

Preparing to be a College Music Major

The University of Indianapolis is fortunate in its ability to award *significant scholarships* to prospective music majors who show *significant preparation* in the following categories:

- *Record of disciplined academic work* as shown by quality high school GPA (grade point average)
- *Achievement* as well as *potential in one area of music* as shown in a performance audition (usually accomplished by private lessons and daily practice)
- *Keyboard skill*, regardless of primary area of performance, as demonstrated in a keyboard placement test (often accomplished through class piano or private lessons)
- *Vocal skill*, regardless of primary area of performance, as demonstrated in aural/vocal skills placement test (often accomplished through singing in choirs in school, church, or community)
- *Knowledge of music fundamentals* including treble and bass clef notation, rhythm values, key signatures, meter signatures, major and minor scales, and intervals and triads as demonstrated in a written music theory placement test (often accomplished in primary instrument lesson, high school theory class, individual study of programmed theory text, i.e. Paul Harder's book, "Basic Materials in Music Theory: A Programmed Course")

In addition to the above basic knowledge and skills, developing *habits* in the following areas will give you, the prospective music major, a "leg up" when the time comes for your college audition.

LISTEN: The more you listen to music, the more prepared your ears will be for the challenges of college level work in music. Listen to a wide variety of great music from classical (Renaissance, Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th Century) to jazz to ethnic to folk to various popular styles. Listen to different recordings of the same piece. Listen not only to recorded music, but also to music *live* in a concert hall. Listen to different genres of music (solo, chorus, concerto, symphony, percussion ensemble, string quartet, woodwind quintet, oratorio, brass quintet, art songs, opera, musicals, solo with accompaniment, etc.). The more you listen, the more discerning you will become.

PRACTICE: Develop the discipline to practice *every day* and as much as you can. Performing music requires skills that cannot be developed overnight. Practice scales and etudes to develop technical skills; practice pieces in order to experience and to communicate feelings through the tensions and releases in the music. Pay close attention to details of the score.

STUDY: Study the music that you learn to play. Figure out its form (the repetitions and contrasts, the variations and how they work, etc). Figure out the chord progressions and cadences. Translate the text if it is a vocal piece in a foreign language. (If you are a singer, study a foreign language, particularly French, German, and Italian.) Read about the context of the piece (who wrote it, when, where, why, and in what style) and figure out which style characteristics are used in the piece you are studying. Compare the interpretations of the piece as performed on different recordings. Memorize your piece not only physically by playing it, but also *in your mind* away from your instrument or voice.

PERFORM: Perform music as often as you can. Perform alone, perform with others, perform music in various styles. Connect with your audience through your music making by using all your knowledge, your skill, and your feeling for the music. Always be thoroughly prepared for every performance.

COMPOSE: Every person can be creative at every level of knowledge and skill. Write music for your instrument or for your small performance group. You will surprise yourself at what you can do and how much you will learn from doing it.

Overwhelmed? Don't be. We both know that making music is an *incredible* joy. Just be aware of the *rigor* of preparing to be a really good musician. The rewards of making music alone and with others, and communicating with an audience can be astronomical!

The music faculty members at the University of Indianapolis look forward to meeting you and to hearing you make music!

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