

# MUSIC STUDENT'S HANDBOOK

Birmingham-Southern College



Department of Music

Updated for 2021-2022 Academic Year

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CHAPTER ONE

ABOUT THE MUSIC PROGRAM  
AT BSC



## The History of the Music Department

When Birmingham-Southern College opened in 1918 on its current site "on the city's western border," it was created from a merger of two liberal-arts colleges, in the new post-Civil War industrial city of Birmingham, founded in 1871, and modeled as a "New South," modern manufacturing-based city, in contrast to the older agrarian industries on which Alabama's economy was based before the war. The older of the two parent schools was Southern University, founded in 1856 in Greensboro, Alabama. The other was Birmingham College, founded in 1898 on the site of the present Hilltop campus. Both of these institutions were Methodist-related colleges, as is Birmingham-Southern College.



At first the music curricular offerings at BSC were minimal: courses in the appreciation of music and basic music theory. The College also offered choral and instrumental ensembles as non-credit activities. There was no major or minor, and one full-time instructor taught and supervised all music courses and activities.

In 1895, a group of Birmingham business leaders, seeking to enhance the burgeoning interest in music already taking hold in the fast-growing city, incorporated the Birmingham Conservatory of Music, locating it in downtown Birmingham. The first faculty consisted of its director, a pianist, conductor and teacher based at the Cincinnati College of Music named Benjamin Guckenberger (pictured at left) as its head. Guckenberger brought two other musicians from the Cincinnati school to Birmingham (one being his wife), and hired an elocution and speech teacher from one of Birmingham's prominent families to form the initial faculty of four.

Guckenberger was an Ohio native and the son of German immigrants who studied at the Cincinnati College of Music. Like nearly all serious classical American musicians of the day, he traveled to Germany for advanced study. Guckenberger worked with the esteemed composer and pedagogue Xavier Scharwenka. His wife Margaret Gerry Guckenberger was a soprano from Boston, and was a direct descendant of Elbridge Gerry, a signer of the Declaration of Independence and James Madison's Vice-President. Margaret headed the voice department at the new school. An esteemed young violinist, Emil Wiegand, taught string instruments, but only remained in Birmingham for a couple of years.

The Conservatory's initial enrollment was eighty students in 1895-96. The following year enrollment doubled to 166 and increased to 200 by Fall 1897. Guckenberger's talent for connections and prior business experience helped the Conservatory grow rapidly, at a time when Birmingham's reputation as a new industrial center was expanding. Guckenberger also ran the city's annual May Festival, a distinguished event that brought world-class musicians to the young city each spring. Guckenberger was engaged as choir

director at two prominent religious congregations, Jewish congregation Temple Emanu-El and at St. Mary's Episcopal Church, where he led many special programs, including Birmingham's first complete performance of Handel's Messiah, and became very influential in the city, redounding to the benefit of the Conservatory, both in enrollment and financial support.

One of the first students to graduate with a diploma (no degrees were offered at this time) from the Conservatory was a young lady whose family moved to Birmingham so that she could continue her music studies begun in Cincinnati with Mr. Guckenberger. Edna Gockel went on to study as well with Scharwenka in Germany, and upon her return to Birmingham she assumed control of the Conservatory in 1903 when the Guckenbergers moved to Boston. Miss Gockel married William Gussen, a violinist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and he then became director of the Conservatory until his tragic death from tuberculosis in 1920. At that time the Conservatory was recognized as one of the preeminent schools of its kind in the South. Mrs. Gussen again assumed leadership of the institution until her retirement in 1930, establishing master classes, branch campuses of the Conservatory throughout north Alabama, and overseeing the design and construction of the Conservatory's own building in 1927, that still stands across from Phillips High School downtown.



*A young Edna Gockel (Gussen), second and fourth director of the Birmingham Conservatory of Music (1904-5, 1920-30)*

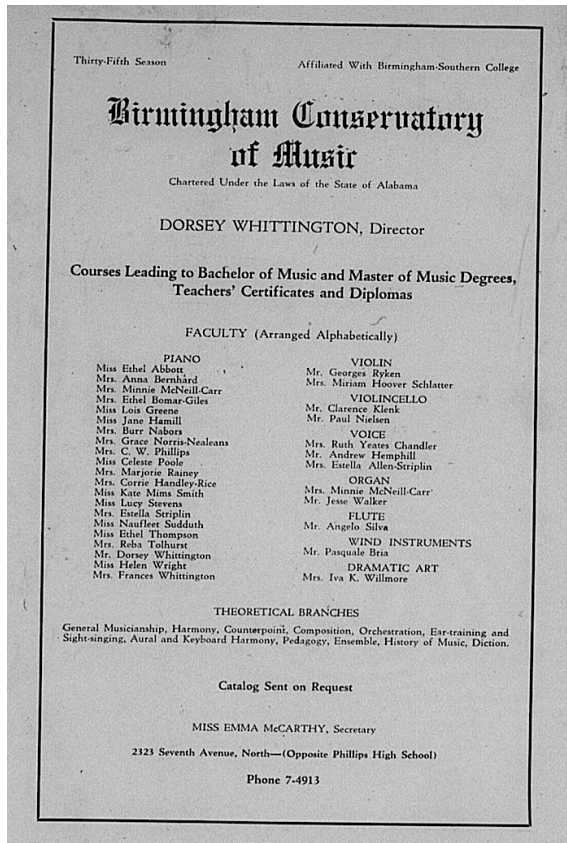
In 1929, Mrs. Gussen prepared for retirement from teaching by recruiting a world-renowned pianist and teacher to take her place as Conservatory director. Dorsey Whittington was born in the midwest in 1899 and was raised in the Los Angeles area. After attending the Institute for Musical Art (today The Juilliard School) in New York, he embarked on a most successful world concert tour on three continents. His wife Frances, also a gifted performer, joined him as a two-piano team until her death in 1948. In 1930 Whittington began planning for the addition of an undergraduate curriculum leading to degrees in music performance (B.M.) and music education (B.M.E.) as well as a graduate degree (M.M.). The Conservatory became affiliated with the new National Association of Schools of Music, where Whittington was an early board member, and conferred its first college degrees in 1936. Whittington was also one of the first conductors of the Birmingham Civic Symphony Orchestra, the forerunner of today's Alabama Symphony Orchestra.

The links between the Conservatory and the younger BSC were close long before the two institutions merged. Well before BSC, in the early 1900s, Edna Gockel's study in Germany was underwritten by Col. Robert S. Munger, a "founding father" of BSC for whom Munger Hall is named. In 1912, when an overnight fire destroyed nearly all the property of the Conservatory in their downtown location, Col. Munger made his farm near today's Five Points South entertainment district a temporary home for the

school, with recitals held in a large barn. Many of the early trustees and supporters of BSC were already long-time Conservatory trustees, patrons and parents of music students there. As early as the 1920s there had been a consortial arrangement between BSC and the Conservatory, where students of both institutions might each take courses at the other institution, and many Conservatory graduates received the A.B. degree (today's B.A.) from 'Southern.

After Whittington became director in 1930, the Conservatory expanded its program to offer the Bachelor of Music and Master of Music degrees, the traditional degrees of music schools affiliated with the newly-formed National Association of Schools of Music (NASM), which accepted the Conservatory as an institutional member in 1934. Whittington, ever the astute businessman, and BSC President Guy Snavely began plans that would further solidify the relationship between Conservatory and College. In 1940 the Conservatory moved to the BSC campus, occupying the former Simpson Preparatory School facility, whose front door opened onto Eighth Avenue, West, behind today's Sorority townhouse complex. The building also housed the Department of Chemistry, leading Whittington to note that the Conservatory was unique among music schools in sharing intimate space with science labs. The former Simpson School was home to the music program of the College until the present Hill Building was constructed in 1966.

Throughout the 1940s the two institutions continued to operate independently but cooperatively, and granted separate degrees. Following World War II, plans were accelerated for merger, which became official in starting with the 1952-53 academic year. The college-level instruction in the Conservatory became the Music Department of Birmingham-Southern College. The Conservatory continued as a part of BSC in its founding mission to be a preparatory and community-school music program, which continues to the present day. Hugh Thomas, appointed to the Conservatory faculty in 1933, and a former student of Whittington's, was appointed Dean at that time, coinciding with Dorsey Whittington's retirement. He remained on the BSC faculty until his retirement from full-time teaching in 198, remaining part-time as director of the BSC Concert Choir until 1993.

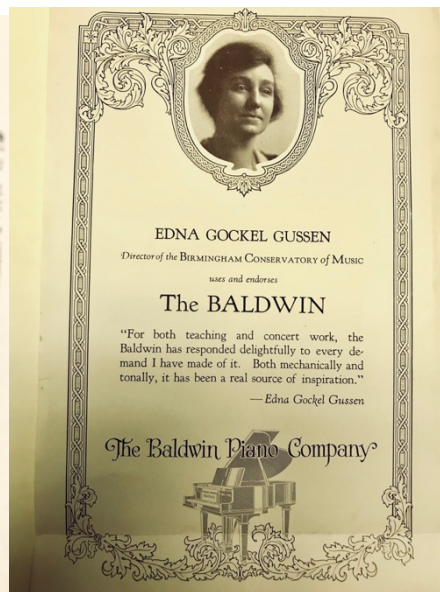


(Above): Dorsey Whittington in a piano lesson. This photo dates from the 1940s and was taken not at the Birmingham Conservatory, but at the Interlochen Music School in Michigan, where he taught for many summers and was one of the first piano faculty members.

(Left): The Conservatory in its heyday as an independent school: A prospectus from 1930. Note the size of the faculty, especially in piano, the degrees in music offered, and the "affiliation" with Birmingham-Southern College.



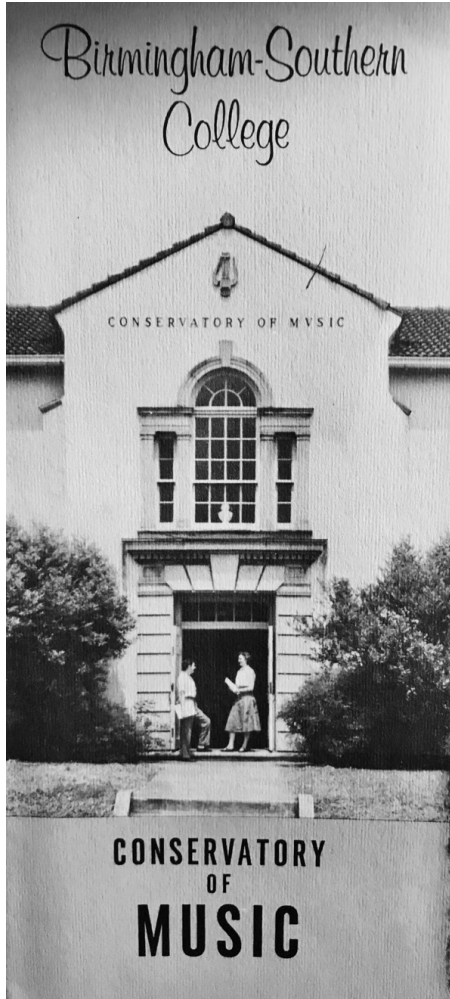
An illustration of the new home of the Birmingham Conservatory on 7th Avenue North from its dedication in 1927. The building, though modified, still stands today.



Edna Gockel Gussen, director of the Conservatory between 1905-1930, with her husband for many of those years, in an endorsement for Baldwin pianos, ca. 1925.



The story of the Conservatory and its merger with BSC parallels the course of many independent music schools in the United States from the Gilded Age onward, beginning with the merger of a conservatory with Oberlin College in 1865. It reflects the development of music as a recognized branch of academic endeavor and the interest of colleges to incorporate music more integrally as part of the liberal arts mission.



The Conservatory and Music Department have had an illustrious roster of faculty and graduates from its programs. Mrs. Gussen is remembered as the composer for Alabama's State Song, which was officially adopted by the state legislature in 1930, to words by Julia Tutwiler. Songwriter Hugh Martin, composer of "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" and songs for the film "Meet Me in St. Louis" starring Judy Garland, was an alumnus who was honored by BSC as a distinguished graduate when he was 95 years old. Composer Ezra Sims was a renowned avant-garde composer and winner of a Guggenheim Fellowship. A host of professional performers in opera, including three on the roster of the Metropolitan Opera, conductors, pianists and organists worldwide, scholars and musicologists associated with colleges and universities are former students as well. Several of them are honored with their portraits that hang in the lower lobby of the Hill Recital Hall. Just as significant are the great many more who pursued other careers outside music and for whom their study and love for the art continued to be central to their lives, including former Secretary of State Condoleeza Rice, who recalled her piano lessons at the Conservatory as a child in her autobiography.



*(Right): Longtime Conservatory faculty member, and Professor at BSC, Hugh Thomas, for whom the Master Class series at BSC is named along with his wife, longtime instructor and pianist Barbara. This photo dates from the 1950s, when Thomas became Dean of the Conservatory upon its merger with BSC.*

## **Mission Statement of the Department of Music**

One of the principal goals of a liberal-arts education is the search for meaning. The study and practice of the art of music in all its facets: the interpretative, technical, and analytical, through individual development and with others in ensemble, is a unique key to that search. Music, perhaps more than any other art, has the potential of expressing emotional nuance, of stimulating the free play of the imagination, and of communicating abstract ideas such as beauty, profundity, and awe. These uniquely human concepts are essential to the liberally-educated person.

The study and practice of music is always an intellectual challenge. Even students with outstanding academic records in high school often find the study of music to be a refreshingly different endeavor, because it merges intellectual and technical skills with deep emotional wells within us to a degree found in few other educational pursuits. It requires talent, initiative, a sense of risk, the courage to stake out a personal interpretation informed by knowledge of historical style, and perseverance. The study of music is not for the faint of heart.

But, like all that is truly worthwhile, it is a lifelong pursuit that returns deep, rewarding satisfaction to those who have the love and commitment to it. The rewards of music study are transferable to every other intellectual dimension of the human spirit; this consilience, as the biologist Edward O. Wilson has noted, lies at the very heart of the well-educated human being.

## **A Brief Summary of Opportunities**

The Department of Music at Birmingham-Southern College enrolls hundreds of students every term, both majors and non-majors, in a curriculum that offers a balanced, integrated approach to the areas of performance, theory, and history. Individual private music instruction in voice, piano, organ, classical guitar, and all string, wind and brass instruments is available to all BSC students, as well as participation in all ensembles, and in a variety of courses in the theory and appreciation of music, including the music of non-Western cultures. A diverse array of master class teachers, faculty and student recitals, and concerts by various ensembles throughout the year augment and enrich the education of the entire campus community.

## **The Music Major**

The goal of the Major in Music is to give students a grounding in the primary skills of music study: performance, theory and music history. We believe that the undergraduate student is best served by centering one's music education in the development of performance on an instrument, or as a singer. Theory training includes not only a thorough grounding in musical analysis, harmony, counterpoint and later compositional trends, but in the development of the creative faculty through frequent assignments in composition. Courses in music history develop the awareness of musical trends, styles, and literature, providing context for the developing musician. Work in ensembles teach musical and interpersonal skills, and enable students to collaborate in a wide variety of ways. The BSC music major provides an excellent preparation for graduate study in any of these fields. Specifically, the major requires our students to:

- gain experience in performance, theory, composition, and history
- develop familiarity with musical traditions, genres, canonical repertoire, major artists, styles, and instruments in the musical cultures covered in the curriculum;

- develop familiarity with major issues, central trends, modes of inquiry, and primary areas of controversy among scholars and performers, utilizing both primary source material as well as current scholarship;
- be able to read a musical score with aural and analytical comprehension and be able to describe musical structures persuasively, both verbally and in writing;
- be able to research, successfully develop, and express informed opinions about music, both verbally and in writing, from historical, analytical, and cultural perspectives;
- improve their formal presentation skills as both a performer and a speaker;
- improve their abilities to use library and on-line resources in all aspects of musical inquiry.

Successful completion of the major provides a basic musical competency, enriches students' other coursework at the College, and enhances their experience of their applied study. Music alumni are among the College's most distinguished, having achieved both academic and commercial success in music at national and international levels. BSC music majors include performers who have been internationally renowned as pianists, conductors, organists, orchestral musicians, in opera, church music, musicology, theory and composition. Many have excelled as teachers in elementary, middle and high schools in both public and private institutions, and some are now working in music-related fields such as music therapy and arts management. Graduate schools that BSC students have continued their education in recent years include The Juilliard School, Yale School of Music, Peabody Conservatory, Cleveland Institute of Music, the University of Miami, Columbia University, and the University of Edinburgh. Other music alumni have gone on to successful careers in law, medicine, and public service.

### **Which Degree is right for me?**

BSC is unique among music programs in a liberal-arts environment, in being able to offer four degrees within the music program. We recognize that BSC students are a diverse group intellectually, with varying goals for their undergraduate music education, and the purpose of these degree programs is to help assure the most appropriate program for each student's goal. The process of determining the appropriate music degree is a personal one, but it is made with the advice of the student's academic advisor (usually, but not necessarily, a member of the music faculty), and the full music faculty, which maintains a strong interest in the academic advisement and progress of each major.

All music majors begin their first year at BSC in the same track of required courses. Students wishing to pursue a course of study leading to the BMA degree are strongly encouraged to make this decision by the end of the first full year of academic study, as the minimum requirements for the degrees begin to differentiate in the sophomore year.

#### **Bachelor of Arts Degree, Music Major**

The BA degree, music major, combines the depth of music study as outlined above with a balanced curriculum in the varied liberal arts offered at the College. The likely candidate for the BA with a major in music is a motivated student who wishes to focus on his/her development as a musician but wishes to have the breadth of the wider liberal-arts offerings as well. Such students sometimes go on to advanced study in music at the graduate level, but more often they will move into a non-musical career or field of advanced study.

Within the BA degree, there are several options for students to choose: a track in Songwriting, a track leading to Disciplinary Honors, and a "thesis" option in lieu of the performance option. These are discussed in Chapter Two.

## **Bachelor of Musical Arts Degree, with an Interdisciplinary Music Major**

The BMA represents the unique opportunity to combine the in-depth opportunities of a music degree with a relevant area of study outside music. Because of the wide variety of creative options for music-based majors in this degree program, a process of mentoring and advisement with a music faculty member is critical for all students in this degree program. Typically, students meet with a music advisor in the sophomore year, and together they develop a desired outcome for the degree, and the plan of courses of study to achieve it. The typical BMA candidate wishes a more in-depth and directed focus in music study than is normally required in the BA, and has an outcome in mind that cannot be as effectively achieved by a mere combination of a music major and non-music minor, or even a double major within the BA curriculum.

## **Academic Progress and Advising**

As stated above, BSC music faculty members have a dedicated interest in the well-being and progress of music majors, and spend a great deal of time in individual advising sessions as needed. In addition to the usual academic advising issues that arise from term to term, faculty encourage students to discuss career goals, graduate schools and similar issues relating to their musical progress.

## **The Sophomore Interview**

At the end of the sophomore year, all music majors will be invited to interview with and audition for the full music faculty. By this point, majors are expected to declare one of the degree plans in music, and will have already made some progress toward that in their coursework and planning. BMA candidates may elect to present their degree plans for approval at this time. In addition to its value as an assessment and advising tool for both the student and the faculty, the mid-point interview is the formal instrument of admission for those students who intend to matriculate in the BMA degree program. Following the interview, a letter indicating the results of the interview, along with any relevant comments, is sent to the student, the student's advisor, and a copy is placed in the student's departmental file.

## **Pre-Recital Hearings**

When a student is preparing a degree recital (either the half- or full-recital), he/she will have a hearing before a committee of no fewer than two music faculty members. This hearing must be held at least one month before the projected date of the recital. In the hearing, students will present a draft copy of the proposed recital, and will be prepared to perform any or all of the selections at the request of the committee. Passing the pre-recital hearing is required for the recital to take place on the scheduled date. The intention of the hearing is to insure the readiness of the performers for the recital, with the understanding that having the appropriate mastery of the material one month prior to the performance is critical to a successful and enjoyable performance experience.

## **Jury Examinations**

All students taking private music (MS) courses at the 300 and 400 level must pass a jury examination at the end of each term of study. The final grade for the course consists of a combination of the teacher's grade and the collective jury grades. Students in their first term of college study are exempt from the jury examination. Students who have performed a half or full recital in that term may also exempt the jury for that term, provided they have secured an appropriate number of faculty members to attend and grade the recital for that purpose, and so notified them that the student desires to have the recital serve in place of the jury examination for that term.

Summer term juries are held early in the following fall term. In the event of documented illness at the time of the jury examination, the jury may either be re-scheduled within the stated time of that jury, or in

extreme cases, a make-up jury at the beginning of the next regular academic term can substitute. All jury examinations, and make-up jury opportunities, are announced by postings in the music building, and it is the student's responsibility to sign up for the jury.

An important word about "Jury Sheets" - The completion of a "jury sheet" by the student is essential for every student, whether or not the student actually takes a jury examination. The reason for this is that the "jury sheet" serves as a written documentation of the student's actual progress in the course, and is placed in the departmental file for each student.

For this reason, even students who are exempt from juries (such as those taking MS 100-level courses, and those who are opting for a degree recital to count as the jury) must complete and turn in a signed jury sheet at the end of each term of applied study.

## **Specific Faculty/Staff Contacts for Departmental Matters**

### **Music Department Chair: Professor Jeremy Grall**

Maintenance issues: Ms Judy Pandelis

Choirs: Prof. Lester Seigel

Conservatory: Ms Lucy Victory

Band and Jazz Ensemble: Prof. David Phy

Guitar Courses: Prof. Grall

Instrumental Courses: Prof. Phy

Lockers in Hill Building: Ms Pandelis

Opera Workshop: Prof. Jeff Kensmoe

Organ Courses: Prof. Seigel

Piano Courses and Teaching: Prof. Seigel

Recital Classes: Prof. Kensmoe

Recital Scheduling: Ms Pandelis

Recording Facilities: Prof. Grall

Theory and Music History: Prof. Grall

Voice Courses: Prof. Kensmoe

Whittington Competition: Prof. Seigel

The Music Department of Birmingham-Southern College is an accredited member of the National Association of Schools of Music, and has been since 1936.

The Music Department is also home to the Epsilon Alpha Chapter of Pi Kappa Lambda, a national honor society for music.

## CHAPTER TWO

# CURRICULUM, DEGREE AND MAJOR OPTIONS



## The Curriculum for the Music Major and Minor

In the spirit of the College's Explorations Curriculum, the goals for music majors, particularly in applied study, are outcome-based. A consequence of this goal is that successful completion of a major in music, for any degree or music major, is not only a matter of passing the necessary required courses in music, but additionally of achieving the appropriate minimum proficiency level in applied music. While it is expected that, for most students, the stated proficiency levels for both the primary instrument and any secondary instruments (such as piano for a singer) can be reasonably achieved or surpassed by the amount of applied study specified in each degree plan, satisfactory attainment of the appropriate proficiency level in the instrument is essential; the minimum requirements of applied study are not in themselves sufficient for completion of the major. For more about the Proficiency Levels, please see Chapter Three.

Students who seek to major in music must demonstrate sufficient competency to undertake work at the college level. Students must achieve a proficiency level appropriate for their degree and must advance towards that degree at a rate acceptable to the music faculty. Following the first two years of study, a committee of music faculty will interview students. The committee will advise students concerning their degree plans and expectations.

### Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the music major, students will be able to:

- Hear, identify, and work with musical elements – rhythm, pitch, harmony, structure, timbre, and texture
- Read and apply musical notation through performance
- Recognize and articulate an understanding of compositional process and musical style with reference to artists, technologies, events, and cultural forces through the major periods of history
- Use research tools and analysis to develop, defend judgments, and write about music
- Demonstrate a trajectory of continuing growth in applying skills and musical performance

**The College Catalog is the definitive word on all curricular matters. Customarily the student follows the catalog requirements in force in the year of her/his matriculation at BSC, but in some instances a student can choose another BSC catalog edition. See your academic advisor for details. The information found in this Handbook is for convenience and does not supersede that of the Catalog.**

Both the music major working toward the Bachelor of Arts degree and the major in the Bachelor of Musical Arts degree requirements consist of three essential parts: (1) the required courses in music for all degrees and majors ("core"), (2) non-credit requirements, such as recitals, qualifying interviews and proficiency satisfactions, and

(3) Explorations courses outside of music (often referred to as "general studies" or "general education" experiences.)

The January E-Term at BSC impacts in some way all three parts of the curriculum requirements.

Following are hypothetical plans for the typical music major in each of the degree options. These represent one way of completing the minimum requirements for each degree and are solely intended to give students some idea of what to take, and when.

### **The B.A. with Disciplinary Honors in Music**

Students majoring in music leading to the BA degree may choose to qualify for Disciplinary Honors by fulfilling the following additional requirements and criteria:

- Successful interview/audition for the music faculty by the end of the sophomore year (often referred to as the "full faculty jury"). This is the formal admission into the Disciplinary Honors track.
- Complete all requirements for the B.A. in music, attaining a minimum cumulative GPA of 3.250 in all courses in music, and a minimum 3.000 GPA in all courses taken at Birmingham-Southern College, of which the Senior Conference requirement shall be a full recital (sixty minutes) in the principal instrument in the senior year.
- Complete two units of MS 400-level study in addition to the applied study required of the B.A.
- Complete an additional one-half unit in a course designated MU 300 or higher.
- Complete a performance of a thirty-minute recital in the junior year

### **The B.A. with an Emphasis in Songwriting**

Students choosing the Songwriting track complete all of the requirements for the B.A. above, adding the following with the following exceptions and additions:

- The minimum units in applied study is 2.5 units over a minimum of three regular terms
- MU 352
- MU 355, to be taken twice for a total of 1 unit
- MU 371
- MU 450

### **The Minor in Music**

The requirements for a music minor are grounded in the following three competencies similar but less intensive than for the major: (1) exposure to performance and training in an instrument or in voice, (2) core knowledge of musical style, history and theory of music, and (3) experience in making music in an ensemble.

The six-unit sequence consists of the following courses:

Musical style, history and theory:

MU 121, Introduction to Music

Two units in music theory from MU 151, MU 152, MU 251, and MU 252 as appropriate

Performance and training:

Two units (usually over four regular terms) in applied study numbered MS 300 or above, achieving proficiency level two

Experience in an ensemble:

One unit (four regular terms) chosen from MU 112, 113, 211, 215, 217, 242, 341 or 343.



There is no audition or conference required for a student to minor in music.



### **Advice for the Music Major concerning Successful Completion of Requirements**

While requirements for the music major as outlined in the *Catalog* are straightforward, students should be aware of certain factors that can be helpful in navigating one's matriculation in the major smoothly. Mainly, they concern time management and advance planning, two factors that are essential for success in most of life's ventures. Here are some tips to keep in mind:

#### *Considering a Double Major?*

The requirements for the BA degree, music major, are fewer than those for either the Disciplinary Honors option or the BMA degree requirements. So the BA is generally the recommended plan for those who wish to double-major in music and another area.

#### *Recital Class and Concert Attendance*

Do not neglect the attendance in Recital Classes and in concert attendance! Not only is it good to hear others' performances, it also shows support for one's peers in the department. Faculty recital, guest recitals, and master class attendance should be considered mandatory for all music students, barring extraordinary circumstances.

#### *Piano Proficiency*

Keep in mind the requirement for all music majors that each student must satisfy a basic piano proficiency test (minimally Level One of the piano proficiency guidelines).<sup>1</sup> This means that students who need additional instruction to achieve the basic piano proficiency will need to take adequate piano lessons (100-level or 300-level, or a combination) to prepare for that. Students are strongly advised to do so as early as possible. If the test is unsuccessful, a student may re-take the test until one has passed it. Waiting until the senior year to attempt the piano proficiency can jeopardize one's timely graduation! A second benefit is that the early study of piano generally helps students in subsequent study in theory, ear training, and applied lessons.

#### *Readiness for the Theory Sequence (MU 151 et al.)*

Students who need fundamental preparation in music theory when entering BSC may have to delay enrollment in MU 151, offered each fall, and are placed in MU 150, Fundamentals of Music, in the spring of their first year. In such cases, they begin music study with their applied lessons and ensemble participation in the fall of the first year, continue those and add MU 150 in the spring term, and enroll in MU 151 and MU 153 in the fall of the second year, progressing from that point onward. This delay is quite typical and doesn't impede a timely completion of the major.

#### *The Music History Sequence (MU 221 and MU 222)*

Please be aware that these two courses are only offered in alternative years. As of this edition of the *Handbook*, the courses are scheduled to be offered again in the Fall of 2021 (MU 221) and Spring of 2022

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<sup>1</sup> In reality, students whose primary instruments are piano or organ do not formally have to take this basic piano proficiency test as they must satisfy a higher proficiency level in the course of their studies.

(MU 222). Both are required for all music majors and should ideally be taken in the same year. In course planning, keep this timetable in mind. MU 222 also has a pre-requisite of EH 102 or 208.

#### *The BMA Approval Process*

The way a student generally begins the process of matriculation in the BMA degree program is as follows:

1. As soon as a student has a plan for matriculation toward the BMA, s/he should approach a music faculty member to discuss the merits of the objective and to explore strategies for mapping out a course plan that addresses it. (If the student wants to choose one of the suggested tracks for the BMA established by the Department, this process is greatly simplified!). There are many nuances in such course planning, including the availability of each course, the time frame for completion, and ensuring that the overall course plan coherently addresses the objective for the “major.”
2. Once the course plan is confirmed, the student must write up the plan, clearly stating the objective, detailing the courses to be taken (listed by course number, estimated term to be taken, and if needed, a short explanation of its application to the objective), and the nature of the public capstone presentation, such as a recital, a lecture, etc. As noted above, sometimes courses anticipated become unavailable, so it is helpful to have alternatives when possible. Again, following the suggested tracks can help minimize such problems.
3. The student must find a suitable conference date with a quorum of the full-time music faculty to present the proposed plan and get approval. A copy of the plan is placed in the student’s progress folder in the music office, and should any changes to the plan be needed, a printed memo noting the alteration should be placed in the file by the BMA advisor.
4. In order to ensure timely completion of the BMA plan, students must accomplish these steps no later than December of the second year—even earlier if that is possible. Should a student decide to pursue the BA after approval of the BMA process, it should not compromise progress on the BA, so early pursuit of the BMA is not an irrevocable choice.

# CHAPTER THREE

## PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN APPLIED MUSIC STUDY (LESSONS)



Proficiency Levels are a means of benchmark assessments of student progress throughout one's matriculation in college study in applied music. This term refers to the individual music lesson and pertains to courses at BSC with the course prefix "MS"). The various instrumental and singing courses have proficiency levels established by the faculty that must be attained for each instrument studied according to the requirements for each major.

### **PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN PIANO (MS 110, 310, 410)**

(revised October 2017)

I. Proficiency Levels for music majors, piano or organ concentration, all degrees  
(See attached sheet)

II. Proficiency Levels for music majors, non-piano or organ concentration, all degrees, and for musical theatre majors

A. To be prepared in advance of the proficiency examination:

1. Solo Repertoire (all music majors):

Level 1: Perform from memory a piece exhibiting reasonable competency in a homophonic texture, similar in length and style to "Largo" from *Serse* by Handel.

Level 2: Perform from memory two short pieces from the piano repertoire in contrasting textures.

2. Technique:

Singers: 5-note scales (do-sol), hands together, beginning in C, ascending and descending chromatically in all major keys.

Instrumentalists: I-IV-V7-I progression in five major and five harmonic-minor keys of the student's choice. Keep a consistent rhythm at a steady tempo. LH provides bass line (inversions permitted).

B. To be distributed one week before the examination:

1. Harmonization of a melodic line using primary chords (I-IV-V at least) with a simple accompaniment pattern, to be performed at the examination

2. Transpose and play the harmonization of (II.B.1.) above in a key one whole step above or below the written key.

3. Reading at the piano from open score:

a. Singers: From an assigned SATB passage of no more than eight measures in length: play at the piano the S/B lines together, and any other two simultaneous lines of the student's choice

b. Instrumentalists: From a slow movement of a classic-era string quartet of no more than eight measures, play at the piano the Violin I and Cello lines together, and any other two simultaneous lines of the student's choice.

### III. Other Students taking piano

There is no piano proficiency requirement for students outside the above majors, who are taking piano as an elective. There is no piano proficiency requirement for students minoring in music.

As approved by the faculty, these standards will go into effect beginning in the 2018-19 academic year.

#### **PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN VOICE (MS 120, 320, 420)**

Voice Juries, proficiency exams, take place during exam week at the end of each semester. Make-up juries for students who are sick or have other emergencies during regular exam times will take place during the first week of classes in each semester. A student must have approval from his/her teacher to do a makeup jury. Documentation of illness or emergency may be requested at the discretion of the teacher.

Jury Repertoire Form - This form must be filled out prior to the voice jury. The student must bring this form to the exam. Jury forms are available in the voice department office and from voice faculty members.

#### **Level One**

#### **VOICE PROFICIENCY EXAMS (JURIES) BMA and BA – Voice Principals**

1. Proficiency Level I is to be taken at the end of the second term of MS 320. 2. The primary goal of the Proficiency Level I jury is to evaluate the student's technical progress

3. Ten minutes will be allowed for the test.

The following are expected of a successful Level I Test: 1. Musical accuracy

2. Physical alignment that serves singing

3. Evidence of efficient breath management

4. Connection of breath to tone

5. Proper pronunciation and inflection of the languages represented 6. Evidence of responsiveness to text

7. Evidence of a communicative performer

#### **Repertoire Requirements**

Four selections from memory (two in Italian and two in English) Student will present:

1. One Italian song or aria from the 17th or early 18th centuries 2. One song in English

3. One song of choice with Instructor approval

#### **Proficiency Level II and Level III**

1. It is recommended that Level II is to be taken at the end of the fourth term of MS 320, and Level III at the end of either the fifth term or sixth term of MS 320. 2. Repertoire for Level II must represent work done after the successful completion of the Proficiency Level I test.

3. Upon successfully passing the Level II jury, the student will perform the same jury repertoire for the Sophomore Qualifying Exam, which is to be performed for the Music Faculty.

4. Technical progress remains a significant part of this assessment.

5. 10-20 minutes will be allowed for these tests.

Proficiency Level II and III tests should demonstrate a combination of vocal, musical and performance achievement, progress in all skill sets, and continued growth in the following areas:

1. Musical accuracy

2. Correct pronunciation and inflection of text

3. Vibrant, resonant singing that reflects physical coordination

4. Ability to sing legato line

5. Sensitivity to musical style

6. Performance that reveals understanding of and commitment to text 7. Development as a persuasive and communicative performer

### **Proficiency Level II and Proficiency Level III Repertoire Requirements**

Four selections from memory 1. 1 song in Italian

2. 1 song in German or French

3. 2 other selections

Student will present 1 song or aria in Italian and one other selection. Student will be asked to read an Italian text aloud (Proficiency Level II).

### **Pre-Recital Hearing for capstone event (one of three tracks):**

Upon completion of Proficiency Level III, students will progress to recital and/or lecture (Capstone) preparation. A Recital Hearing must be completed at least 4 weeks prior to the scheduled Capstone event. A student must pass the Recital Hearing in order to present the Capstone event. A student will be allowed 2 attempts to pass the Recital Hearing. Dependent upon the requirements for their major, students will choose to present a capstone event (30 minutes cumulative) from one of three tracks:

1. Recital with program notes 2. Lecture-recital

3. Lecture presentation

### **Repertoire requirements for Option 1:**

Students will present

1. Songs and arias representing Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and 20th-21st century art music.

2. Songs and/or arias in English

3. Songs/arias in two foreign languages: Italian, German or French

### **Repertoire requirements for Options 1 and 2:**

Songs and/or arias appropriate to the lecture topic. Performance and writing assessments for Options 1 and 2:

1. See Voice Jury Rubric

2. See Writing Rubric (for recital program)

## **PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN ORGAN (MS 130, 330, 430)**

Before organ study commences, the student must be able to satisfy Proficiency Level One in Piano.

### **Memory Requirements**

Performance from memory is not required, with the following exceptions:

1. A student studying for 1/4 unit (MS 130) must memorize one piece each term.

2. On jury examinations, one piece must be played from memory.

3. To satisfy proficiency level requirements above level Two, the following must be performed from memory:

a. the required work by J. S. Bach

b. any required work of the nineteenth century

c. any required work in the French symphonic style.

4. When presenting a degree recital, or when performing a recital that is to be used as a jury or in satisfying the requirement of a proficiency level, the student must play from memory as required in No. 3 above when playing the pre-recital hearing. Playing other literature from memory is encouraged but not required. Scores, page turners and registrants may be used in the performance of all recitals.

### Level One

1. a. After one year of study a student must demonstrate ability to perform a composition in contrapuntal texture involving a melodically active pedal part and both hands.
- b. A non-music major seeking to satisfy the general education requirement in the Fine Arts will demonstrate in three jury examinations the ability to perform works in a variety of styles and textures; i.e., a trio, a chorale prelude, a Romantic work, a twentieth century work, etc.
2. Literature: Exercises and compositions for manuals and pedals in the Gleason Method, or works of comparable difficulty.  
At least two compositions of suitable difficulty must be learned for performance each term.  
Example: Works the difficulty of:
  - J.S. Bach. "Ich ruf zu dir" (Orgelbüchlein)
  - Dupre. Seventy-nine Chorales
  - Langlais. Ten Pieces
3. Technical skills. Play the following major scales legato in the pedal for one octave in eighth notes, the temp to be no slower than quarter = 60. A major, A-flat major, C major, G major, B-flat major.

### Level Two

1. To satisfy requirements for Level Four, a prelude and fugue, two chorale preludes, and a toccata, all of appropriate difficulty, must be learned for performance.
2. Literature: Works the difficulty of:
  - Bach. Prelude and Fugue, E minor, BWV 533 (The Cathedral)
  - "Jesu, meine Freude" (Orgelbüchlein)
  - Gigout. Toccata in B minor
  - Brahms. Es ist ein Ros' entsprungen
3. Technical Skills. Play all major melodic minor scales legato in the pedal for one octave (plus one note) in eighth notes, the tempo to be no slower than quarter note = 72.

### Level Three

1. To satisfy requirements for Level Six, the following must be learned for performance, each of appropriate difficulty.
  - a. a portion of a French Baroque work
  - b. a prelude and fugue of J. S. Bach
  - c. a Romantic work (French or German)
  - d. a twentieth century work (French or German)
  - e. four chorale preludes
2. Literature: Works the difficulty of:
  - Bach. Prelude and Fugue, C minor, BWV 546
  - Toccata, F major, BWV 540
  - Distler. Orgelsonate (Trio), Op. 18, No. 2
  - Pepping. Grosses Orgelbuch
  - Reger. Introduction and Passacaglia

Franck. Chorale, A minor  
Piece Heroique  
Alain. Litanies  
Langlais. Suite Médiévale

3. Technical skills. Play all major and melodic minor scales legato in the pedal for one octave in eighth notes, the tempo to be no slower than quarter note = 72, while playing the following whole-note chords on a single manual as accompaniment: I-IV-V-V-I. Examples of possible voicing of the accompanying chords will be provided in lessons.

### **Disciplinary Honors Proficiency Level Requirements for Organ**

Literature: Works the difficulty of:

Albright. Organ Book I  
Bach. Prelude and Fugue, D major, BWV 532, Trio Sonatas  
Toccatà, Adagio and Fugue, C major, BWV 564  
Franck. B-minor Chorale, E-major Chorale  
Liszt. Fantasy and Fugue on B-A-C-H  
Langlais. Te deum  
Hindemith. Sonatas  
Dupre. Preludes and Fugues  
Pepping. Sonate für Orgel (Trio)  
Messiaen. Transports de joie  
Persichetti. Shimah B'koli; Sonata  
Rorem: Quaker Reader

Pedagogy:

- a. Complete a comparative survey of materials currently available for the instruction of beginning organists. The survey is to be begun in the Fall term and completed in the Spring.
  - b. As required by the instructor, participate in weekly organ classes as a coach for beginning students.
4. Technical skills. Play all major and melodic minor scales legato twice in the pedal for one octave in eighth notes, the tempo to be no slower than quarter note = 72, while playing the same scale in contrary motion, first with the left hand then with the right.



**PROFICIENCY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS IN STRING INSTRUMENTS (MS 140, MS 340, MS 440)  
ORCHESTRAL STRING INSTRUMENTS (All degrees)**

**(MS 140, 340, 440)**

**Level 1**

*Proficiency Level 1 should be satisfied by the end of the first full year of private instruction.*

*The primary goal of the Proficiency Level 1 jury is to evaluate the student's abilities through basic technical and lyrical works.*

The following are the expectations of a successful Proficiency Level 1 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Good hand and finger position

Appropriate posture

Solid tone with centered pitch in all registers

Rhythmic Stability

Ability to control the bow

Musical accuracy

Technique:

Major and Natural Minor scales up through four sharps and four flats, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 100

At least two collegiate-level technical etudes, TBD by instructor.

Repertoire:

Perform a solo with accompaniment that represents lyrical and technical abilities, or an equivalent movement(s) from a major concerto with accompaniment, TBD by instructor.

**Level 2**

*Proficiency Level 2 should be taken at the end of the second full year of private instruction (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Music for Level 2 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 jury (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Proficiency Level 2 should demonstrate a trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument studied.*

*Upon successful passing of the Level 2 jury, the student will perform the same repertoire from the Level 2 jury for the Sophomore Qualifying Exam, which is to be performed for the full music faculty.*

The following are the expectations of a successful Proficiency Level 2 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Good hand and finger position

Appropriate posture

Solid tone with centered pitch in all registers

Rhythmic Stability

Ability to control the bow in various articulations

Musical accuracy

Performance of musical details

Basic historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

All Major and Natural Minor scales, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 120

Two collegiate-level technical etudes from two different method books, (should be in addition to books studied in Level 1), TBD by instructor

Repertoire:

Perform a full concerto with accompaniment or equivalent solo with accompaniment, TBD by instructor.

Orchestral Excerpts: two technical and two lyrical, TBD by instructor.

### **Level 3**

*Proficiency Level 3 should be taken at the end of the third full year of private instruction (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Music for Level 3 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 and 2 juries (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Upon successful passing of the Level 3 jury, the student should have enough quality repertoire and experience to perform at least a half-recital.*

*Proficiency Level 3 should demonstrate an advanced trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument, as well as research understanding of all works studied.*

The following are the expectations of a successful Proficiency Level 3 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Good hand and finger position

Appropriate posture

Solid tone with centered pitch in all registers

Rhythmic Stability

Ability to control the bow in various articulations

Musical accuracy

Performance of musical details

Historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

All Harmonic and Melodic Minor scales, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 120

Two collegiate-level technical etudes from two different method books, (should be in addition to books studied in Level 1 and 2), TBD by instructor.

Repertoire:

Perform a full concerto that is intended for orchestral accompaniment (a piano accompaniment should be used for the proficiency audition), TBD by instructor.

Orchestral Excerpts: two technical and two lyrical, TBD by instructor.

**PROFICIENCY LEVELS FOR WOODWIND AND BRASS INSTRUMENTS**  
**(MS 150A-J, MS 350A-J, MS 450A-J)**

**Level One**

1. Proficiency Level 1 should be taken at the end of the freshman year.
2. The primary goal of the Proficiency Level 1 jury is to evaluate the student's tone and abilities through basic technical and lyrical works.
3. The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 1 jury:

Basic Abilities:

- Quality tone throughout all registers
- Appropriate posture and hand position
- Clear articulations
- Musical accuracy

Technique:

- Major and Natural Minor scales up through four sharps and four flats, one octave with arpeggios, 8<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 120
- F concert chromatic scale, 2 octaves, 8<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 120
- At least two collegiate-level technical etudes, TBD by instructor

Repertoire:

- Perform a solo with accompaniment that represents lyrical and technical abilities, or an equivalent movement from a major concerto with accompaniment, TBD by instructor

**Level Two**

1. Proficiency Level 2 should be taken at the end of the sophomore year.
2. Music for Level 2 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 jury.
3. Upon successful passing of the Level 2 jury, the student will perform the same repertoire for the Sophomore Qualifying Exam, which is to be performed for the Music Faculty
4. The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 2 jury:

Basic Abilities:

- Quality tone throughout all registers
- Appropriate posture and hand position
- Clear articulations
- Musical accuracy
- Performance of musical details
- Basic historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

- All Major and Natural Minor scales one octave (two octaves where possible) with arpeggios, 16<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 80
- Bb concert chromatic scale, 2 octaves, 8<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 120

- In addition to the etudes in Level 1, at least two more collegiate-level technical etudes from two different method books, TBD by instructor

Repertoire:

- Perform a full concerto with accompaniment or equivalent solo with accompaniment, TBD by instructor

### **Level Three**

1. Proficiency Level 3 should be taken at the end of the junior year.
2. Music for Level 3 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 and 2 juries.
3. Upon successful passing of the Level 3 jury, the student should have enough quality repertoire and experience to perform a half-recital.
4. Proficiency Level 3 should demonstrate a trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument, as well as research understanding of all works studied.
5. The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 3 jury:

Basic Abilities:

- Quality tone throughout all registers
- Appropriate posture and hand position
- Clear articulations
- Musical accuracy
- Performance of musical details
- Historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

- All Harmonic and Melodic Minor scales one octave with arpeggios, 16<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 80
- Bb concert chromatic scale, 2 octaves, 8<sup>th</sup> notes at quarter note = 120
- In addition to the etudes in Level 1 and 2, at least two more collegiate-level technical etudes from two different method books from those used in prior terms, TBD by instructor

Repertoire:

- Perform a full concerto that is intended for orchestral accompaniment (a piano accompaniment should be used for the proficiency audition), TBD by instructor
- Orchestral Excerpts: two technical and two lyrical, TBD by instructor

## **PROFICIENCY LEVEL REQUIREMENTS IN PERCUSSION (MS 150K, 350K, 450K)**

*Proficiency Level 1 should be taken at the end of the first full year of private instruction.*

*The primary goal of the Proficiency Level 1 jury is to evaluate the student's abilities through basic on various percussion works.*

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 1 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Appropriate posture and hand position

Rhythmic stability

Musical accuracy

Basic technique on all instruments studied

Technique:

Major and Natural Minor scales up through four sharps and four flats, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 100 (2 or 4 mallets for arpeggios)

C concert chromatic scale, 2 octaves, 16th notes at quarter note = 100 (2 mallet)

14 of the 26 American Drum Rudiments, TBD by instructor (snare)

Repertoire:

One collegiate-level mallet etude, TBD by instructor.

One collegiate-level rudiment etudes on snare, TBD by instructor.

One collegiate-level work on timpani, TBD by instructor.

### **Level 2**

*Proficiency Level 2 should be taken at the end of the second full year of private instruction.*

*Music for Level 2 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 jury (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Proficiency Level 2 should demonstrate a trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instruments studied.*

*Upon successful passing of the Level 2 jury, the student will perform the same repertoire from the Level 2 jury for the Sophomore Qualifying Exam, which is to be performed for the full music faculty.*

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 2 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Appropriate posture and hand position

Rhythmic stability

Musical accuracy

Basic technique on all instruments studied

Performance of musical details

Basic historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

All Major and Natural Minor scales, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 100 (2 or 4 mallets for arpeggios)

All 26 American Drum Rudiments (snare)

World drum techniques on two different instruments

Repertoire:

Perform one collegiate-level 4 mallet etude or solo, TBD by instructor.

Perform one collegiate-level rudiment etude or solo on snare, TBD by instructor.

Perform one collegiate-level etude or solo on timpani, TBD by instructor.

Perform one world drum etude, TBD by instructor.

### **Level 3**

*Proficiency Level 3 should be taken at the end of the third full year of private instruction (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Music for Level 3 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 and 2 juries (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).*

*Upon successful passing of the Level 3 jury, the student should have enough quality repertoire and experience to perform at least a half-recital.*

*Proficiency Level 3 should demonstrate an advanced trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument, as well as research understanding of all works studied.*

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 3 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Appropriate posture and hand position

Rhythmic stability

Musical accuracy

Strong technique on all instruments studied

Performance of musical details

Historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

All Harmonic and Melodic Minor scales, one octave with arpeggios, two octaves with arpeggios, 16th notes at quarter note = 80 (2 or 4 mallets for arpeggios)

All 26 American Drum Rudiments with the ability to start on either hand (snare)

Drum technique on multiple instruments

Repertoire:

Perform two contrasting works on marimba, at least one work must be performed with 4 mallets, TBD by instructor.

Perform 2 snare works for use in a recital, TBD by instructor.

Perform a solo work for multiple drums, TBD by instructor.

Orchestral Excerpts: one mallet, one snare, and one timpani, TBD by instructor.



## PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN HARP (MS 150L, MS 350L, MS 450L)

### Level One:

Basic competencies in music theory and harp technique: knowing all major/minor scales, including pedal positions, arpeggios, basic harp hand positioning and pedal technique (high thumbs, closing all fingers, connecting all fingers, familiarity with all pedals and their flat-natural-sharp positions).

Repertoire examples: *The Little Fountain*, Samuel Pratt; *Petite Suite Classique*, Grandjany; Bochsá Etudes.

### Level Two:

Competencies with all harp extended techniques, such as left and right hand harmonics, glissandi and double glissandi, *pres de la table*, muffling, flat thumb, etc.

Sight-reading skills, including predicting placement/connecting, lifting, fingering, and anticipating pedaling.

Familiarity with harp history and primary harp composers and their techniques, such as Grandjany, Salzedo, Renie, Tournier, Hasselmans.

Repertoire examples: *Preludes*, Grandjany; *Feuillets d'Album*, Renie; *Automne*, Grandjany; Pozzoli Etudes.

### Level Three:

Maintaining all previous proficiencies in harp techniques and posture, ability to perform a half-hour recital, with memory skills and performance aptitude.

Repertoire examples: *Au Matin*, Tournier; *First Arabesque* or *Clair de Lune*, Debussy/Grandjany; *Sonatas*, Naderman. Orchestral excerpts: *Capriccio Espagnol*, Rimsky-Korsakov; *Waltz of the Flowers*, Tchaikovsky; *Romeo and Juliet*, Tchaikovsky.

## **PROFICIENCY LEVELS IN GUITAR (MS 160A, MS 360A, MS 460A)**

### **Level 1**

Proficiency Level 1 should be taken at the end of the first full year of private instruction. The primary goal of the Proficiency Level 1 jury is to evaluate the student's abilities through basic technical and lyrical works.

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 1 jury:

#### Basic Abilities:

Good Right and Left hand and finger position  
Appropriate posture  
Solid tone  
Rhythmic Stability  
Musical accuracy

#### Technique:

Perform two slur studies from either the Segovia or Aaron Shearer slur books.  
Demonstrate sight-reading using the open position scales  
Adequately perform two Giuliani Right-Hand Arpeggio studies.  
C, G, D, A major scales in three positions.

#### Repertoire:

Perform two solos from memory. The pieces should be either two intermediate level solo works or two advanced musical studies. TBD by instructor.

### **Level 2**

Proficiency Level 2 should be taken at the end of the second full year of private instruction (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).

Music for Level 2 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 jury (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).

Proficiency Level 2 should demonstrate a trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument studied.

Upon successful passing of the Level 2 jury, the student will perform the same repertoire from the Level 2 jury for the Sophomore Qualifying Exam, which is to be performed for the full music faculty.

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 2 jury:

#### Basic Abilities:

Good Right and Left hand and finger position  
Appropriate posture  
Solid tone  
Rhythmic Stability

Musical accuracy  
Performance of musical details  
Basic historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

Perform two slur studies from either the Segovia or Aaron Shearer slur books.  
Demonstrate sight-reading using the open position and second position scales  
Adequately perform two Giuliani Right-Hand Arpeggio studies.  
Perform all of the Segovia Scales

Repertoire:

Perform two contrasting solos from memory of intermediate repertoire at a level that demonstrates the ability to begin the advance repertoire required at the advanced level

### Level 3

Proficiency Level 3 should be taken at the end of the third full year of private instruction (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).

Music for Level 3 should represent work done after successful completion of the Proficiency Level 1 and 2 juries (exemptions may be allowed upon full faculty approval).

Upon successful passing of the Level 3 jury, the student should have enough quality repertoire and experience to perform at least a half-recital.

Proficiency Level 3 should demonstrate an advanced trajectory of musical growth in all skills related to performing the instrument, as well as research understanding of all works studied.

The following are expected of a successful Proficiency Level 3 jury:

Basic Abilities:

Good Right and Left hand and finger position  
Appropriate posture  
Solid tone  
Rhythmic Stability  
Musical accuracy  
Performance of musical details  
Basic historical and theoretical knowledge of the works being performed

Technique:

Studies will be determined by the instructor based on the specific requirements of the pieces currently being studied.

Repertoire:

Be able to perform two-four advanced level pieces. Representative works may include movements from the Bach Cello, Lute, or Violin Solo works, advanced work by Leo Brouwer (such Decameron Negro, Elogio de la Danza), advanced classical works (such as the Grand Overture by M. Giuliani or Rondo by D. Aguado etc.), and/or a Romantic work (such as by Mertz, Granados, Barrios Mangoré, or Albéniz etc.).

# CHAPTER FOUR

## OTHER MATTERS RELATED TO MUSIC STUDY



### **Accompanists**

All students registered for 300 and 400 level courses in applied music (MS) may avail themselves of one of the staff accompanists assigned to that studio, as recommended by the teacher. The need for accompanists can vary widely depending on the instrument being studied. Students are required to pay a set fee each term to cover the cost of the accompanist.

### **Departmental Recital Class**

Students are encouraged to attend and to participate in the Tuesday morning recital class, held at 11:00 AM most of the fall and spring terms, usually on the last Tuesday of the month. Most applied music courses require a student to perform at least once each term in recital class. To perform in the recital class, students must have permission of their applied teacher, and complete a form in advance of the recital class, which is available online:

Performances in the class are not graded and are for the purpose of giving the student experience in performing in public, a valuable activity prior to a recital or concert performance. For the audience, it is an opportunity for students to support each other in their musical progress and growth, and for faculty to hear and appreciate student's progress.

### **Studio Classes**

For most instruments and voice, applied teachers organize their studios (piano, voice primarily) into class settings on a regular basis, with others in their instrumental families or studios. Your teacher will publicize studio classes when they are held and can provide additional information.

### **Master Classes**

Through the Hugh and Barbara Thomas Master Class Series, outstanding performers/teachers are brought to campus to work in a group setting with students. The Master Class is one of the highlights of any musician's ongoing education and is a treasured opportunity in any music school or department. Often a public performance is included as part of the master teacher's visit and the event is published as part of the season events for the year. Your applied teacher will be able to give you specific information about these opportunities.

### **About Degree Recitals**

Music majors working toward the BA degree are required to present a minimum 30 minute public recital, usually in the senior year. For music majors in the "thesis" track of the BA, a comprehensive thesis mentored by a faculty member may be submitted in lieu of a public recital, but a presentation on the topic is required as part of the requirement of all BSC students to participate in a Senior Conference.

Students often work as a pair to present an hour-long recital, featuring thirty minutes of music by each soloist, to create a longer performance with intermission. There are advantages to this option in that families can attend an evening or weekend recital. Audiences tend to be larger when there are two performers. And during the end of term period, which is busier than usual, student audiences often appreciate being able to attend a "two for one" event. There is no change in requirements for each student if this option is chosen.

#### **Procedures:**

Well before the recital date (no later than the beginning of the term in which the recital is to be held), the major teacher and student begin discussions of the recital program, and select a tentative performance date.

When that date has been determined, it is considered tentative until the student has passed the pre-recital hearing (see below). However, the student should alert the departmental secretary, Judy Pandelis, of the tentative date so that it can be noted on the College calendar, to prevent scheduling conflicts.

The student asks two or three music faculty members to serve as the auditors for the pre-recital hearing, and informs them of the date. The pre-recital hearing must be held no later than one month prior to the tentative recital date.

The student should also insure that an accompanist (or other needed musicians) are available for the hearing.

For the Pre-Recital Hearing: The student should secure an appropriate room for the hearing. If the Recital Hall is not available, often a larger classroom or ensemble room will suffice. For percussion, the Phillips Rehearsal Hall should be used.

The student must prepare a draft of the recital program, following the appropriate format as shown below. Bring a copy of the program for each of the auditors to the hearing. It is not necessary to bring copies of your music to the hearing.

Assuming the hearing goes well, the faculty members present will sign one copy of the recital program draft, which should be taken immediately to Ms Pandelis in the Art Building. At that point the tentative recital date becomes permanent. Ms Pandelis will prepare the final draft of the recital program and arrange for it to be printed and available in time for the recital. It is the student's responsibility to pick up the finished programs and take them to the Recital Hall on the day of the recital (or the day before).

If the student does not pass the hearing, the tentative recital date becomes forfeit. The student should set up a new time for a hearing, and the recital date to be chosen must be later than one month from this subsequent hearing.

#### **How to format the Printed Program:**

Please see the attached sample programs. It is important to follow the models for recital programs, both for the ease of the audience's use, and because the recital program documents certain information necessary as part of your academic progress as a music major. Your major teacher, the departmental secretary (Judy Pandelis, in the Art Building), or the faculty member designated to proof all printed programs for departmental recitals can help you if you have specific questions.

A sample of a full recital (such as a senior degree recital) in organ:

The Faculty of Music of  
BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE  
presents  
**JANE ELIZABETH DOE**  
in  
Organ Recital

Messe pour les Couvents Plein jeu Recit de Chromhorne Dialogue	François Couperin 1668-1733
---	--------------------------------

Sonata IV, E minor, BWV 528 Adagio-vivace Andante Un poc' allegro	Johann Sebastian Bach 1685-1750
--	------------------------------------

INTERMISSION

Litanies	Jehan Alain 1911-1940
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Three Short Hymn Settings Simple Gifts Fairest Lord Jesus Lord of the Dance	Gerald Bales b. 1919
--	-------------------------

<i>Final</i> from Symphony No. 1	Louis Vierne 1870-1937
----------------------------------	---------------------------

Thursday evening  
March 25, 2012  
Eight o'clock  
Hill Recital Hall

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Arts, Disciplinary Honors in Music. Ms Doe is a senior.

*You are cordially invited to a reception following the recital, in the lobby.*

A sample of a half-recital (such as a Junior degree recital for Disciplinary Honors, or senior recital for the BA) in voice:

The Music Department of  
BIRMINGHAM-SOUTHERN COLLEGE  
presents  
**JONATHAN EDWARD DOE**  
in  
Voice Recital  
Virginia Dismukes, Piano

Die Liebe des Nächsten  
Vom Tode  
Die Ehre Gottes aus der Natur  
Gottes macht and Vorsehung  
*from Sechs Lieder von Gellert, Op. 48*

Ludwig van Beethoven  
1770 - 1827

Sanctus  
*from St. Cecilia Mass*

Charles Gounod  
1818 - 1893

Lydia  
Mai

Gabriel Fauré  
1845 - 1924

The Falcon  
White was the way

John Jeffreys  
b. 1927

Thursday Morning  
April 10, 2008  
Eleven o'clock  
Hill Recital Hall

This recital is presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Bachelor of Arts. Mr. Doe is a senior.



## Annual Performance Opportunities and Competitions

Performance Competitions are a standard part of the music major's world, and like so many things, there are both pros and cons associated with them. Benefits include the ability to compare your level of performance with others, both within and beyond BSC, experience in live performance and stage presence, and valuable addition to one's performing resumé. In the best competitions, judges' feedback is constructive. But there can be a downside, when a competition is poorly organized and not sensitive to the pedagogical value that undermines the department's educational mission. Choosing to participate in a competition must be decided carefully and with the advice and consent of your applied teacher. Here are some descriptions of departmentally-sponsored music performances and competitions, and a word or two on other opportunities frequently encountered by music students.

**BSC Bands, Choirs, Opera Workshop:** All BSC ensembles within the music department are open to all students, regardless of major or standing. Some ensembles require an audition, which are announced. For the Concert Choir and Hilltop Singers, auditions are customarily held in the late spring for the following academic year. For Opera Workshop, it is customary for students to be enrolled in voice lessons. For more information on BSC bands, contact Professor David Phy; for choirs, Prof. Lester Seigel, and for Opera, Prof. Jeff Kensmoe.

For music majors and qualified non-majors, an Ensemble course (MU 341) may be formed for ensembles in one instrument (such as guitar, harp, percussion), or consorts (piano trio, string quartet, duo-piano, etc.), when possible. These options should be discussed with the student's studio teacher.



**The Dorsey and Frances Whittington Competition** is named for two prominent teachers on the faculty of the Birmingham Conservatory of Music, which merged with the College in the early 1950s to form the present-day BSC Music Department. Dorsey Whittington was a longtime Director of the Conservatory, and was a world-renowned pianist and composer, who was also the founding conductor of what today has become the Alabama

Symphony Orchestra.

The competition is open to all BSC students currently studying applied music at the College. Notices of the application deadline, usually in mid-fall, are posted around the Hill building each year. Students wishing to enter should consult with their applied teacher, who signs a form that students complete, recommending them for the competition. The competition itself is held in early December. Winners are announced on that day, and subsequently receive the opportunity to perform the following February with a professional orchestral ensemble as soloists, in a public performance on campus.

**Honors Day Recital** – In recent years the Department has offered a recital on Honors Day, in the spring term, usually consisting of students who have won competitions of various kinds that year. Students are invited by the music faculty to participate in this event based on qualifications and programming needs.



**Choral and Instrumental Concerts and Opera Workshop Productions** are held on a varying schedule each year. These are outstanding opportunities for performance in instrumental, choral and opera venues. All ensembles are open to all students at the College by audition and/or placement.

**Outside Competitions** are encouraged for qualified music majors by their teachers. It is the expectation of the Music Department that when your teacher tells you that you should enter a competition he/she feels is appropriate, that you say “Yes!” Competitions are a normal part of music and indeed, in life itself, and a wholesome competition experience can teach one a great deal, build confidence and connections.

**Performances Off-Campus:** The faculty encourages all performing experiences which are educationally valid and which are in line with the student's individual abilities, needs, and goals. However, since there is more to be gained from performing than simply "experience", the faculty places highest priority on productions on the campus, which are designed with specific educational objectives. Students majoring in music may appear in off-campus musical/theatrical productions, though only with the approval of their academic advisor and their private teacher. The faculty will work cooperatively with each student to plan performance activities on the campus and will advise students as to the educational value of off-campus opportunities. Students who wish to undertake the time-consuming activity in an off-campus production may be advised to take a reduced course load. Students who hold merit or service scholarships in music are expected to participate fully in on-campus performance activities in music.

# CHAPTER FIVE

## FACILITIES



### **The James Blaine Hill Music Building**

Completed in 1966, the James Blaine Hill Music Building houses music classrooms, practice rooms, teaching studios, ensemble rehearsal rooms, music technology classrooms and studios and a 287-seat recital hall. The building contains a 10.2 state of the art electroacoustic music studio and the Taylor Recoring Studio. Traditional keyboard instruments include pipe organs by Möller, Reuter, Schantz, Ruhland, and Casavant, Steinway grands in the teaching studios, four additional Steinway concert grand pianos, a harpsichord and an upright or grand piano in practice rooms. The Hill Building is dedicated in honor of Mr. Hill, a benefactor and Trustee of the College, and replaced the music department's home in the former Birmingham Conservatory of Music facility on campus, which originally faced 8th Avenue West behind today's sorority townhouses.

SMOKING IS NOT PERMITTED ANYWHERE WITHIN THE BUILDING, and is not permitted outside by the loading dock (downstairs).

Hours when the building will be open are posted each term. It is usually open according to the following schedule. Students may be granted additional access to the building by requesting entrance from security:

Monday through Thursday: 7:30 a.m. to 10:00 p.m.

Friday: 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Saturday: 9:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

Sunday: 2:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m.

#### *Lockers and Practice Rooms*

Lockers are available for students at no charge and are assigned by Judy Pandelis, in the main office. Under no circumstances are belongings to be left in the hallway. Items found in the hallway will be removed. Students are responsible for obtaining a lock to secure the locker. Students with large instruments may request space in special instrument lockers in Hill, or in Phillips.

Practice rooms are available on the lower floor of the Hill Music Building. The combination for the lock on the Organ Practice Rooms is available to students registered for Organ. Practice rooms are not scheduled but are available on a first-come, first-served basis. A practice room vacated for more than ten minutes is considered to be available for use, even though belongings have been left in it.

#### *The Taylor Recording Studio*

Located in Hill, the studio is available to eligible students for use in recording and production projects. For more information, contact the Department chairperson.

### **The Phillips Building**

The M. Paul Phillips Building was built in the early 1920s to be the first library at the College, and after 1976 became an administrative center for Admissions and Financial Aid offices. It is located next to Munger Hall on the Academic Quad, parallel to Arkadelphia Road between the Harbert and Munger buildings and houses administrative and rehearsal facilities for the BSC Symphonic Band and Jazz Band. Private lessons in percussion, and various instrumental methods courses are taught in Phillips, and the facility is available on an as-needed basis for individual private practice. To arrange practice time in the Phillips Building, please contact Prof. David Phy.

## CHAPTER SIX

### LIFE AS A MUSIC STUDENT AT BSC



## "Our" Facilities and Their Care



In all music schools, there is a sense of community that draws music students together, created by the unique opportunities and habits, and the fact that so much of the individual practice, rehearsal and study for a music student takes place in a dedicated physical space for that department. In the case of BSC, there are two such dedicated spaces, the Hill Music Building and the Phillips Building.

It is important to the faculty and administration that the safety and comfort of students working in these music buildings are always a priority. Because of the varied requirements of music student activities, building resources and spaces are generally accessible with approval for practice and study. The building often feels like a "second home" for students. As with any home, students are asked to recognize and care for the environment and facilities for the good of all those who spend so many hours there, and for the upkeep and to maintain the quality of many valuable instruments housed in the buildings. Some of these responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- keeping all exterior doors closed, and closing windows when leaving a classroom or lounge area
- only using authorized rooms and spaces for practice
- cleaning up any and all food products, preferably disposing of excess food containers in outside trash cans

The Honor Code of the College is in effect at all times and includes respect for College and private property. It is a punishable crime to steal anyone else's personal property or damage instruments or equipment, and such cases will be investigated and prosecuted according to College regulations. Music students are asked to be vigilant and aware of protecting their own personal property and those of other students, and to use common sense to safeguard their possessions at all times.

### **BSC Music Students' Association**

BSC Music Students have established the Music Students' Association (MSA), which is open to all students at the College with an interest in music each year. Elections are held for office positions, who lead the MSA in organizing special social events such as the annual Hillfest in the Amphitheatre, assisting with audition days, and fundraising activities for the Association.

### **A Supportive Environment for Learning**

The learning environment of the Music Department always seeks to be one of mutual support, comradery between students and a respectful working relationship between students and faculty in the best collegial spirit of academic institutions. Though stress and pressure are unavoidable at times, the atmosphere in the Music Department strives to be constructive in the overall goal of student learning and development as musicians and scholars.

### **Etiquette in Recitals and Concerts**

The term "recital" for a music presentation is attributed to the great pianist, composer and conductor Franz Liszt, as the equivalent of the literary recitals in vogue in Europe in his day, and is understood to be a smaller-scale concert usually involving only a few performers. Recitals are the principal venue for performances at BSC. For such recitals and for larger concerts, there are certain protocols that every music

student should know and respect, as they have been developed to maximize enjoyment of the entire audience, to support the focus and work of the performer(s), and inculcate a respect for the music itself and its potential meaning and effectiveness.

Different venues and genres of performances have different protocols. While it is encouraged to applaud during jazz concerts after one performer's solo riff, it is not considered acceptable in classical-music programs. Here are a few general rules:

- Food and drink are prohibited in all indoor recital venues.
- It is customary to applaud when the performers first come onstage and at the conclusion of the first piece. However:
- In a multi-movement work, such as a sonata, concerto, symphony or suite, it is a distraction to applaud after each separate section, nor does the performer expect this. Regardless of one's enthusiasm, applause should be withheld until the end of the entire work, at which point one may show one's enthusiastic as good taste allows. For singers, this also applies to a group of songs under one heading, such as a song-cycle or any organized grouping as indicated by the printed program.
- Cell phones must be silenced. It is inconsiderate and distracting to use phones during the performance.
- In some cases, as when professional musicians are performing, recording the performance is prohibited.
- Flash photography is distracting, disconcerting, and forbidden during a performance.

# CHAPTER SEVEN

## HEALTH AND WELLNESS FOR MUSICIANS





## Basic Health Protection for All Musicians

On stage and in life, it is important for musicians to take steps to protect their neuromusculoskeletal health. Musicians and music faculty whose playing- and singing-related behaviors make them susceptible to certain neuromusculoskeletal conditions and disorders may wish to explore the following methods of neuromusculoskeletal health protection:

- Warming up before practice and performance. As appropriate, engage in physical, vocal, and musical warm-up exercises.
- Mobilize muscles and joints to increase blood flow to those body parts that will be moving rapidly and frequently during the playing and performing of music.
- Lubricate your vocal folds. Hydrate!
- Taking a break from practice and rehearsal whenever possible. A good rule of thumb is a 5- minute rest every half hour.
- Avoiding excessive practice time and stress.
- Set daily limits and vary repertoire during practice sessions.
- Avoiding excessive repetition of difficult repertoire, especially if progress is slow.
- Avoiding repertoire that is beyond one's technical or physical reach.
- Refraining from sudden increases in practice times. Instead, slightly reduce total practice time before juries, recitals, etc. to allow mind and body adequate energy for performance.
- Ensuring proper body alignment and technique. Be mindful of balance and weight delivery and ensure adequate freedom of movement and support during practice and performance. If appropriate, adapt an instrument or make use of external support mechanisms, such as shoulder rests, neck straps, and flute crutches.
- Maintaining good "mental hygiene." This includes getting adequate sleep, good nutrition, regular exercise, and spending time with friends and family.
- Refrain from hazardous or recreational drug use.
- Seek the help of a mental health professional when appropriate.
- Allowing for relaxation. Injuries are much less likely to occur in persons who are both physically and psychologically fit. Stress management is as important as practice management.

### Vocal Protection

It is equally important for musicians to take steps to protect their vocal health. This holds true for all musicians, regardless of performance medium or area of specialization. Musicians may wish to explore the following methods of vocal health protection:

Drinking plenty of water. The vocal folds need to be lubricated with a thin layer of mucus to vibrate efficiently. The best lubrication is achieved by drinking plenty of water. Aim to drink at least eight glasses of water a day.

Avoiding and/or limiting consumption of caffeinated and alcoholic beverages, as they pull water out of your system and deplete the vocal folds of needed lubrication. If you choose to drink caffeine or alcohol, be sure to sufficiently increase your water intake.

Not smoking. Smoking irritates and dries out the lining of the larynx. It contributes to decreased vocal quality, promotes reflux laryngitis, and increases the need for throat clearing and “smoker’s cough.” Smoking is also extremely detrimental to lung function, which can make breathing, speaking, and singing more difficult. Also, work to avoid exposure to secondhand smoke.

Being mindful of antihistamine usage, which dries out the vocal tissues. Be sure to stay well hydrated if you are taking allergy medication. Certain other medications, both prescription and over the counter, may have a similar drying effect. When in doubt, check with your doctor and, if appropriate, ask about suitable alternatives.

Avoiding dry air environments. Forced heat, air conditioners, and climates with low levels of environmental moisture can be hard on your vocal health. Consider using a humidifier at night to compensate for the dryness.

Avoiding yelling or raising your voice unnecessarily. Avoiding throat clearing and voiced coughing. Using vocal amplification systems when available and appropriate. Resting your voice, especially if you are sick. Remember, it’s important to give yourself adequate time to recover.

## Other Resources for Music Students

### On-Campus

**BSC Counseling and Health Services** is located on the second floor of the Norton Campus Center. Confidential appointments for medical and emotional support services are available at no charge for enrolled students, faculty and staff.

### Off-Campus

If you need non-emergency medical treatment outside of normal business hours, BSC recommends the following urgent care clinics:

#### **American Family Care**

1664 Forestdale Blvd.  
Birmingham, AL 35214  
(205) 791-2273

#### **Summit Express Urgent Care**

1360 Montgomery Hwy  
Vestavia Hills, AL 35216  
(205) 978-7550

#### **Med Help**

1 Lakeshore Parkway  
Homewood, AL 35209  
(205) 930-2950

#### **UAB Urgent Care**

125 20th St. South  
Birmingham, AL 35233  
(205) 801-5251

For mental health counseling off campus:

#### **Grayson & Associates**

(205) 871-6926  
[www.graysonmentalhealth.com](http://www.graysonmentalhealth.com)

#### **Pitts & Associates**

(205) 870-3520  
[www.drbertpitts.com](http://www.drbertpitts.com)

### Online

**Athletes and the Arts** is a coalition of twenty organizations whose goal is health and wellness practices for performing artists and athletes. The common ground of both fields has been long recognized.  
<http://athletesandthearts.com/>

**Dangerous Decibels** is sponsored by a consortium of three US and two foreign universities, and is dedicated to disseminating information and research into potential hearing loss in musicians.  
<http://dangerousdecibels.org/>

Ralph A. Manchester, M.D. "The Role of Rest," *Medical Problems of Performing Artists Journal*, September, 2012, pp. 121-122.

The following document is condensed from *Basic Information on Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health I-3 Information and Recommendations for Administrators and Faculty in Schools of Music* and is reprinted by permission of the National Association of Schools of Music (NASM) and the Performing Arts Medical Association (PAMA).

## **Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health Facts and Concepts**

### **Neuromusculoskeletal and Vocal Health: The Basic Issues**

The human neuromusculoskeletal system is comprised of the nervous system, the muscular system, and the skeletal system. Together, these systems support the body's physical structure and enable movement. In this resource document, the term "neuromusculoskeletal" is used to encompass not only overt physical movements (the pressing of a key, the strumming of a string), but also the small internal movements our bodies make, for example to produce breath and modify vocal sounds.

Vocal health is referred to as a component of neuromusculoskeletal health within these documents. When the term "neuromusculoskeletal" is used, vocal health is included. Direct references to vocal health – for singers, instrumentalists, and future music teachers alike – are interspersed throughout the text. Special attention is devoted to issues of vocal health in the sections neuromusculoskeletal issues affecting the voice and vocal protection.

"Neuromusculoskeletal" also includes the body's position in space and the relationship of the skeletal system to corresponding muscles and tissues. Terms such as "alignment" or "posture," which often refer to spinal positioning, weight distribution, muscular support, and balance, are important talking points in conversations about musicians' neuromusculoskeletal health.

Good health and healthy behaviors are important to all musicians, regardless of instrument and area of specialization. For example, although singers are usually provided with more detailed information during their voice studies, basic overview understanding of vocal health is essential for all musicians. All use their voice in speaking, and many are engaged with the singing voice in their roles as conductors, coaches, teachers, recording engineers, researchers, therapists, and so forth.

The various neuromusculoskeletal and vocal disorders that affect musicians have many varied contributing factors. Some may be genetic in nature or result from an infection. Others may be the result of trauma or injury. Still others are related to certain behaviors, either in isolation or those that are repeated over time. Musicians coping with or developing certain neuromusculoskeletal conditions, complications, or disorders may find that they have a negative impact on their ability to play, sing, and practice music.

Preventative measures need to be taken by individual musicians and institutions where musicians study and work. These may include, but are not limited to the provision of information, applications of information in decision-making and culture building, and modifications to the musician-instrument interface.

The purpose of this resource is focused on neuromusculoskeletal health, on neuromusculoskeletal disorders related to the musician's body and voice, and on preventative measures. Without knowledge of what can happen and how to minimize risk, music students and professionals have little basis for making informed

decisions to care for their neuromusculoskeletal and vocal health and that of other musicians with whom they work.

Musical performance involves the conscious positioning of the body into specified playing and/or singing postures, some of which may seem unnatural at first. A musician's practice routine is often physically demanding and time-intensive. For serious musicians, especially those studying, singing, and playing music at advanced levels, "days off" are few and far between.

Some musicians, at some point in their careers, may develop one or more neuromusculoskeletal conditions, complications, or disorders related to their engagement in musical activities. Decisions about practice and performance play an important part in the neuromusculoskeletal health of musicians, but numerous factors contribute to an individual's neuromusculoskeletal fitness.

Musicians are responsible for their art form, and for supporting the well-being of other musicians. Cultivating the most positive personal and professional relationships between musical performance and neuromusculoskeletal health is part of that responsibility.

Like so many issues in music itself, optimum effectiveness depends on balanced applications of knowledge and skill in varying circumstances by thousands of individual student, professional, and amateur musicians day after day.

### **The Neuromusculoskeletal System**

The musculoskeletal system is a complex system of muscles, tendons, ligaments, bones, joints, and associated tissues that move the body, allow for speech, and that help the human body to maintain its form. The term "neuromusculoskeletal" expands upon "musculoskeletal" to include the nervous system. The nervous system coordinates voluntary and involuntary actions and transmits signals to different parts of the body.

The nervous system is comprised of the central nervous system (CNS) and the peripheral nervous system (PNS). The central nervous system includes brain and spinal cord. The peripheral nervous system is made up primarily of nerves, which allow the central nervous system to communicate with the rest of the body.

### **Vocal Anatomy**

The human voice is produced by four component systems. These are often referred to as the "generator," the "vibrator," the "resonator," and the "articulator." The "generator" is the breath provided by the lungs. The principle muscle involved in breath is the diaphragm, a dome-shaped muscle that extends along the bottom of the rib cage. The diaphragm is assisted by various muscles in the abdomen, ribs, chest, and back. The "vibrator" is the larynx, commonly referred to as "the voice box." Horizontally stretched across the larynx are two infoldings of mucous membrane called vocal folds, or more frequently "vocal cords."

When breath regulated by the generator passes along the vocal folds, vibrations occur. The "resonator" is the resonating cavity above the larynx that is responsible for giving the voice its tonal quality. This resonating cavity includes the vocal tract, much of the pharynx (the throat), the oral cavity, and the nasal passages. The "articulator" includes the tongue, lips, cheeks, teeth, and palate. These structures help to shape sounds into recognizable words and specific vocalizations. These four component parts work together to produce human speech and singing.

## Disorders of the Neuromusculoskeletal System

The causes and contributing factors of neuromusculoskeletal disorders vary, but they generally fall into the one of the following categories: (1) genetic or related to a pre-existing medical condition, (2) trauma or injury-related, (3) behavior-related. Common symptoms of neuromusculoskeletal disorders include pain, stiffness, aching, throbbing, cramping, and muscle weakness.

Some disorders may be permanent, while others may be temporary. Those disorders that are temporary may respond well to rest and/or behavior modification. Others may require medical intervention or therapy. Sustained behavior modification may lead to the elimination or reduction of certain symptoms or disorders.

### Contributing Factors

The causes of behavior-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders are manifold. However, most fit into one of two basic categories or factors. They are: 1) overuse and/or misuse and 2) genetic factors.

#### 1. Overuse/Misuse

The human body has certain physical limits. Exceeding these limits can often lead to injury. In the arts-medicine arena, overuse is defined as a practice or activity in which anatomically normal structures are used in a so-called normal manner, but to a degree that has exceeds their biological limits. Such overuse produces certain physical changes, often accompanied by corresponding symptoms or complaints. The degree of excessive activity needed to produce these results varies from person to person and seems to be related to a person's individual anatomy and physiology.

Another key term in this category is misuse. Misuse is defined as a practice in which anatomically normal structures are used in an abnormal manner and/or to an excessive degree, sufficient to produce specific symptoms. Such misuse places certain bodily structures under stress.

Related to both overuse and misuse is abuse. Abuse should be considered as a causative or contributing factor when an activity is performed not only excessively (overuse) or improperly (misuse), but also in a conscious, willful manner. Such self-imposed abuse often produces deleterious physical effects.

Under certain circumstances, both overuse and misuse can turn into abuse. A common example of abuse is "playing through the pain." This abuse involves persisting in long intervals of practice or performance in the face of pain without appropriate rest breaks or activity modification.

Some examples of vocal abuse in singers include repeated instances of singing too loudly or singing out of range. Abuse may also be the use of dangerous substances.

#### 2. Genetic Factors

For instrumentalists, the most common genetic factor influencing behavior-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders is hypermobility. It is also known as joint hyperlaxity or the trait of being "double jointed." Such instability of certain joints may predispose an individual to muscle pain syndromes and/or tendinitis, an inflammation of the tendon. (A tendon is a tough band of fibrous connective tissue that connects muscle to bone.)

Hypermobility joints possess a greater than normal range of motion. Individuals with hypermobile joints have the tendency to compensate for the instability of the joint by using more muscle tension when completing

movements or tasks involving the joint. While this extra muscle tension allows for better control over certain movements, such tension can actually increase one's risk of damaging or straining a muscle. Individuals with hypermobile joints are generally advised to monitor and actively reduce the amount of tension that they carry in their muscles. Specific strengthening exercises can also help, and in some instances, people with hypermobile joints may be well served by external methods of joint support, such as small ring splints or tape.

### **Musicians and Risk Factors**

Two facts are clear:

- Neuromusculoskeletal health is essential for musicians.
- Many behavior-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders are preventable.

Two conclusions are obvious:

- Musicians have basic neuromusculoskeletal health responsibilities
- Healthy neuromusculoskeletal behaviors are a critically important addition to the musician's portfolio of essential disciplines.

Constant attention is necessary, because in many cases neuromusculoskeletal damage develops gradually over time. The severe or advanced symptoms of certain neuromusculoskeletal disorders may be career-ending for a musician. Even if debilitating problems do not occur initially, career activity becomes increasingly difficult and finally impossible as neuromusculoskeletal disorders proceed to more advanced stages.

### **What do these facts and conclusions mean for musicians and for schools and departments of music?**

Musicians necessarily engage in repeated neuromusculoskeletal behaviors and hold particular postures when they rehearse and perform. But such behaviors and postures do not equal automatic risk of one or more neuromusculoskeletal disorders. There are many factors involved in benchmarking and determining the inherent physical risk.

For musicians, managing neuromusculoskeletal health starts with understanding basic facts and avoiding the most obvious problematic behaviors, postures, and situations. A behavior is risky when it involves overuse, misuse, or abuse of certain bodily components, or if it fails to recognize and adapt to an individual's physical limitations, genetic or otherwise. A list of basics is provided in Contributing Factors.

There is more, however. Like most other decisions in advanced music-making, thoughtful judgments about what to do and what not to do for yourself and for others involve gaining in-depth knowledge and applying it with sophisticated understanding.

In all musical settings, a number of variables are interacting at the same time. These interactions are unique to specific settings and situations.

Four major variables influence a musician's risk for singing- and playing-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders. Some are intrinsic; others are extrinsic to the musician. Some may be modifiable; others, nonmodifiable. The four main categories of risk factors include:

## 1. Intrinsic factors – non-modifiable.

a) Gender. Studies reveal a greater prevalence of problems in female than male instrumentalists. This seems to be related to the smaller average size of the female hand and fingers, as well as the relatively smaller bulk and cross-sectional dimensions of their muscles. On average, female muscle strength is 15% less than that of males. With regard to vocal range, or the span of “musically useful” pitches that a singer can produce, female musicians tend to have higher ranges than their male counterparts.

b) Anatomy. For instrumentalists, intrinsic factors such as height, hand size, lung capacity, and joint hypermobility may affect the ways students play certain instruments and, in some cases, may affect their choice of repertoire.

For singers, intrinsic factors include lung capacity, vocal range, tessitura, and timbre among others. These factors affect the assignment of voice type (bass, baritone, tenor, countertenor, contralto, mezzo-soprano, and soprano) and, as a result, the parts and songs that singers are expected and selected to sing.

Anatomy is unchangeable, so it is important to develop technique and an approach to playing and singing music that takes this situation into account.

## 2. Intrinsic factors – modifiable.

a) Alignment. Poor body alignment, sometimes referred to as “bad posture,” can increase the risk of injury. Proper body alignment, including good balance and body positioning, is vital to the continued health of musicians.

b) Quality of movement. Since sound is the result of movement, both at micro and macro levels, the quality of a musical sound is related, at some level, to the musician’s quality of movement. It is important that musicians work to maintain high levels of body awareness in order to avoid bound, stiff, or limited movements that can lead to injury.

c) Stress and psychological health. Musicians, like anyone else, are more susceptible to injuries, pain, etc. when under stress and/or depressed. Many of the neuromusculoskeletal problems for which musicians are at risk can, if they become chronic, contribute to a situation that may lead to depression. It is important for musicians to recognize the importance of their psychological health as a part of their overall physical health.

d) Motivation and effort. Improving one’s muscle strength and endurance depends on motivation and consistent effort. Exercise and conditioning are important. In some instances, musicians may need to seek expert guidance from a physical therapist, somatic educator, vocal coach, or other healthcare specialist.



### 3. Extrinsic factors – non-modifiable.

- a) The assigned musical repertoire. Certain musical pieces pose particular physical and vocal challenges.
- b) Venue. Once selected, the space in which one is performing can make injury more or less likely. The acoustics, temperature, lighting, and seating all have an effect on a musician's performance.
- c) Instrument. While instruments can be modified to some extent, some characteristics cannot be changed. The frequency of injuries is higher among players of those instruments requiring many repetitions of finger action, as well as instruments that must be held in difficult postures. Players of large instruments have a greater prevalence of problems. Long arms are needed to hold and play the instrument. Hands must stretch wider to press strings, keys, or valves; this requires greater muscle tension and increased use of the smaller and weaker intrinsic hand muscles. Additionally, these instruments are more difficult to play quickly than smaller instruments because of the greater size and complexity of keywork and valve travel, or greater space between strings and fingerboard.

### 4. Extrinsic factors - modifiable

- a) Time spent playing or singing. Perhaps the single most important risk factor that musicians can manage is time: how much time one spends practicing, frequency and nature of rest breaks during practice sessions, how quickly one increases practice time when a major performance is approaching, and how one approaches more technically demanding passages.
- b) Non-music-related activities. An often-overlooked risk factor involves non-music-related activities, some of which can be sources of overuse or misuse. Some fitness and conditioning activities, including sports participation, may place excessive demands on the neuromusculoskeletal system, especially if overdone or done incorrectly. (This is not to say, however, that such activities should be avoided all together, only that engagement should be at safe levels, utilizing proper technique and form.)

In some instances, excessive use of certain electronic devices, including computers, tablets, cell phones, and gaming systems, can pose a risk. As in many things, moderation is key.

Loud social events and those in which cigarette smoke or alcohol are in abundance pose a serious risk to vocal health. Similarly, some forms of outside employment may also be physically or vocally demanding.

## **Neuromusculoskeletal Issues Affecting the Body**

### Muscle Pain

Whether one ascribes muscle pain to overuse, misuse, postural factors, tension, technical problems, or poor conditioning, the principal underlying cause of muscle pain is sore muscles. Muscles that are fatigued are less able to contract as strongly and frequently as “normal” muscles. With continued use, fatigued

muscles are placed under greater stress, often leading to microscopic damage and disruption of the muscle fibers, a condition known as muscle strain.

Muscle contraction is a physical-chemical process. When the necessary chemical compounds are in short supply, muscles can no longer operate at optimal efficiency. Furthermore, muscle contraction produces lactic acid; when this substance accumulates in tissues, it minimizes the muscle's ability to continue efficient contractions. Both of these consequences of excess muscle use will cause pain during and after the period of use.

Once the period of activity is over, some of these side effects will correct themselves. In other instances, muscular pain will continue for variable periods of time.

Playing-related neuromusculoskeletal disorders in all age groups are more commonly seen in specific body locations. Paramount among these are the shoulders, neck, hands/fingers/wrists, and lower back. Some of these locations are more common in specific instruments, e.g., thumb problems in clarinetists, lower back strain and pain in double bass players.

### Neuropathies

“Neuropathy” is a general medical term that refers to diseases or malfunctions of the nerves. Neuropathies are classified according to the types or location of the affected nerves. Focal neuropathy is neuropathy that is restricted to one nerve or group of nerves, or to a particular area of the body. Symptoms usually appear suddenly and can include pain; sensory disturbances, such as numbness, tingling, “pins and needles” sensations, burning, or even itching; and weakness.

In the case of bodily extremities, the pain may occur at the site of a nerve compression or entrapment, which occurs when a nerve passes through a narrowed channel bounded by bone, fibrous bands, bulky muscles, or enlarged arteries on its way to or from its ultimate destination. In other cases, the pain may be distributed anywhere along the course of the nerve.

Muscle weakness and impaired dexterity are often later effects. The three most commonly identified entrapment neuropathies include 1) carpal tunnel syndrome at the wrist, 2) ulnar neuropathy, and 3) thoracic outlet syndrome.

Carpal tunnel syndrome occurs when the median nerve, which runs from the forearm into the palm of the hand, becomes pressed or squeezed at the wrist. The carpal tunnel – a narrow, rigid passageway of ligament and bones at the base of the hand – contains the median nerve and several tendons. When irritated or strained, these tendons may swell and narrow the tunnel, compressing the median nerve. The result can be pain, weakness, or numbness in the hand and wrist that radiates up the arm. Causes are numerous and varied.

Ulnar neuropathy is a condition in which the ulnar nerve, which runs from the neck along the inside edge of the arm and into the hand on the side of the little (pinky) finger, becomes inflamed due to compression of the nerve. Symptoms include tingling, numbness, weakness, and pain, primarily along the elbow, the underside of the forearm, and along the wrist or inside edge of the hand. Compression of the ulnar nerve is often linked to repetitive wrist or elbow movements. For musicians, sustained elbow flexion, particularly among players of bowed instruments, has been known to contribute to this condition in some cases.

Thoracic outlet syndrome is a group of disorders that occur when the blood vessels or nerves in the thoracic outlet – the space between the collarbone and first rib, become compressed. Symptoms include pain in the neck and shoulder areas and numbness in fingers.

### Dystonia

Dystonia is defined as a disorder of sustained muscular contractions, producing unwanted movements or abnormal postures. The cause of dystonia remains unclear. Focal dystonia is dystonia that affects a particular area of the body. Because men are more likely to develop focal dystonia, it is hypothesized that genetic or hormonal factors may be involved. Additionally, repetitive movements, especially those that are painful, seem to trigger it.

In the instrumental musician, dystonia typically presents symptoms that are localized to the upper limb in keyboard, string, percussion, and woodwind players, and that involve the embouchure in brass and some woodwind players. The right hand of keyboard players and the left hand of string instrumentalists are most commonly affected.

## **Neuromusculoskeletal Issues Affecting the Voice**

The more common neurological voice disorders in the music student include phonatory instability, vocal strain, and vocal fold motion abnormalities.

### Phonatory Instability

Phonation is the process by which air pressure generated by the lungs is converted into audible vibrations. A method of phonation called “voicing” occurs when air from the lungs passes along the vocal folds at the base of the larynx, causing them to vibrate. Production of a tonal, pleasant voice with smooth changes in loudness and pitch depends upon the symmetrical shape and movement of the vocal folds. Phonatory instability occurs when there is asymmetrical or irregular motion of the vocal folds that is superimposed on the vocal fold vibration. Phonatory instability often manifests itself as an unsteadiness, hoarseness, or roughness of voice.

The condition can be short- or long-term. Short-term causes of phonatory instability include fatigue, certain medications, drug use, and anxiety. These problems tend to resolve rapidly with removal of the cause but remain if the causative agent fails to be eliminated. Over-the-counter allergy medications, antidepressants, and highly caffeinated drinks, which stimulate the nervous system, can cause vocal tremors, a form of phonatory instability.

### Vocal Strain and Vocal Fold Abnormalities

Overuse of the voice, whether by singing or speaking, can produce vocal strain. Unlike playing an instrument, singers must be aware of problems singing at the extremes of vocal range, especially the upper end. Both duration and intensity of singing are as important as they are for instrumentalists.

Misuse activities can occur also; examples of this are attempting repertoire that is beyond the individual’s stage of vocal maturity and development, and improperly learning and practicing certain vocal styles. Prolonged overuse, in some cases, can lead to the development of nodules on the vocal folds. The nodules appear initially as soft, swollen spots on the vocal folds, but as vocal abuse continues, they transform into callous-like growths. Vocal nodules require specialized and prolonged treatment and rehabilitation and can be of grave consequence to singers.

## **Conquering Stage Fright**

Janet Esposito, MSW

Public speaking is said to be the biggest fear reported by many American adults, topping flying, financial ruin, sickness, and even death. You may have heard the joke that some people would prefer to be in their own coffins than give a eulogy at a funeral. While this may be an exaggeration, many would agree.

Most of us feel a degree of nervous apprehension when preparing to speak up or perform in front of a group. But those who are filled with feelings of dread and panic in such a situation—or anywhere the person might be center of attention—may be suffering from a form of social anxiety disorder (also known as social phobia).

The fear of public speaking or performance, often called stage fright, exacts a huge toll on self-confidence and self-esteem and causes some people to leave school or a job or pass up a promotion. Many, including seasoned professional performers, suffer in silent terror. And because they feel embarrassed, people try to keep their fear a secret, even from a spouse or other close family members or friends.

### **Taking Steps to Overcome Your Fear**

Learning to improve your speaking or performance skills is good, but it's generally not enough to substantially reduce your fear. You must address and revise any negative perceptions, beliefs, thoughts, images, and predictions related to public speaking or performing. And it's often helpful to uncover the deeper fears related to being seen and heard by others, showing vulnerability, and being considered less than perfect. Learning to accept yourself and not feeling that you have to prove yourself to others is at the root of healing.

It is recommended that you learn skills to reduce and manage your fear and anxiety and not resort to using medication or natural products alone. It's also critical to learn cognitive-behavioral methods to stop the cycle of avoiding fearful situations. Avoidance may give you immediate relief, but it reinforces your fear in the long run.

Some people also choose medication or natural remedies to help reduce their symptoms of performance anxiety. Talk with your physician to find the most appropriate treatment for you.

If you are willing stop avoiding your fears and learn new skills to reduce and manage them, you will develop an empowering belief and trust in yourself. In facing your fear, it becomes possible to overcome performance anxiety and find comfort and ease in expressing yourself in front of others.

Try these 10 tips to reduce your stage fright:

1. Shift the focus from yourself and your fear to your true purpose—contributing something of value to your audience.
2. Stop scaring yourself with thoughts about what might go wrong. Instead, focus your attention on thoughts and images that are calming and reassuring.
3. Refuse to think thoughts that create self-doubt and low confidence.

4. Practice ways to calm and relax your mind and body, such as deep breathing, relaxation exercises, yoga, and meditation.
5. Exercise, eat well, and practice other healthful lifestyle habits. Try to limit caffeine, sugar, and alcohol as much as possible.
6. Visualize your success: Always focus on your strength and ability to handle challenging situations.
7. Prepare your material in advance and read it aloud to hear your voice.
8. Make connections with your audience: Smile and greet people, thinking of them as friends rather than enemies.
9. Stand or sit in a self-assured, confident posture. Remain warm and open and make eye contact.
10. Give up trying to be perfect and know that it is OK to make mistakes. Be natural, be yourself.

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# CHAPTER EIGHT

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