University of Washington's first orchestra

Making music since 1862
Music has been a significant element of a well-rounded education at the University of Washington since its very beginning more than 150 years ago. Piano instruction was first offered at the territorial university in 1862, just one year after its founding, and lessons in violin, pipe organ, and singing soon followed. Students have been performing in the orchestra at UW since 1898 and earning bachelor of music degrees since 1911.

A century of musical excellence
More than one hundred years since the University first began conferring music degrees, we remain steadfast in our commitment to offering students—and the people of Washington state and beyond—opportunities to explore and share a remarkably diverse array of musical traditions, styles, and experiences. Our students are part of a long history of musical excellence. They also are active participants in creating the latest chapters of that rich history.