

Thurnauer Master Class FAQ's

What is a Master Class?

A master class is an open lesson where selected students perform for and receive guidance from a distinguished musician in front of an audience. These sessions offer a rare opportunity to witness the artistic and technical aspects of musicality in real time.

What are the Benefits of Attending a Master Class?

While student musicians gain direct instruction, audience members—regardless of their experience with any instrument—benefit from observing a master class. Takeaways include the problem-solving process and how phrasing, expression, and technique can be refined to elevate a performance. Attendees also gain insight into the music itself and how artistry is passed from one generation to another.

Attending a master class can deepen musical understanding, even for those who don't play the featured instrument. The concepts discussed—such as shaping a musical phrase, improving tone production, and enhancing stage presence—are relevant across all instruments, including voice. By seeing how a master musician approaches teaching and interpretation, attendees can evaluate their own musical practice. Additionally, non-musicians or casual listeners can develop a greater appreciation for the craft behind each performance, in turn making concerts more engaging and meaningful.

Who can attend a Master Class? Do I have to be a musician to attend?

Our master classes are open to anyone interested in music and how a great artist/teacher shares knowledge, wisdom, and technique. One does not need to be a musician to enjoy a Thurnauer Master Class!

Who performs in Master Classes at Thurnauer?

Our master classes engage young performers at every level and serve as career development opportunities for New Jersey's music educators, exposing them to innovative, exciting teaching techniques. Participation is by audition, with students nominated by their teachers. If you or your students are interested in any of our upcoming events, please submit a nomination form.

Thurnauer has presented more than 100 Master Class artists since 1996!

These artists include world-renowned musicians, such as violinists Pinchas Zukerman, Pamela Frank, and Itzhak Perlman; cellist Steven Isserlis; pianists Claude Frank and Richard Goode; guitarist Sharon Isbin; jazz bassist Rufus Reid; and flutist Jasmine Choi. See a full list [here](#).

Who is eligible to audition?

- Thurnauer Master Classes are open to pre-college musicians from a wide range of ages and levels of training; from elementary to advanced-level students.

- The criteria for selecting participants include good preparation, serious dedication, and the ability to respond to suggestions in a class situation, whether the student is performing a standard concerto or a piece from the beginning repertoire.
- Selected students must be available to participate in the master class on the date of the master class.
- Repertoire (other than sonatas with piano) should be played by memory.
- Guitar Master Classes are open to pre-college students in New Jersey, New York, and Connecticut.
- For Handler Master Classes (violin, cello, and/or piano), the following criteria apply:
 - Applicants must be New Jersey or Rockland County, NY residents and must be studying privately at a school or studio in New Jersey or in Rockland County, NY. All students studying privately at Thurnauer are eligible, regardless of where they reside.
 - Students currently enrolled in the preparatory division of a New York or Pennsylvania conservatory are not eligible to participate, unless they are also studying privately at the Thurnauer School of Music.

How does one sign up for an audition?

1. **Teacher Approval:** Private teachers must first approve the nomination of their students.
2. **Informing Parents:** Teachers then inform the parents that they can submit a nomination.
3. **Parent Submission:** Parents complete the online nomination form for the specific master class.
4. **Separate Forms:** Each master class has its own unique online nomination form.

Thank you to our Supporters!

We are grateful to the families who generously supported the creation of the master class series at Thurnauer through the establishment of the following funds:

- The Sylvia and Jacob Handler Master Class Fund, established by Drs. Alan and Joan Handler in 1995
- The Neus Family Flute Master Class Fund, established by Karen and Mike Neus
- The Beverly and Lewis Luring Guitar Master Class Fund, established by Dr. Brett Luring and Heidi Chen Luring