Reagan • (615) 322-4938 • jama.reagan@vanderbilt.edu

PIANO (for beginners)

Derek Hartman • (615) 322-7651 • derek.hartman@vanderbilt.edu

STRING INSTRUMENTS

Violin: Connie Heard

Viola: Eric Wong

Cello: Felix Wang

Double Bass: Glen Wanner

Area Contact: Connie Heard • (615) 322-7681 • connie.heard@vanderbilt.edu

VOICE (high school age and older)

Tyler Nelson • (615) 322-7685 • tyler.s.nelson@vanderbilt.edu

WOODWIND INSTRUMENTS

Flute: Molly Barth

Oboe: Jared Hauser

Clarinet: Mariam Adam

Bassoon: Peter Kolkay

Saxophone: Brian Utley

Area Contact: Jared Hauser • (615) 322-7663 • jared.hauser@vanderbilt.edu

REGISTRATION

Blair uses an online registration and payment system, VUPACE. New students should visit vupace.vanderbilt.edu to create a profile and submit a new student application. After application approval, registration may be completed online.

Credit card payments are accepted. Refunds are not made after the first week of classes. Payment may be made in full at registration or in installments. Tuition for spring courses is due by **May 1**. See Elm Stephenson, Blair Academy registrar, for assistance.

Registration begins December 2, 2024

Office hours: 9:00 a.m.–5:00 p.m.

PRIVATE PRECOLLEGE AND ADULT LESSON FEES

ALL ORCHESTRAL INSTRUMENTS, PIANO, GUITAR, VOICE, AND JAZZ

One 30-minute lesson weekly—\$1,399

One 45-minute lesson weekly—\$1,969

One 60-minute lesson weekly—\$2,479

PARTNER PIANO, FIDDLE, AND SUZUKI (INCLUDES GROUP LESSON)

One 30-minute lesson weekly—\$1,529

One 45-minute lesson weekly—\$2,039

One 60-minute lesson weekly—\$2,549

The precollege semester is 16 weeks and includes 15 lessons and a jury/performance exam. New students may submit a need-based scholarship application at the time of registration, after having interviewed with a faculty member.

BLAIR ACADEMY CONTACT INFORMATION

REGISTRATION AND ENROLLMENT QUESTIONS

Elm Stephenson

Blair Academy Registrar

(615) 322-7655

elm.a.stephenson@vanderbilt.edu

BLAIR ACADEMY PROGRAM WEBSITE

blair.vanderbilt.edu/blair-academy

GENERAL QUESTIONS OR CONCERNS

Mary Biddlecombe

Director, Blair Academy at Vanderbilt

(615) 343-3167

mary.biddlecombe@vanderbilt.edu



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