



# THE WALDEN SCHOOL

## Young Musicians Program

### Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

**Q: *How large is Walden's student body? What are the ages of the students?***

A: Walden maintains an intentionally small student body of approximately 50 students, between the ages of 9 and 18. Students aged 9-11 may also qualify for a shortened (3 week) residency. Students who have entered college or university, regardless of age, are no longer eligible to participate as students in our Young Musicians Program but may be excellent candidates for our adult programs (the Creative Musicians Retreat and the Teacher Training Institute).

**Q: *Who are your students and applicants?***

A: Walden students come from all over the world. In 2012 they came from 17 states, as well as Canada, India, Japan, Lithuania, and South Sudan. 12% of students in 2012 were international students and 31% were students of color.

Successful applicants to The Walden School are musicians with an imaginative spirit and a desire to create – using music as the medium. Previous improvisation or composition experience is valued, although not necessary. Applicants who already receive quality vocal and/or instrumental training and demonstrate creativity in other pursuits (language arts, dance, theater, visual arts) are regarded highly and are often excellent matches for Walden's unique program. Generally, we seek students who have studied an instrument privately for at least one year.

**Q: *Do students attend The Walden School for more than one summer?***

A: Yes, frequently they do. The average tenure at Walden is three to four summers, but some students return for 6, 7 or even more summers. A typical summer has approximately 25-30 returning students and 20-25 new students.

**Q: *Walden's session is 5 weeks. Do students thrive away from home for that long?***

A: Yes! The Walden School intentionally strives to establish a safe, strong, and supportive community, and we find that our students form close and lasting friendships that transcend the boundaries of age. Each summer, The Walden School hires, in addition to the Director, 12 teaching faculty and 5 staff, all of who are in residence full-time at The Walden School. With a less than 3:1 student:adult ratio, each Walden student receives unparalleled personal attention.

**Q: *Where do students live?***

A: Walden students are housed in the dormitories of our host campus, the Dublin School. They are grouped according to age and gender, and faculty and staff members live in the dorms with the students. Each student has at least one roommate. The dormitories range in size, housing anywhere from 7 students to 22 students, plus faculty and staff.

**Q: *Does The Walden School offer financial aid?***

A: Yes. Approximately 50% of our student body receives need-based financial aid each summer. In 2012, awards ranged from \$750 - \$6,400, with amounts awarded totaling approximately \$86,000. However, our financial aid budget is limited, and therefore financial need must be a factor in admissions decisions.

**Q: *What are the dining services like?***

A: The entire School community gathers three times a day in the dining hall of the Dublin School, which overlooks Crotched Mountain and the stunning valley below. The Walden School employs excellent chefs, and meals are served buffet style, with varied and ample selections. There are vegetarian options available and a full salad bar is included at lunch and dinner. Specific dietary restrictions may be accommodated.

**Q: *Who are Walden's faculty members?***

A: Members of Walden's faculty represent a broad range of music and teaching experience. They are excellent composers, performers, and educators. Many of them were students at Walden before going on to study at some of the finest colleges and universities in the country. In addition to classroom and private instruction, Walden faculty members perform, coach, and conduct student works throughout the summer session, affirming through example an integrated approach toward music making and original composition. All faculty members have at least completed a Bachelor's degree in music, and many have completed masters or doctorate degrees from leading universities and conservatories. More information about the faculty can be found on our website.

**Q: *What courses does The Walden School offer?***

A: Students take three classes and chorus. Each student is enrolled in Musicianship (Walden's unique and activity-based approach to theory and aural skills), and one or two enrichment courses, which change each summer, depending on the needs of the student body and the passions of our faculty. Many students are enrolled in a composition class instead of one of the enrichment courses. Walden's Director and Academic Deans place students into classes in the spring, and accurate records are kept from year to year so that over time students receive a balanced course of study at Walden over the course of multiple summers. Classes run from 9:15 am until 11:45 am, Monday – Friday. Classes are then followed each day by a 45-minute choral rehearsal.

**Q: *What do the students do when they are not in class?***

A: On weekdays, right after lunch, the entire Walden community has a rest period – a quiet time for relaxation, reading, letter writing, etc. Following this time the students rotate through 45-minute practice periods, and faculty often offer one-on-one tutoring or composition lessons. During the late afternoons Walden's staff offer recreational activities. These include refreshing swimming trips to nearby Dublin Lake and games such as ultimate Frisbee, capture the flag, croquet, or cards. On Saturday the entire community hikes a nearby mountain and attends a dance in the evening. The academic program is enriched by The Walden School Concert Series on Friday evenings, workshops offered by visiting guest artists, and weekly Composers Forums. Once a week, the community gathers for an 'open mic' so that students, faculty, and staff can perform for one another in a casual setting – humorous skits, songs, recital music, poetry, dance and more are presented for the whole community to enjoy.

**Q: *Who provides supervision of the students when they are not in class?***

A: It is Walden's philosophy that by participating together in all levels of community life, faculty, staff, and students create an environment where close, respectful relationships can develop and creativity may flourish. Therefore, in addition to teaching, our faculty members assist full-time adult staff members in overseeing the non-academic aspects of our program. This includes living alongside the students in dormitories, eating meals together, supervising free time, and participating in various school-wide recreational activities.

**Q: *Can parents visit students during the session?***

A: There are numerous public events throughout the summer – concerts, composers forum and events during the final week, Festival Week – that are all open to the public and members of the parent community. We encourage parents to visit during these times. Also, with prior arrangement, it is possible to take one's child out for a lunch or dinner, or to join in one of our Saturday hikes with the entire community. It is not possible to accommodate parents and families in the dining hall for meals, except on the Thursday evening of Festival Week for the family dinner.

**Q: *Do students leave campus during the summer?***

A: Students go off-campus with staff and faculty supervision on regular occasions throughout the summer. Each Saturday the entire community hikes a nearby mountain, and all students, faculty and staff board school buses and head off-campus for the day. This excursion is almost always followed by a couple of hours in a local town so that students can visit stores to purchase sundries, books or other items. There are also frequent swim trips to nearby lakes, which are off-campus. Students are never allowed to leave campus without being accompanied by a faculty or staff member.

**Q: *What about cell phones, internet, television, video games, and computers?***

A: Walden students are quite busy during the summer, and the location of the program is ideal as a retreat from the distractions of our ever-connected and plugged-in world. Therefore items such as video games, PDAs, cell phones and other electronic devices should be left at home; the Walden School does not allow their use during the summer session. Students do not have access to the internet while at Walden. Students who already use a computer to notate compositional work can bring the computer and related software and can work on such projects while at Walden, but must refrain from watching television shows or movies or playing video games on the computer. Students have access to dormitory phones and can purchase phone cards to use with the phones so as to call home on occasion during certain hours of the day.

**Q: *If the program is in New Hampshire, why is the office in California?***

A: Walden currently offers summer programs only, and we utilize the campus of the Dublin School in New Hampshire, where we have been in residence since 1983. Therefore our faculty and staff live all over the country and world, and it so happens that the current and most recent former Executive Director both live in San Francisco, hence our office in San Francisco. Walden's Executive Director, Seth Brenzel, is also the Director of the Young Musicians Program and is in full-time residence in New Hampshire in the summer.

For additional information about The Walden School's Young Musicians Program, contact us at:  
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