

Overview

The Department of Music at Carleton College enrolls several hundred students every term, both majors and non-majors, in a curriculum that offers a balanced, integrated approach to the areas of performance, composition, theory, history, and ethnomusicology. Experience in all these fields is essential to the understanding of music as an artistic and intellectual achievement. The Department provides music-making experiences in our performing ensembles and private lessons, as well as interaction with artists appearing on our concert series. Additionally, we offer an array of classroom courses that range from those designed specifically for the introductory level student to advanced seminars for majors and for those non-majors who devote a significant part of their time to music.

Learning Goals

The primary learning goal of the study of music at Carleton is to give students a thorough grounding in all aspects of the field: performance, composition, theory, history, and ethnomusicology. In addition to excellent preparation for graduate study in any of these fields, Carleton music courses provide all students, regardless of major, with a basic vocabulary, performance opportunities, and enrich student's other coursework at the College.

Though students arrive at Carleton College with a wide range of musical background and ability, all are encouraged to broaden, deepen, enrich and improve their engagement with music. Our goal is to give our students many opportunities to gain the knowledge and practice the skills we have identified. Our curriculum is designed to sequence as much as possible the knowledge and skills in stages of increasing complexity, culminating in the senior integrative exercise.

Areas of Knowledge

Majors and non-majors who devote a significant part of their time to music will:

- * Demonstrate familiarity with musical traditions, genres, canonical repertoire, major artists, styles, and instruments in the musical cultures covered in the curriculum;
- * Demonstrate familiarity with major issues, central trends, models of inquiry, and primary areas of controversy among scholars and performers, utilizing both primary source material as well as current scholarship;

Skills of Inquiry and Analysis

Majors and non-majors who devote a significant part of their time to music will:

- * Comprehend, with aural and analytical proficiency, musical scores;
- * Describe musical structures persuasively, both verbally and in writing;
- * Demonstrate the ability to use library and on-line resources in all aspects of musical inquiry.

Higher Order Thinking Skills

Majors and non-majors who devote a significant part of their time to music will:

- * Research, successfully develop, and convincingly defend a thesis about music, both verbally and in writing, from historical, analytical, and cultural perspectives;

Creative/ Experiential Skills

Majors and non-majors who devote a significant part of their time to music will:

* Demonstrate, through formal presentation as both a performer and a speaker, practical experience in performance, composition, theory, history, and ethnomusicology.

Assessment of learning outcomes

In addition to coursework-based evaluation of student progress, assessment of our students' musical growth takes place in solo and ensemble concerts, studio classes, and final projects. Along the way we provide our students with feedback and critical evaluations of their work so that they are aware of their individual strengths and areas that need improvement.

Specifically, Carleton music students are assessed as follows:

* Assessments of the knowledge areas are embedded in course work in the targeted area;

* Inquiry and analysis skills are assessed through course-based research projects and the senior integrative exercise;

* Higher order thinking skills are assessed through course-based research projects and the senior integrative exercise. In addition to feedback to individual students, we understand that attention to programmatic assessment is also necessary. Regular monitoring of the senior integrative exercise provides us with the most valuable feedback as to how we are succeeding as a program and where we need to make adjustments to our curriculum to accomplish the outcomes we expect.

* Creative/ Experiential Skills are assessed through formal, student presentations as both a performer and a speaker.

Conclusion

The study of music in a liberal arts setting develops logical thinking, critical analysis, literacy, historical consciousness, cultural sensitivity, and aesthetic values. The human dimensions that music is especially capable of revealing--emotional nuance, beauty, and imagination--are central to the liberal arts ideal. Creative musical activity cultivates feelings of accomplishment and also facilitates the search for meaning. Many students with outstanding academic records believe their work as musicians is the most challenging they undertake as an undergraduate. Composing, performing, and writing about music requires talent, initiative, risk, and reflection and demands the courage to stand up for a personal vision realized through exacting attention to detail. This process can stimulate personal, intellectual, and social growth and have a positive, lasting influence.