

COURSE CONTENT 2025

Preface

Astona is a two-week summer music academy for highly-gifted, carefully-selected string-players and pianists from 12 to 24 years of age. Astona was founded by cellist Nancy Chumachenco in 1988 and takes place in 2025 at Sonnenberg in Baar.

Astona aims to bring talented students from all over the world together and to work with them on the highest level with tutors of international renown. Astona is neither a festival nor a master class, but a place where the student is first priority and is furthered and supported in an atmosphere of intensive work and healthy, beautiful surroundings. The fact that Astona accepts extremely young as well as mature students and is international sets it apart from most other summer music academies. Astona is not a commercial venture, the students come first, and all public concerts are performed by the students themselves.

Astona's influence extends far beyond the duration of the course, and through advice and possibilities for further study and progress, Astona and its faculty members often accompany students on their way into the future.

1. Curriculum

Private instrumental lessons

6 lessons.

Chamber Music Instruction

Pre-organised groups, 2 hours of instruction and practise daily.

Orchestra

String Orchestra, 8 - 9 rehearsals of ca. 90 minutes each.

2. Student Performance

Individual

House Concerts: One performance at a house concert, either solo or with professional piano accompaniment.

Public Concerts: Programs are chosen by the faculty members on the basis of performances at the house concerts.

Chamber Music

House Concerts: one performance.

Public Concerts: Programs are chosen by the faculty members on the basis of performances at the house concerts.

Orchestra

Two public concerts in the orchestra formation.

3. Practise and Rehearsals

Daily **individual practise** at scheduled times, up to 4 hours per day, depending upon age.

Daily lessons and practise in assigned **chamber music** group, ca. 2 hours per day.

Orchestra rehearsals: 8 – 9 rehearsals of ca. 90 minutes, including sectionals.

Practise and rehearsal times are obligatory for all students and are integrated into the daily schedule.

4. Organisation of chamber music groups, music and pianos, music stand

The chamber music groups and the orchestra formation are organised by the directors in advance of the course. Students receive their music 6 weeks prior to the course, either by post or by email.

Students bring their own music for their private studies.

Students bring their own instruments with them. Astona, with few exceptions, does not organise the rental of string instruments. In the case of rental of an instrument from the violin maker in Zug, all transportation, rental costs and risks fall to the student.

Participants are obliged to bring their own music stand.

For performances a fine Yamaha grand piano is available.

5. Care and repair of Instruments

Students are responsible for the condition of their instruments. They keep their instruments in their own rooms.

Repairs can be arranged with the local violin maker in Zug. All costs must be covered by the student.

6. Concerts

Along with intensive instruction and practise, concerts and performance also constitute an important part of the curriculum at Astona.

The internal **house concert** is a central feature of the Astona program, and attendance by all students and teachers is obligatory. Each student has the opportunity to perform in one house concert. The programs of the house concerts are determined by the teachers and students and are announced several days in advance.

Chamber music and solo concerts provide students with the opportunity to perform publicly as soloist or in a chamber music group. The choice of programs and performers is made by the faculty members on the basis of the performances in the house concerts. Generally there are three to four such public concerts. Additionally there might be a private concert for one of Astona's sponsors. The highlight of the summer academy is the Gala Concert on the last evening of the course.

As a member of the **orchestra** formation, each string-player has the opportunity to perform publicly in two concerts.

7. Daily schedule from Monday through Saturday

07:00 - 08:00	Breakfast
08:00 - 10:25	Private lessons/Practise
10:30 - 12:15	Chamber music
12:30 - 13:00	Midday meal
13:15 - 14:15	Private lessons/Practise
14:30 - 16:15	House Concert (1 st week)
16:30 - 18:00	Private lessons/Orchestra (15:30-16:30 2 nd week)
18:30 - 19:30	Evening meal/free time
19:30 - 22:00	Program as announced/Public concerts (2 nd week)/Free time
from 22:00	Curfew, depending on age