



26/27 Audition Requirements

This ensemble isn't just about playing rock music—it's about building a fully functioning, student ensemble that functions like a **professional touring group**. From lead vocalists and instrumentalists to sound engineers and stage crew, every member plays an essential role in bringing our performances to life.

We're looking for **dedicated, motivated students** who are ready to challenge themselves musically, work as a team, and contribute to something bigger than themselves. If you bring a strong work ethic, a collaborative mindset, and a genuine passion for music, skill, and talent, we want to see you rock.

The Miami Beach Rock Ensemble is more than just an after-school activity—it's a **legacy**. Founded in 1972, the group is the **first high school rock ensemble in our nation's history**.

When preparing for your audition, remember: **song selection is only one part of the process**. You are expected to learn and perform **all required material** for your instrument or role. Incomplete preparation may result in disqualification from the audition process.

If you have questions, need support, or want help preparing, don't hesitate to reach out. The **Student Manager** listed on the audition application form is here to assist you.

[**AUDITION APPLICATION**](#)

[**TIME SLOT SELECTION**](#)

[**PRACTICE TRACKS**](#)

(Instruments use regular track, vocalist karaoke track)

Song Selection (Select One)

Yes — Roundabout
Journey — Any Way You Want It
Led Zeppelin — Immigrant Song
Queen — Somebody to Love
Heart — Magic Man

I. VOCAL AUDITION

The Miami Beach Rock Ensemble typically features **4 to 5 lead vocalists** each year. We're looking for dynamic performers who can confidently command the stage and bring energy, emotion, and versatility to a wide range of rock music—from classic hits to modern anthems. Vocalists should be comfortable singing both lead and background parts and be open to collaboration, as most performances include harmonies, duets, and full ensemble vocals.

We're looking for vocalists who demonstrate:

- Strong **stage presence** and connection with the audience
- Solid **vocal tone** and stylistic range
- Clear **diction** and **lyrical delivery**
- Good **pitch accuracy** and the ability to sing in tune
- Tight **rhythm and timing**, especially when performing with a band
- **Team spirit**—you'll often be performing in coordination with other singers and musicians

Audition Components:

a. Prepared Song

- Choose **one song** from the **approved list**.
- You will sing along with a **provided instrumental backing track**.
- Backing tracks and song info will be sent via email prior to your audition.

b. A Cappella Performance

- Sing a short song of your choice (verse & chorus recommended) **without accompaniment**.
- This section highlights your vocal control, pitch, tone, and emotional expression.

c. Harmonization Test

- You'll be asked to harmonize using intervals such as **thirds and fifths**.
- This helps us assess your ear and your ability to blend vocally with other ensemble members.

Tip: Confidence and preparation go a long way. We're not looking for perfection—we're looking for vocalists who are ready to grow, collaborate, and rock the stage.

II. KEYBOARD AUDITION

The Rock Ensemble only selects **1 keyboardist** each year. Keyboardists in this group are not just rhythm players—they're expected to bring **musical versatility, strong harmonic knowledge**, and **stage confidence** to both rehearsal and performance. You'll often be supporting vocalists, adding melodic texture, and occasionally leading sections of the song.

We're looking for students who can adapt to a variety of rock styles, from piano-driven ballads to synth-heavy arrangements. Whether your background is classical, jazz, or contemporary, what matters most is your **chord fluency, timing, and expressiveness**.

You will be evaluated on:

- **Stage Presence** – confidence, engagement, and professionalism
- **Tempo & Timing** – ability to stay locked in with a band or backing track
- **Chord Knowledge & Execution** – clean voicing, accurate fingering, and smooth transitions
- **Scale Technique** – fluidity, accuracy, and finger control

Audition Components:

a. Prepared Song

- Choose **one song** from the approved list provided.
- You'll perform with the **provided backing track**.
- A keyboard will be provided, but you are welcome to bring your own if preferred.

b. Chord Proficiency

- Demonstrate comfort and accuracy playing the following chord types in multiple keys:
 - **Major**
 - **Dominant 7**
 - **Major 7**
 - **Dominant 9**
 - **Major 9**
 - **Minor**
 - **Minor 7**
 - **Diminished 7**
 - **Augmented**
 - **Suspended 2**

- **Suspended 4**

c. Major Scales

- Perform **all major scales, two octaves**, using both hands.
 - Accuracy, evenness, and confidence in execution will be assessed.
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III. GUITAR AUDITION

Each year, **2 to 3 guitarists** are selected to join the Rock Ensemble, one as a lead, and two as rhythm. Guitarists in this group need to have a **good foundation in chord theory, a developing solo voice**, a sense of **style and tone identity**, and a **performing presence**.

We're looking for players who not only have technical skill, but also know how to play with intention—whether they're driving the energy of a song or laying back to support vocals. Flexibility, tone awareness, and musicality are key.

You will be evaluated on:

- **Stage Presence** – comfort, confidence, and ability to engage while performing
- **Chord Knowledge & Execution** – fluency in common and extended chord forms
- **Scale Fluency** – comfort navigating the fretboard cleanly and musically

Audition Components:

a. Prepared Song

- Choose **one song** from the approved list provided.
- You will perform with the provided backing track.

b. Chord Proficiency

- Demonstrate these chord types in multiple positions/voicings:
 - **Major**
 - **Dominant 7**
 - **Major 7**
 - **Dominant 9**
 - **Major 9**
 - **Minor**
 - **Minor 7**
 - **Diminished 7**
 - **Augmented**
 - **Suspended 2**

Suspended 4

c. Scales

- Play **two scales** of your choice (major or minor).
- Focus on clean technique, control, and confidence.

d. Sound & Equipment

- Bring any personal gear that reflects your style and makes you feel most comfortable playing.
 - **Bring your own guitar, strap, cable, tuner, and any pedals you use.**
 - An **amplifier with clean, distortion, and reverb** will be provided.
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IV. BASS AUDITION

The Rock Ensemble selects **1 bassist** each year to serve as the **foundation of the band's rhythm section**. As a bassist, you're not just following along—you're driving the groove, supporting harmonic structure, and holding the band together alongside the drums.

We're looking for bassists who have a good sense of **timing, tonal control**, and **musical feel**. You don't need to be flashy or overly technical, but you do need to **lock in with the band**, adapt to different styles of rock, and **play with confidence** and consistency.

You will be evaluated on the following:

- **Stage Presence** – Your comfort, focus, and confidence while performing
- **Tempo & Groove** – Ability to stay in the pocket with steady timing
- **Chord Progressions** – Understanding and navigating common rock progressions
- **Scales** – Clean, controlled scale playing with accurate fingering and tone

Audition Components:

a. Prepared Song

- Select **one song** from the approved list.
- A **bass amp will be provided**, but you must bring your own **bass guitar, strap, cable, and tuner**.
- Focus on playing **with authority and musicality**—know your part, feel the groove, and show us your stage energy.

b. Constructed Bass Line over I–IV–V Progression

Demonstrate your ability to create a solid, musical bass line using these patterns:

1. **Root–5th**
2. **Root–3rd–5th**
3. **Root–5th–Octave**
 - Play each pattern clearly and in time. Groove and feel are just as important as accuracy.

c. Scales

- Perform **one major** and **one minor** scale of your choice.
- Use even tone and good technique. You may be asked to play them at different tempos or in different positions.

Tip: Don't underestimate the power of simplicity. We're not looking for the flashiest licks—we're looking for **bassists who understand their role**, can play **with discipline**, and bring **musical sensitivity** to the ensemble. Your job is to keep it solid, steady, and strong.

V. DRUM AUDITION

The drummer is the **heartbeat of the Rock Ensemble**—responsible for driving the rhythm, supporting dynamic shifts, and keeping the entire band locked in time. We typically select **one primary drummer**, with potential alternates or percussionists depending on the year's needs. The ideal candidate is someone who can balance **precision and feel**, adapt to multiple genres and time signatures, and lead with consistency and musicality.

We're looking for a drummer who isn't just technically skilled, but also has **great listening skills, strong internal tempo, and a clear sense of groove**. In this ensemble, you'll be expected to hold down full songs from start to finish, often while adjusting to live vocalists and instrumentalists in real time. Confidence, reliability, and musical sensitivity are essential.

Evaluation Areas:

- **Stage Presence** – Professionalism, energy, and confidence on stage
- **Groove & Feel** – Ability to support the song with clean, musical playing
- **Tempo Control** – Playing in time with or without a click or track
- **Versatility** – Comfort moving between styles, time signatures, and rhythmic feels

Audition Components:

1. Prepared song:
 - a. Select **one song** from the approved list.

- b. Focus on playing **with authority and musicality**—know your part and feel confident.
 2. Demonstrate a Rock Beat
 3. Demonstrate a Jazz Swing groove
 4. Demonstrate proficiency in 3/4 meter
 5. Demonstrate proficiency in 5/4 meter (listen to “Take Five” by Dave Brubeck)
 6. Demonstrate proficiency in 6/4 meter (listen to “Whipping Post” by Allman Brothers)
 7. Demonstrate proficiency in alternating between a 5/4 and 6/4 meter
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VII. STAGE CREW “TECHIES”

The **technical crew**—often referred to as the **sound team**—is an essential part of the Miami Beach Rock Ensemble. While they may not be center stage, their role is absolutely vital: ensuring that every rehearsal, performance, and recording session sounds professional, runs efficiently, and showcases the talents of the band at their best.

Due to the **electronic and live-performance nature of the ensemble**, having dedicated and knowledgeable sound engineers is not just helpful—it’s necessary. We are looking for **3–5 students** each year who are passionate about **music technology, live sound mixing, and stage production**.

This role is ideal for students who may not be performers themselves but who want to be deeply involved in the music world. Whether you’re already experienced with audio gear or are eager to learn, we’re looking for individuals who are **focused, dependable, detail-oriented**, and excited to grow their technical skill set in a real-world environment.

What We're Looking For:

- **Musical awareness** – ability to listen critically and understand balance, tone, and mix
- **Technical curiosity** – interest in learning how sound systems work and how to solve problems
- **Professionalism** – commitment to showing up on time, taking initiative, and working behind the scenes with pride
- **Team mentality** – readiness to support musicians and collaborate closely with directors and crew

This role does not require a traditional musical audition, but applicants will complete a brief **interview and hands-on demonstration**. If you're passionate about live sound, music production, or engineering, this is your chance to gain real-world experience.

FAQ

What happens after I sign up?

Once you sign up, you'll be added to our weekly audition newsletter. Starting four weeks before auditions, you'll begin receiving updates that include:

- Important reminders and deadlines
- Backing tracks for the audition songs
- Helpful preparation tips and resources
Make sure to check your email regularly so you don't miss anything!

What if I miss my audition time?

If you miss your scheduled audition time, you must contact us within 72 hours.

We will do our best to reschedule you at the end of audition day, if time allows — but this is not guaranteed.

The earlier you communicate, the better your chances of being accommodated.

Can I show up late or leave early from rehearsals?

No. Full attendance is required.

If you cannot commit to being present every Tuesday and Thursday from 2:30 PM to 5:30 PM, you will not be eligible to participate in Rock Ensemble.

This ensures fairness and musical consistency for all members.

How will I know if I made it into the ensemble?

Audition results will be posted:

- Over the weekend, you will receive a phone call from the director, Sammy Gonzalez.
- On our Instagram account | @miamibeachrockensemble
- On the door of Room 316
Date: Monday, September 7

What happens if I get in?

Congratulations!

Our first rehearsal is on Tuesday, September 8.

We'll be playing all five audition songs together as a band, so you're expected to:

- Arrive on time
- Be fully prepared
- Bring your instrument/equipment

- Be ready to collaborate and rock!

Is Rock Ensemble free?

Yes!

All YMU (Young Musicians United) programs are completely free of charge.

What if I don't get in? Are there other opportunities?

Absolutely. YMU offers many other music programs and activities throughout the city.

Once audition results are posted, we'll send out info about:

- Alternative music groups
- Community workshops
- Studio time
- Mentorship programs

There's something for everyone.

What are the benefits of joining Miami Beach Rock Ensemble?

Being part of this ensemble offers more than just great music. You'll gain:

- Professional mentorship
- 90+ Community service hours
- Experience that boosts your college applications
- Scholarship opportunities
- Performance experience at events across South Florida
- And most of all — a supportive, creative team to grow with 🎵