The Music Department curriculum is firmly rooted in the traditions of classical music and jazz, and is comprised of high-level private study, academic music courses, chamber and jazz ensembles, music composition, and performances.

Private instruction with The Academy’s world-class faculty is central to the Music Department’s curriculum. Students take two weekly 45-minute private lessons — one classical, one jazz — which prepare them for masterclasses with world-renowned artists, performances, juries, competitions, and college auditions.

Additionally, all students are placed in various ensembles, which can include Jazz Combo, Classical Vocal Ensemble, Chamber Ensemble, and New Music Ensemble. These groups, which focus on developing musicianship through small-group settings, regularly participate in Academy recitals and concerts.

"At auditions and college visits, when I tell people that I’ve already composed three operas, they think I’m a graduate student. I tell them ‘No, I’m about to be a freshman!’ And they can’t believe it.”

-Karen, Music ’17
Music Department Curriculum

Music Department students are immersed in 15-plus hours of training per week. Courses include:

- Jazz Combo
- Vocal Workshop
- Chamber Ensemble
- Theory/Ear Training
- Commercial Composition and Music Production

What can students expect from the Music Department?

Music department students perform in several jazz and classical performances per semester, some of which take place at professional jazz clubs like the legendary Jazz Showcase, and classical venues such as Curtiss Hall. Other major department events include the annual student-composed Opera, and festivals and competitions attended by the Academy New Music Ensemble. Recent guest artists include world-renowned jazz and classical musicians Carl Allen, Jason Moran, Judy Carmichael, and 8th Blackbird.

While the Music Department has two distinct paths—vocal and instrumental—each student takes courses and private lessons in classical and jazz performance and composition, and every student learns piano. Additionally, students have the opportunity to take classes in commercial music and production in our state-of-the-art Justin Tranter Recording Studio.

Each semester, music students perform both classical and jazz pieces before Music Department faculty, showcasing progress earned through their private lessons. These performances, designed to provide valuable feedback for growing within the department, comprise a large part of the student's grade. Seniors replace this process with an hour-long recital. This performance showcases the depth of the technical proficiency, style, interpretation, and professionalism they have developed through lessons, classes, and ensemble study. The recital serves as a senior thesis, and is essentially an independent study overseen by the Department Chair.

Recent College Acceptances

Belmont University
Berklee College of Music
Boston Conservatory
California University of the Arts
University of Cincinnati Conservatory of Music
Eastman School of Music
Johns Hopkins University
The Juilliard School of Music
Lawrence University
Marymount Manhattan College
University of Michigan
New England Conservatory of Music
Northwestern University
Oberlin College and Conservatory
Pepperdine University
University of Southern California
Tulane University
Washington University (St. Louis)

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