Music Program
Matt Malsky, program director

The Department of Visual and Performing Arts includes five distinct undergraduate programs that engage in the research, theory, and practice of the creative arts. Each program offers its own major while sharing some facilities, resources, collaborative events, courses and faculty with other programs and departments. This allows students to chart their own course through a variety of concentrations.

Communities of Effective Practice

• Performing ensembles/private instruction – activities include weekly rehearsals/lessons, workshops & juries and student recitals, concerts and tours
• Recording Studio – a hub of activity in music technology including course work, independent student projects, visiting lecturers and concerts
• Concert Series – more than 25 programs each year, including professional ensembles and soloists, a faculty recital series, the biannual Traina Chamber Music Residency and the new Geller Jazz Concert Series
• Creative InterMedia courses – edgy, exploratory, collaborative courses offered to juniors and seniors in all five V&PA areas.

Capabilities of Effective Practice

11. Effective learning involves participation in a network with others who share various interests. Students should develop the capacity to apply knowledge of music with agility and creativity to contexts requiring the participation of multiple collaborators with specialized skills and knowledge. Through these experiences students should test, stretch and share their creative potential. This is most commonly accomplished through participation in a “workshop” course.

12. Students will achieve the ability to plan, organize, and present an independent research or creative capstone project that integrates scholarly, creative, and/or performance skills. Especially valued in these experiences are engagement and imagination, self-directedness, resilience and persistence. These projects should demonstrate the ability to collaborate across differences and manage complexity.

Orientation Phase

At the level of “tour” courses, students are expected to participate fully in all activities presented by course instructors. At this level of development, students are not expected to have identified and developed specialized interests and skills (e.g., composition, historical research, performance or music technology), but to work both individually and within their peer group to master the foundational skills required for work in music. Collaboration at this level consists of group projects and presentations.

Exploration Phase

All music majors and minors are required to take as early as possible a “tour” Core course, one major area of concentration in the Program: music theory & composition, music history & criticism, and music technology. Additionally, all music theory courses are required to introduce the fourth area of study, applied musicianship skills. Together, the goal of these core experiences is to develop the knowledge base and the methodological tools to be needed for more advanced coursework in music history.

In their senior year, each music major is required to produce evidence of a sustained experience. This will vary with a student’s area of concentration. But through capstone seminars, independent study and senior recitals, each student is required to transform the intensive, culminating work in their area of specialization. This work is usually the largest, most sophisticated, complete, and collaborative project of their academic career and the final work necessary to complete a professional portfolio and must include a public demonstration of student work.