Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music

music.northwestern.edu

Overview

One of the oldest degree-granting music institutions in the United States, Northwestern University's Henry and Leigh Bienen School of Music combines a nationally ranked music program of conservatory-level intensity with the academic rigor and scholarly resources found only at a world-class private research university. Entering first-year undergraduates show the highest level of achievement in music as well as academics. The school believes that by carefully developing outstanding musicianship and keen intelligence, while nurturing a curiosity about the world, we can best encourage the emergence of each student's unique creative voice.

Key to all performance majors is intensive one-on-one training with a celebrated faculty that includes members of the Chicago Symphony and Lyric Opera of Chicago Orchestras, internationally acclaimed soloists, sought-after conductors, and distinguished scholars and clinicians. Students work in small classes with these dedicated teachers and artists in a curriculum that comprises music history and theory, aural and piano skills, instrumental and voice lessons, and advanced electives. Special programs include a five-year dual-degree curriculum—enabling students to earn a degree in music as well as one in communication, education and social policy, engineering, journalism, or arts and sciences—and the ad hoc (self-designed) major. Additionally, the world-class music making and other cultural resources of downtown Chicago provide exceptional opportunities for learning outside the classroom.

Facilities

The Bienen School of Music occupies three lakefront buildings. The Patrick G. and Shirley W. Ryan Center for the Musical Arts houses the 400-seat Mary B. Galvin Recital Hall, the 150-seat David and Carol McClintock Choral and Recital Room, and the 150-seat Shirley Welsh Ryan Opera Theater as well as administrative and faculty offices, teaching studios, classrooms, and practice rooms. The building connects with Regenstein Hall, which houses the 200-seat Regenstein Masterclass Room, the Office of Bands, rehearsal facilities, faculty studios, and practice rooms. The 1,000-seat Pick-Staiger Concert Hall houses rehearsal facilities and the Concert Management Office.

Musical Organizations

As a part of their program of study, music majors are required to participate in music school ensembles. Students from all other schools of the University are also encouraged to participate in any organizations for which they qualify. Ensembles include Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Philharmonia; Symphonic Wind Ensemble, Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and Wildcat Marching Band; Bienen Contemporary/Early Vocal Ensemble; University Chorale, University Singers, Alice Millar Chapel Choir, and Northwestern Camerata; Jazz Orchestra and jazz small ensembles; Baroque Music Ensemble and Contemporary Music Ensemble; Guitar Ensemble and Percussion Ensemble; and chamber music ensembles.

Music Library

Among the nation's largest music libraries, the Northwestern University Music Library supports all areas of musical study with a broad collection of books, scores, sound recordings, periodicals, and online resources. The facility, located in historic Deering Library, offers a reading room rich in reference materials, a music listening center, and a computer lab equipped with specialized music hardware and software. The Music Library is also distinguished internationally for its extensive collection of contemporary music, which includes one copy of nearly every score published since 1945 as well as many original manuscripts by prominent composers such as Pierre Boulez, John Cage, George Crumb, and Iannis Xenakis. The Music Library's collections and staff serve the Bienen School of Music, the entire Northwestern University community, and researchers from around the world. For more information see www.library.northwestern.edu/music.

Programs of Study

The Bienen School of Music offers programs leading to the professional degrees of bachelor of music, master of music, and doctor of musical arts. The school also offers two nonprofessional degrees, the bachelor of arts in music and bachelor of science in music.

The curriculum allows flexibility for students while providing an education that is foundational for all musicians. Applicants in all areas who are accepted by the Bienen School enter directly into a program of specialization that begins in the first undergraduate year. The music core studies, taken by all students, require the acquisition of fundamental competencies and provide fundamental and essential experiences that complement the specialized studies in the declared major. Students are also required to complete studies in a number of allied subjects throughout the University.

Bachelor of Music (BMus)

Courses of study leading to the bachelor of music degree include majors in piano, strings, voice, winds and percussion, jazz, music cognition, music composition, music education, musicology, and music theory. Candidates for the degree of bachelor of music must complete a minimum of 48 units. For bachelor of music degree requirements, see the program page specific to the area of study.

Bachelor of Arts in Music (BAMus) and Bachelor of Science in Music (BSMus)

The bachelor of arts in music and bachelor of science in music are nonperformance degrees that offer a broad liberal arts education with a major in music. The requirements of the BAMus are essentially identical to those for the BA in the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences; the requirements for the BSMus are the same as those for the BAMus except that the BSMus has no foreign language requirement. Within these degrees’ focus on music, there are a wide range of possibilities for study; students may choose to specialize in one of the available academic areas (music cognition, music composition, music education, musicology, or music theory) by fulfilling their Music Electives with courses in their area of interest, they may choose not to specialize (in which case the Music Electives are fulfilled with any music courses), or they may design an ad hoc specialization, consisting of 10 units which substitute for the Music Electives category below.

For BAMus and BSMus degrees, 45 units are required:
**Attendance Policy**

Students are expected to attend all sessions of courses and ensembles for which they are registered. It is the responsibility of students enrolled in the Bienen School of Music to acquaint themselves and comply with the attendance policy of their departments, class instructors, and ensemble conductors. In addition, students who are absent from classes for three or more consecutive days because of illness are required to notify the Bienen School’s Office of Student Affairs.

Outside professional opportunities may arise for music students. If such an opportunity directly interferes in any way with curricular responsibilities, students must first obtain permission from the faculty of record for courses potentially affected, including classes, rehearsals, and performances, along with the signature of the program coordinator and a signature from one of the co-chairs of the Department of Music Performance. Noncompliance may be cause for failure in the courses or ensembles for which a student is registered during that quarter.

**Applied Music Study**

Bachelor of Music degrees require four years of individual instruction for performance majors in piano, strings, voice, winds and percussion, jazz, and in composition. One year is required for academic majors in music cognition, musicology, and music theory; three years are required for music education. Concurrent registration in a major ensemble (https://www.music.northwestern.edu/academics/ensembles/) is required in each quarter of applied study, with the exception of piano majors and composition majors. Applied study must be with a faculty instructor in the program area to fulfill degree requirements.

**Applied Music Courses**

Students in degree programs outside of music may have a limit on the number of applied music courses that are allowed to count toward those degrees. The list below specifies courses offered by the Bienen School that are considered to be applied music.
### Double Majors

Students may earn a double major in four years by fulfilling the requirements of both majors. Typically, the double major within the Bienen School of Music combines a specialization in a performance area with one in an academic area, although double majors in two academic areas are also possible. A double major in two performance areas is not permitted.

Four-year music students may also complete a second major outside the music school but may earn only one bachelor's degree. Second majors from the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences are available to Bienen School of Music students without transferring into that school. Majors in the other four undergraduate schools at Northwestern may only be completed by students in that school; in these cases, interested music students may either pursue a dual degree with the second school, or transfer to the other school and complete the music major as a second major, in which case no degree from the Bienen School is awarded.
Students in other undergraduate schools may pursue music as a second major.

**Ad Hoc Majors**

It is possible to design an ad hoc (self-designed) major that cuts across specializations to meet a particular student’s needs and career ambitions. Bachelor of Music degree students may design an ad hoc major as a second major; 12 units are required beyond the core, and may not be double-counted in the primary major. Bachelor of arts in music and bachelor of science in music degree students may pursue an ad hoc concentration within the degree; 10 units beyond the core are required for the concentration. Ad hoc programs are designed in consultation with faculty with expertise in the particular area of interest. Specializations have included areas such as arts administration, music criticism, and popular musicology.

**Dual Bachelor’s Degree Programs**

The Bienen School of Music offers dual bachelor’s degree programs with the Weinberg College of Arts and Sciences (music and liberal arts), the School of Communication (music and communication), the School of Education and Social Policy (music and education and social policy), the McCormick School of Engineering and Applied Science (music and engineering), and the Medill School of Journalism, Media, Integrated Marketing Communications (music and journalism). For information on program requirements, see Dual Bachelor’s Degrees (https://catalogs.northwestern.edu/undergraduate/dual-bachelors-degrees/).

**Minor Programs**


Minor programs include a minimum of 6 and a maximum of 9 courses, of which a minimum of 5 courses are not double-counted toward the major. Students must receive a grade of C or above in all courses counted toward the minor; P/N grades in courses used for minor requirements must be approved by the assistant dean. Students who wish to complete a minor program should fill out a Minor Declaration Form, available in the Office of Student Affairs, and should fill out a minor petition form one year before graduation. Students may pursue more than one Bienen School of Music minor.

Requirements for minors in general music (for non-majors), music cognition, music composition, music education, musicology, music technology, and music theory can be found on the corresponding program page. See below for requirements for minors in arts administration, commercial music, and music criticism.

**Minor in Arts Administration (8 units chosen from the list below, music majors only)**

- ECON 201-0 Introduction to Macroeconomics
- ECON 202-0 Introduction to Microeconomics
- MUSIC 360-0 Career Innovation in Music and the Performing Arts
- MUSIC 398-0 Internship
- Any courses from BUS_INST (Business Institutions), IMC (Integrated Marketing/Communication), or ENTREP (Entrepreneurship)
- Any courses in ORG_BEH (Organizational Behavior), ACCOUNT (Accounting), MKTG (Marketing), or ADVT (Advertising) through the School of Professional Studies

**Minor in Commercial Music (8 units, open to music majors and non-majors)**

- JAZZ_ST 330-1 Jazz Composition and Arranging I and JAZZ_ST 330-2 Jazz Composition and Arranging II
- One course chosen from RTVF
- MUS_COMP 211-0 Class Composition
- MUS_COMP 314-1 Instrumentation
- One course in popular music chosen from GEN_MUS or MUSICOL
- Two courses chosen from MUS_TECH

**Minor in Music Criticism (6 units, music majors only)**

- MUSICOL 399-0 Independent Study or MUSIC 398-0 Internship
- JOUR 201-1 Reporting & Writing
- JOUR 201-2 Multimedia Storytelling
- JOUR 202-0 Philosophy of Modern Journalism or JOUR 370-0 Media Law & Ethics
- JOUR 310-0 Media Presentation: Newspaper/Online or JOUR 311-0 Media Presentation: Magazine Editing or JOUR 312-0 Media Presentation: Video Producing for Broadcast & the Web
- One additional journalism elective

**Program Honors**

Each year faculty are invited to nominate graduating students for program honors. To be eligible for program honors, students must have a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or above and be outstanding contributors to their respective programs. Additional criteria govern the selection of voice majors; see the coordinator of the voice and opera program for details. Faculty select only a small number of students in each program for program honors in a given year; for more information, contact the Office of Student Affairs in the Bienen School of Music.