



# Strategies for Success Advising Guide: Music Major



As a student at Middlesex, you can earn either the *Associate in Arts Liberal Arts and Science: Fine and Performing Arts, Music Option* or the *Associate in Science Liberal Studies: Performing Arts Music Option* degree.

The field of music has a wide variety of occupations open to those who are passionate about music and who have the necessary skills to succeed. This guide includes information about the skills, qualities, and talent necessary for a career in music to help you determine whether the music major will support your long-term goals.

## Exploring Your Options

Before deciding upon a major, you should take some time to explore your interests and develop your long-term academic, career, and personal goals. Periodically throughout each semester, meet with your advisor so that he/she can guide you through a self exploration process that will help you identify your academic and career interests. These activities are for your first year or during your first 30 credits at MCC.

\_\_\_ During the first few weeks of your first semester at Middlesex, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor and discuss your future plans and how a major in music can help you to achieve your goals. You and your advisor will work together to build an academic plan in DegreeWorks (an online educational planning tool that can be accessed through MiddleNet (<https://middlenet.middlesex.mass.edu>) that will include:

- Your major and degree requirements
- A map of the courses you will take each semester
- Your academic, career and personal goals, as well as, plans to achieve them

\_\_\_ Complete the FOCUS2 online career assessment tool which is located on our website at [www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/FOCUS2.htm](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/FOCUS2.htm). After completing FOCUS2, schedule a meeting to discuss your results with a career counselor. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.

\_\_\_ Review the career biographies which are located on the career services website at: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/bios.asp](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices/bios.asp)

\_\_\_ Mid-Semester; schedule an appointment with your advisor to review your academic progress. Also, use this time to discuss your progress toward meeting your academic and career goals.

\_\_\_ Before the semester ends, schedule an appointment to meet with your advisor to discuss the classes you will take the following semester. (Early November to plan for Spring Classes, Early April to plan Fall and Summer classes)

## Is the Music Major Program the Right Fit for Me?

If you are considering a career in music, there are certain skills and personality traits essential to a profession in this incredibly competitive field.

You may be a good fit for the Music Major program if you:

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- Have a passion for music.
- Have the ability to accurately hear and reproduce pitches and rhythms.
- Are creative and curious.
- Are diligent, focused, detail-oriented and disciplined.
- Can persevere in the face of obstacles or discouragement.
- Are reliable.
- Work well with people of different backgrounds.
- Seek out and enjoy learning new things.
- Have good music reading skills in at least one clef.
- Have had private music lessons through high school.

If you are interested in pursuing a degree in music performance or music education at a conservatory or university after graduation from Middlesex Community College, you should also:

- Be able to perform at a high level on your instrument or voice.
- Have done well in Music Theory 1 and 2 at MCC.
- Have taken Independent Study in your instrument or voice while at MCC.

*It is possible that a talented student entering MCC not reading music, through hard work in our music program can acquire the musical skills needed to be accepted into a music degree program at a four year institution. However, a student entering MCC with no music reading skills and little performance training needs to understand that by the time of graduation from MCC that she or he must “catch up” to the students in the second or third year of a four year music school.*

### What You Can Find in the MCC Music Department:

We offer a variety of music survey courses, music theory, music technology, introduction to music business and applied classes in voice, piano, percussion and guitar as well as independent studies for more experienced music students. Students of all different levels are encouraged to perform in the student recitals at the college, and we have student ensembles, such as the MCC Chorus and the MCC Guitar Ensemble, where you can meet and work with other student performers.

The music department sponsors the *A World of Music Concert Series* where music faculty, guest artists, including members of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and students are featured. It also coordinates the Music Outreach/Collaboration with Lowell High School.

**Middlesex Community College offers two associate degrees with music options. Both degrees include the following, and serve as a stepping stone to a Bachelor’s Degree at a four-year institution.**

- Gives prospective music students the basic music theory and keyboard skills necessary to enter any music degree program.
- Introduces students to the many specialized areas within the music field, by offering survey courses in Western Music, World Music and Jazz.
- Provides advanced students the opportunity to study voice, guitar, piano, violin/viola or percussion on an individual basis with faculty performers through the independent study course option.
- Provides students with valuable performance opportunities at Middlesex Community College.
- Operates on both campuses and uses the Concert Hall in Bedford, with its good acoustics and fine 7 foot Baldwin piano, for classes and performances.

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- Emphasizes teamwork and interpersonal skills required for employment.
- With the exception of individual lessons, all courses are appropriate for students with or without music experience.

The two degree options differ in these ways:

### **Associate in Arts Liberal Arts and Science: Fine and Performing Arts, Music Option**

This degree prepares students to continue on to a Bachelor of Music or a Bachelor of Music Education degree at a university or conservatory. The Liberal Arts and Science option gives students the opportunity to take Liberal Arts courses (specifically English and History courses) which are required at most four-year college, universities, music schools and conservatories.

### **Associate in Science Liberal Studies: Performing Arts Music Option**

This degree is appropriate both for students who wish to transfer to a Bachelor of Music or a Bachelor of Music Education degree at a university or conservatory as well as for those students who wish to take a variety of music courses. The Liberal Studies option gives students the opportunity to take a variety of Liberal Arts and free elective courses as well as music courses.

## **Program Outcomes**

Graduates of the program are prepared to:

- Demonstrate basic music skills in both music theory and performance;
- Make use of music technology;
- Be knowledgeable about a variety of musical styles;
- Demonstrate performing experience through participation in student recitals in the college concert series.

AND

- Interpret and analyze information in order to engage in critical thinking and problem solving;
- Communicate, use information, and employ technology effectively;
- Communicate an understanding of the world from a global perspective;
- Demonstrate social responsibility within the college community;
- Demonstrate the capacity for on-going personal and professional development.

## **Career Path**

When most people think of a career in music, they think of performing, recording, or composing. However, a strong music background can prepare you for a constellation of jobs, from education to technology to managing the business of music. Here are some to consider:

### **PERFORMING:**

- **Performing artist or soloist:** Outstanding skill at your instrument.
- **Permanent member of an orchestra, band or group:** Outstanding skill at playing and music reading.
- **Freelance musician:** Flexibility, excellent skill at your instrument, and a large repertoire.
- **Background singer:** Outstanding skill at singing; ability to both improvise and read music.
- **Church or synagogue musician:** Excellent skill at your instrument; knowledge of sacred music.
- **Musical theater:** Excellent singing, acting and often dancing skills.

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### CONDUCTING:

Conductors need to have good organizational skills, rehearsal and conducting technique, and be able to work well with people.

- **Orchestral:** Extensive knowledge of orchestral repertoire, styles and interpretation. Ability to read various clefs and knowledge of transposing instruments.
- **Choral:** Extensive knowledge of the voice, rehearsal techniques, and choral repertoire, styles and interpretation. Strong piano skills are highly desirable.
- **Bands and other instrumental groups:** Extensive knowledge of repertoire, styles and interpretation. The ability to compose and arrange music is highly desirable.
- **Opera:** Extensive knowledge of the operatic repertoire, the orchestra, the voice, and how to work with singers.

### COMPOSING:

All require a comprehensive knowledge of music theory.

- **Classical:** Thorough knowledge of the instruments of the orchestra and of music writing software. Usually requires an advanced degree in composition. Music is generally performed in academic or concert hall venues.
- **Songwriting:** In any style or genre: jazz, pop, art song, blues, country and so on. Requires the ability to write lyrics or to collaborate with a lyricist. Piano skills are helpful. Many songwriters also perform their own music.
- **Musical theater:** In addition to songwriting skills, this requires the ability to write a cohesive score with extensive instrumentation.
- **Orchestrator:** Ability to transfer songs and themes into orchestral scores. This may be done on acoustic or electronic instruments.
- **Freelance:** Composing for hire for specific needs.
- **Radio and TV:** Composing music for commercials, jingles, background music or theme songs.
- **Film:** Composing or arranging music for film scores.
- **Copyist:** Transfers music from scores to individual parts.
- **MIDI or Synthesizer:** Composing using MIDI and computer technology or synthesizer.

### ENGINEERING:

- **Engineer:** Sets up and runs the equipment during recording sessions, and is responsible for making the final product sound the way the artists and producer have specified.
- **Digital editor:** Digitally combines all the audio elements – speech, music, sound effects – in a film or TV production.
- **Producer:** Manages and directs the recording project.
- **Sound technician:** Sets up and runs equipment for live performances.
- **Multimedia developer:** Combines media (sound plus visual media) for websites.
- **Sound designer:** Creates sounds for use in recording.

### MUSIC PRODUCTION AND BUSINESS:

- **Manager or agent:** Represents and advises performers or groups on career decisions.
- **Promoter:** Organizes and promotes concerts, finds and sometimes provides the money to finance them.
- **Record company staff:** Record companies hire people to do a variety of jobs, such as finding talent, administration, public relations, advertising, marketing and sales.
- **Publishing:** Similarly to record companies, publishers need staff to work with composers and arrangers, as well as administration, advertising, marketing and sales.
- **Product representative:**  
Music software:



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Instruments:

Sound equipment:

- **Tours and road work management:** Oversee all arrangements for concert and travel bookings.

### **MUSIC EDUCATION:**

- **Public and private schools:** General classroom music; Band; Orchestra; Chorus; Rehearse, produce, and perform concerts with ensembles. Note: A Master's Degree in Music Education is required.
- **Colleges and universities:** Performance; Musicology (History of music); Ethnomusicology (Music of people groups); Music Theory; Composition; Ensembles; Music Technology; Sound recording; Music Business; Pedagogy (Teaching students how to teach).  
Note: A Master's Degree in your area of specialization is required, and a Doctorate is preferred.
- **Nursery schools and home school groups:** Singing; Rhythm games; Movement and dance; Drama with music.

### **MUSIC EDUCATION:**

*Music therapists work with people with all types of disabilities. They work in many settings, and are usually part of a team that works together to help clients achieve their goals.*

- **Sample settings where a music therapist might work:** Camp for children with disabilities; Nursing home Psychiatric unit; Group home; School; Veterans' hospital; Community mental health center; Elder day care.

### **Career Planning Activities:**

- \_\_\_ Work with your advisor to create a Career Plan. As a student who is on the Career Path, your focus should be on building your skill-set and marketing yourself for a job.
- \_\_\_ Work with an MCC career counselor who can help you create a resume and cover letter. Consider looking for an internship to enhance your skills and establish some work experience. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career and Transfer Centers in Lowell and Bedford to schedule your career counseling appointment.
- \_\_\_ Continue to work with an MCC career counselor who can help you with interview skills and job search techniques. Schedule an appointment with your advisor to follow up on your career plan.

## **The Transfer Path**

Music students from MCC have been accepted to the New England Conservatory, Berklee College of Music, the University of Massachusetts at Lowell and Boston, Smith College, Gordon College, McNally Smith College of Music, and Keene State College.

Most students transfer to a Bachelor's degree program in music performance or education. Students who complete a minimum of eight science credits as part of their elective options will satisfy the Commonwealth Transfer Compact, which guarantees credit transfer to Massachusetts state colleges and the University of Massachusetts.

Performance opportunities, such as student recitals and final juries for independent study, give students valuable experience which will help with future auditions.

### **Transfer Planning Activities:**

- \_\_\_ Work with your advisor to create a Transfer Plan. Identifying and applying to a Bachelor's Degree program will be your focus. You'll need to research academic programs of interests, colleges that offer these programs and be aware of deadlines for admissions, financial aid, and housing deposits (if you are interested on living on campus). The transfer process can be complex. Your advisor and transfer counselor can help you with this process.





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- \_\_\_ Schedule an appointment to meet with an advisor to learn about the transfer programs that are available to you as an MCC student, such as Mass Transfer, transfer/articulation agreements with other colleges, and other programs. Also, ask about the Common Application and the benefits of using this form. Call 1-800-818-3434 or visit the Academic, Career, and Transfer Centers in Lowell or Bedford to schedule your transfer counseling appointment.
- \_\_\_ If the transfer institution that you are applying, to requires that you write a personal statement, make an appointment with a tutor in the writing center to help you edit and review your essay. Remember the personal statement reflects who you are as a student and is also a sample of your writing ability.
- \_\_\_ Look for transfer scholarships that may be available. Consider applying to the MCC Foundation Scholarships. The deadlines for these MCC scholarships are typically at the end of the fall semester.
- \_\_\_ If possible, plan to go on college visits. Every college looks good online or in a glossy photo, but you can get a better feel for the school when you visit. Your transfer counselor can help you prepare to get the most from this visit.

### **MCC Advising Resources:**

- Career Services: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/careerservices)
- Transfer Services: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/transfer)
- MassTransfer: [www.mass.edu/masstransfer](http://www.mass.edu/masstransfer)
- Financial Aid: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/financialaid)
- Foundation Scholarships: [www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships](http://www.middlesex.mass.edu/foundation/scholarships)
- College Board Match Maker: [http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv\\_typeofschool.jsp](http://collegesearch.collegeboard.com/search/adv_typeofschool.jsp)