PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS AT CALTECH

CHORAL MUSIC

The Caltech Glee Club is a large non-auditioned choir open to all members of the Caltech community, including undergrads, graduate students, postdocs, alumni, faculty, and staff. No formal experience is necessary to join, but every singer makes the commitment to full rehearsal attendance since each member is vital to the choir’s musical artistry. The Glee Club rehearses three hours a week, presents two concerts each year, participates annually in the Pacific Southwest Intercollegiate Choral Association Festival, and sings for various campus events. Choral repertoire spans centuries and styles, ranging from medieval music to 21st century works, folk songs, and world music. The Glee Club regularly collaborates with the Caltech Symphony Orchestra to present major works. Past performances include Bach Magnificat, Handel Messiah, Haydn Lord Nelson Mass, Mozart Requiem, Brahms A German Requiem, Vaughan Williams Dona nobis pacem, Orff Carmina Burana and Lauridsen Lux Aeterna.

The Caltech Chamber Singers is an auditioned group of advanced singers who perform challenging vocal repertoire in a small mixed ensemble. All members of Chamber Singers are also members of the Glee Club. With only one hour and fifteen minutes of scheduled rehearsal each week, Chamber Singers expect to spend time working on music outside of rehearsal. Performances are typically scheduled in December and April.

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC

The Caltech Orchestra is a full seventy-piece symphony orchestra comprised of Caltech students, faculty, staff and select community members. The orchestra rehearses once per week and performs three pairs of concerts annually. Recent programs have included symphonies by Shostakovich, Mahler, Brahms, and Beethoven, as well as contemporary compositions. The orchestra sponsors an annual concerto competition to provide exceptionally accomplished students with the opportunity to perform as soloists with the orchestra. The spring concert often features a collaboration with the Caltech Glee Club.

Caltech's Chamber Music program provides professional coaching and performance opportunities for approximately thirty separate small ensembles of varying instrumentation. Instrumentalists are grouped into duets, trios, quartets, etc. with those of similar abilities, and rehearse weekly in preparation for public recitals, master classes, and other performance opportunities both on and off-campus. Ensembles perform a wide variety of music, ranging from Renaissance dances for recorders to Baroque trio sonatas, classical string quartets, piano quartets by the Romantic masters, and twentieth century music for winds. The Chamber Music Program also includes music for guitar ensemble, and music for piano four-hands (duets) and two pianos (duos).

The Caltech Wind Orchestra is comprised of select performers of wind and percussion instruments drawn from the undergraduate and graduate student population at Caltech, plus faculty, alumni, staff and community members from Caltech and the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory (JPL). Currently numbering at approximately 80 musicians, this group rehearses once a week and performs three programs of repertoire each academic year, selected from the finest traditional and contemporary music from around the world. The ensemble (formerly known as the Concert Band) has featured such guest artists as Wayne Bergeron, Jens Lindemann, David Rejano Cantero, Hye Sung Choe, Allen Vizzuti, David Shifrin, Eddie Daniels, Jim Self and Frank Ticheli, and has taken on notable recording projects and tours to such locations as Carnegie Hall and China.

The Caltech Jazz Band rehearses on Wednesday nights and regularly features renowned jazz artists to perform as guest soloists and clinicians. Past clinicians have included members of Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, the Brian Setzer Orchestra, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, plus the Count Basie and Duke Ellington Orchestras. Featured guest soloists include Flea, Wayne Bergeron, Andy Martin, Rebeca Mauleon, Billy Childs, Steve Houghton, Bill Watrous, Bobby Shew, Gary Foster, Greg Bisonette, and Carmen Bradford. Caltech jazz groups have recorded several CDs including, "The Capitol Sessions," recorded at the famous Capitol Studios in Hollywood. Members of the jazz bands have also performed at the Great Wall in China. The Jazz Improvisation class meets for one hour each week and is open to all musicians from Caltech. Various styles of music and the theory behind improvisation are played and discussed. The improvisation class also performs in public and invites guest artists and coaches to visit and share their concepts.
Guitar classes are offered each term. Beginning Guitar requires no previous experience and provides an introduction to basic technique and musicianship, including classical, flamenco, and folk music. Intermediate Guitar emphasizes reading notes on the entire guitar fingerboard, and offers a more thorough study of classical technique and musicianship. Advanced Guitar for the serious student, provides exploration of the expanded classical repertoire and a thorough treatment of musical interpretation and performance techniques. Works from the Renaissance through the Contemporary period are covered. The Guitar Ensemble provides more advanced players opportunities to practice and perform.

VISUAL ARTS

The Ceramics class is designed for the beginning to advanced student. Students are given demonstrations with working on the wheel, slab roller, sculpture, and glaze techniques. Instruction on creating functional forms is also provided. Ongoing critiques with the instructor are an integral part of the Ceramics course.

Painting and Drawing class emphasizes the visual communication of ideas and personal research. Varied media, live models, and a growing reference library support students at all levels of expertise. The Silkscreen and Silk Painting studio is used extensively for ditch day stacks and other student activities. A class is offered to teach students basic techniques and provide advice for ongoing projects. Virtual and Augmented Reality painting and exploration is available during these classes with an HTC VIVE, other hardware and cutting edge software.

THEATER ARTS

In its fourth decade, Theater Arts at Caltech (TACIT) continues to perform a wide diversity of productions with an emphasis on original plays written for the Caltech community, musical theater and the student-run club Explicit. Led by experienced professionals, TACIT offers classes in acting, directing, storytelling, playwriting, and improvisation, as well as expertise in sound, lighting design, costumes, properties, and publicity. Students join an ensemble of performers and technicians drawn from Caltech students, faculty, staff, JPL, and alumni. In recent years science and culture have been featured prominently, with the world premieres of the original musicals Boldly Go! (2016) and Alice Through The Wormhole (2015), as well as Mate (2012) Pasadena Babalon (2010), and Rocket Girl (2008). Other recent and notable productions include Bradbury 100 (2020), Avenue Q (2019), and Company (2017) along with She Kills Monsters (2017), Rent (2014), Rashomon (2013), The Rover (2012), The Three Musketeers (2011), and the student-driven musical I Love You, You’re Perfect, Now Change (2010).

FACILITIES

The new Frautschi Rehearsal Hall, located in the Hameetman Center, provides an outstanding space and acoustics for our large ensembles and classes.

The Caltech Music House provides practice rooms equipped with a piano. Some rooms have grand pianos, including one room containing two grand pianos. The rooms vary in size, able to accommodate both individual practice and small group rehearsals.

Performances take place in Ramo Auditorium, Beckman Auditorium, and the Dabney Lounge.

A new Recording Studio will soon be open in the Hameetman Center. A temporary studio is located in the Dabney Student Activities Center. Membership in the studio is by application and requires an orientation and prior approval for use. For more information on the Caltech Studio, visit http://studio.caltech.edu

The Caltech Theater House (TACIT) offers an extensive library of books and movies, plus rehearsal and meeting space for the Caltech community. Theater facilities include a costume shop and scene shop containing wardrobes, furniture, and props.

The Art Chateau houses silkscreen facilities where students create T-shirts for many campus activities, including Ditch Day. A model stand for life drawing anchors the studio for silkpainting, watercolor,
acrylics, oils, etc. A large art reference library supports both creativity and relaxation. In the print studio a 4’ x 6’ press prints metal, stone, and block.

PERFORMING AND VISUAL ARTS CONTACT INFORMATION

Wind Orchestra & Guitar Classes
Director of Performing and Visual Arts Matthew Elgart: MC 1-67, (626) 395-2679
Glenn Price: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3714 melgart@caltech.edu

Glee Club and Chamber Singers Painting and Silkscreen
Nancy Sulahian: MC 2-70, (626) 395-6260 Jim Barry: MC 0-67, (626) 395-3295
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Orchestra Ceramics
Glenn Price: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3714 Leslie Plunkett: MC 0-67, (626) 395-3295
gprice@caltech.edu plunkett@caltech.edu

Chamber Music TACIT (Theater Arts at Caltech)
Maia Jasper White: MC 2-70, (626) 395-6198 Brian Brophy: MC 2-70 (626) 395-3696
mjasper@caltech.edu Brophy@caltech.edu

Jazz Band Performing and Visual Arts Office
Barb Catlin: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3295 Cindy De Mesa: MC 2-70 (626) 395-3295
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Please complete the interest forms for Music and Theater Arts by September 1st. You will find the forms on the “To Do” list that can be accessed from: https://deans.caltech.edu/Services/Newstudents