

Frequently Asked Questions

What is historical performance? What do students get out of it?

Historical performers attempt to bring an era's music to life according to the tastes and practices of musicians of the time. Musicians in the Baroque era wrote detailed instructions about the use of the bow, and following them brings out the zest and energy in Baroque music. There were no baton-wielding conductors, so historical performers are all chamber musicians.

Any exploration of another musical styles makes students into better listeners and more versatile players! The agility that EMYA students develop in Baroque phrasing and articulation benefits all their playing. Students who might go on to study their instrument in college will have an edge in knowing more about the field.

Is this program likely to be a good fit for a particular student?

EMYA seems to best serve students who resonate with many of these statements:

- *I enjoy learning something new.*
- *I'm intellectually curious about early instruments, the idea of historical style, etc.*
- *I've heard a Baroque ensemble and felt drawn to the sound!*
- *I'm excited to use a Baroque bow.*
- *I love the feeling of working to get something just right.*
- *EITHER I just love playing music and am happy to add one more specialty... OR I haven't quite found my "voice" in the classical world yet and I'm looking for my people.*
- *I'm here to learn and do my best work, more than to compete for stardom. I respect my colleagues who may be less or more advanced than me.*
- *I'm drawn to the chamber music aspect of all Baroque playing: Even in a Baroque chamber orchestra, everyone's individual sound matters, and we're all co-leaders.*
- *If I'm an advanced student, I might find it refreshing to focus on full musical sophistication without as much note-cramming in the practice room as my high-level modern-classical projects require.*

What level do students need to be at to participate?

Our projects serve a wide range of levels, from intermediate to advanced:

Intermediate participants need strong basics in place: please be able to play with comfort and excellent intonation up to two flats or three sharps (in first position, or first through third) and to use all parts of the bow so that you can follow directions about articulation. Students who haven't had an advanced ensemble experience yet will be amazed at the level of polish and musicality we can discover together!

Advanced players may have the opportunity to engage with virtuosic solo material. With Baroque style they'll enjoy a whole new palette for shaping and articulation, and they'll be inspired by working with world-class basso continuo accompaniment. Half of high-school-age EMYA players have gone on to conservatory studies in classical and/or historical performance.