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 and Orff Carmina Burana.

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 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 orchestra comprised of Caltech students, faculty, staff and select community members. The orchestra meets once per week and gives three pairs of concerts annually. Recent programs have included symphonies by Mahler, Brahms, and Beethoven, as well as contemporary compositions. The orchestra also sponsors an annual concerto competition to give exceptionally accomplished student soloists the opportunity to perform with the orchestra. The Spring concert usually features a collaboration with the Glee Club, including past performances of "Carmina Burana".

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-Occidental Wind Orchestra is comprised of select performers of wind and percussion instruments drawn from the undergraduate and graduate student population at Caltech and Occidental College, plus faculty, alumni, staff and community members from Caltech and the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratories (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, Hye Sung Choe, Allen Vizzutí, 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 is directed by Barb Catlin and rehearses on Wednesday nights. The band invites local jazz professionals to perform as guest artists and clinicians. Members from Big Bad Voodoo Daddy, the Brian Setzer Orchestra, The Red Hot Chili Peppers, the Count Basie and Duke Ellington Orchestras have cliniced the band. Guest artists include Flea, Wayne Bergeron, Andy Martin, Rebeca Mauleon, Billy Childs, Steve Houghton, Bill Watrous, Bobby Shew, Gary Foster, Greg Bisonette, Carmen Bradford, and others. Caltech jazz groups have recorded several CDs including, "The Capitol Sessions," recorded at the famous Capitol Studios in Hollywood. Members of the jazz bands also recently performed at the Great Wall in China. The Jazz Improv Class, taught by Barb Catlin, meets for one hour every week during school. Any musician from Caltech may participate in the class. Various styles of music and the theory behind improvisation are discussed and played. The improv class also plays in public and has guest artists and coaches come in to share concepts.
Guitar class is offered each term. Beginning Guitar requires no previous experience and provides an introduction to basic technique and musicianship, and includes 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 towards performances.

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 given. 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 plays with an emphasis on original plays written for the Caltech community, musical theater and student run club Explicit. Under the direction of professional actor and director Brian Brophy, TACIT offers classes in acting, directing, storytelling, playwriting, and improvisation with local professionals in sound, lighting design, costumes, properties, and publicity. Students join an ensemble of performers/technicians drawn from Caltech faculty/staff/students, JPL, and alumni. Under Brophy's direction, science and culture have been featured prominently with the world premieres of original musicals Boldly Go! (2016) and Alice Through The Wormhole (2015), as well as Mate (2012) Pasadena Babalon (2010), Galileo (2009), Karel Capek’s Rossum’s Universal Robots (2009) and Rocket Girl (2008). Other recent and notable productions include. 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

State-of-the-art individual practice rooms, two of which offer variable acoustics, are located in Caltech's Music House. Each practice room contains an excellent piano, including several grand pianos. The Caltech Recording Studio is relocating to the basement of the Hameetman Center. Further details coming soon. The Recording Studio is for recording only, and not for rehearsals. Membership in the studio is by application only, and new members must have an orientation before they can be approved to use the studio. It has some of the best equipment available, including high-quality microphones and amps. The Studio computer contains Pro-Tools Digital recording software. To learn more about the Caltech Recording Studio, please visit the studio web page at: http://studio.caltech.edu. 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 &
Director of Performing and Visual Arts
Glenn Price: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3714
gprice@caltech.edu

Guitar Classes
Matthew Elgart: MC 1-67, (626) 395-2679
melgart@caltech.edu

Glee Club and Chamber Singers
Nancy Sulahian: MC 2-70, (626) 395-6260
sulahian@caltech.edu

Painting and Silkscreen
Jim Barry: MC 0-67, (626) 395-3295
jibarry@caltech.edu

Orchestra
Glenn Price: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3714
gprice@caltech.edu

Ceramics
Leslie Plunkett: MC -67, (626) 395-3295

Chamber Music
Maia Jasper White: MC 2-70, (626) 395-6198
mjasper@caltech.edu

TACIT (Theater Arts at Caltech)
Brian Brophy: MC 2-70 (626) 395-3696
Brophy@caltech.edu

Jazz Band
Barb Catlin: MC 2-70, (626) 395-3295
bcatlin@caltech.edu

Performing and Visual Arts Office
Cindy De Mesa: MC 2-70 (626) 395-3295
cdemesa@caltech.edu

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