Bowdoin’s lively music program offers a wide variety of courses and performance opportunities across many styles, including the Western classical tradition, jazz, world music, and American popular music, among others. Elementary and advanced courses in theory, composition, ethnomusicology, literature, and history are complemented by credited performance ensembles and by private study of an instrument or voice at both intermediate and advanced levels.

In any given semester, an average of more than two hundred students, or approximately one-eighth of the student body, participates in one of these areas. The faculty is complemented by more than twenty adjunct instructors who teach applied lessons and theory labs, coach chamber music, and direct ensembles. The department views the academic and performance disciplines of music as interconnected, and as such, faculty and staff members perform publicly, often with students. Students are also given free tickets for the department’s concert offerings by visiting professional musicians, who often meet with students and give master classes.

The Major and Minor
The music major usually consists of ten academic and two performance credits; students are also encouraged to design their own majors with the assistance of the faculty. The student’s own interests and career plans will help determine his or her choice of courses, although most plans will include at least one or two courses from the disciplines of theory, history, and ethnomusicology, as well as private lessons and a year of ensemble participation. Each student completes an independent study in the final semester of his or her senior year, and honors work consists of a full year of independent study. Double majors are common, and student-designed majors that combine courses in two or more departments are also possible.

The minor consists of five academic courses and one year of private lessons or one year of participation in a single ensemble.

Courses
The breadth of courses demonstrates the department’s interest in the study of all genres from a variety of perspectives. The course Passions and Damnation, for example, investigates the works of Bach, Wagner, Mahler, and Britten, considering issues such as sacred and profane love, the propensity to war, and nationalism derived from Chinese philosophy. Write Your Own Show Tune allows students to gain an intermediate level of competency in music theory with much greater creativity than normal. Introduction to Electronic Music exposes students to the history, aesthetics, and physics of electronic music and allows them to compose their own pieces using industry-standard digital editing, sampling, and sequencing programs.

Other recent courses include The Piano and Its Music; The Concerto; The Beethoven Symphonies; Symphonies Since Beethoven; Opera; The Romantic Period; The Twentieth Century; Music in the Arab World; History of Jazz; History of Rock; Music of the Caribbean; Singing Across the World; The Big Bands; Music of East and Southeast Asia; Jazz on Film; Schubert, His World and Ours; Music and Gender; Composers, Performers, Listeners; Music Under Nazi and Soviet Regimes; Music and Identity; Music and American Society; Composition; Tonal Composition; Tonal Analysis; Orchestration; Rhythm; Composing and Improvising—A Dialogue; and elementary through advanced theory.

Performance Opportunities
Ensembles at Bowdoin comprise a wide variety of faculty- and student-led groups, some of which are also courses (marked below with an asterisk) that can add up to six credits towards graduation.

Resources and Facilities
Studzinski Recital Hall, a state-of-the-art music performance and practice facility that opened in 2007, is central to Bowdoin’s vision for achieving excellence in the arts. The centerpiece is the stunning 280-seat Kanbar Auditorium. The hall was designed by the same architecture and acoustic team that designed the Seiji Ozawa Hall at Tanglewood for the Boston Symphony. The facility includes nine individual practice rooms, a rehearsal room, green room, lobby areas, and new and refurbished pianos.

Among the hall’s technical advances are a series of freestanding “pylons” that create a hidden inner space concealing an adjustable acoustical curtain that can be raised or lowered to “tune” the hall for different music programs. The hall is defined by taut surfaces of brass mesh that contain the space visually, yet allow sound to pass through to the massive bass-supportive brick exterior walls, maintaining the acoustical “bigness” of the space. There is also video and audio recording equipment linked to the stage to allow individuals and groups to review their rehearsals and performances.

Performances also occur in the Tillotson Room of Gibson Hall, in Kresge Auditorium, and in the Bowdoin Chapel, which has such impressive acoustics that professional ensembles have rented the building for recording.

The department’s instrument collection includes a dozen Steinway grand pianos, a tracker-action organ and a large electro-pneumatic instrument, two harpsichords, West African and Caribbean percussion, early-instrument wind and string ensembles, an electronic music studio, and all of the standard orchestral and band instruments.

The Robert K. Beckwith Music Library contains more than 10,000 recordings and 15,000 books and scores, and it provides access to many music periodicals and online music databases.
The Bowdoin Chorus*, which consists of some seventy auditioned students, faculty, staff, and community members, performs traditional a cappella works and large-scale masterworks, such as Mendelssohn’s Elijah and Rachmaninoff’s Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, which was performed on tour in Russia.

The Chamber Choir* is an auditioned group of thirty students. Past performances include Ecuadorian music sung in the Andes, Mendelssohn motets performed in Germany, premieres of new American music for the American Choral Directors Association, and Messiah with the Portland Symphony Orchestra.

The Concert Band** is a forty-member ensemble composed primarily of Bowdoin students that performs a broad range of music from the wind band repertoire. Premieres of new works by established and student composers are often performed. The African Ensemble* and the Middle Eastern Ensemble* include students of varying backgrounds and provide opportunities to play music outside the Western art and popular traditions. The Polar Jazz Big Band celebrates the great bands and composers of the big band era. The Orchestra, which consists of College and community members, meets only during the last third of each semester and usually joins the Chorus in a major work.

Chamber ensembles* normally include at least one string quartet, a brass quartet, a woodwind quartet or quintet, as well as a number of other ensembles depending on interest, such as a clarinet quintet, trombone choir, baritone trio, and wind ensemble. Jazz ensembles** focus on improvisation. Combos are usually three to five players in size and the repertoire includes a variety of jazz styles, such as swing, bebop, bossa nova, and rhythm and blues.

Student-led a cappella groups include mixed ensembles BOKA and Ursus Verses, the Gospel Choir, the all-female Miscellania and Bellamafia, and the all-male Longfellows and Meddiebempsters.

Private Lessons

Private lessons can be taken on three levels: a beginner’s level for no credit; an intermediate level for one-half credit and graded on a “pass-fail” basis; or an advanced level that requires a recital and is graded as a full academic course. Up to two credits of the advanced and up to six credits of the intermediate and ensemble courses may be taken for graduation credit. There is a fee for lessons, but a limited number of scholarships are available. Instruction in voice, piano, organ, harpsichord, and all the major orchestral and jazz instruments is always offered. Some rarer instruments such as Celtic harp, sitar, and recorder are also taught occasionally. From the second semester of study on, all students enrolled for credit perform publicly.

Independent Study & Honors

Independent studies and honors projects are common in the department, and also include studies by non-majors. They often grow out of a course that stimulates interest in a more focused area, and their topics run the gamut, from studies in medieval and Renaissance music to jazz and popular music, theory, ethnomusicology, composition, and conducting. One independent study is required as a capstone course for the major, and the optional, yearlong honors projects, which can include composition and performance as elements, are infinitely varied.

Faculty

Anthony F. Antolini, director of the Bowdoin Chorus and ear-training instructor, A.B. (Bowdoin), M.A., Ph.D. (Stanford), specializes in Russian sacred choral music, choral-orchestral masterworks, and applied theory.

Joanna Bosse, assistant professor of music, B.M. (Houghton), M.M. (Michigan State), Ph.D. (Illinois-Urbana-Champaign), specializes in Latin music, dance music, and musical ethnography.

Robert K. Greenlee, professor of music, B.M., M.M. (Oklahoma), D.M. (Indiana), directs the Chamber Choir and specializes in choral conduct-

Recent works completed by majors in the department have included:

- The Praying Neobaromantis AWV-273.15
- Short Stories
- The Art of the Baroque Violin
- Transcending the Comfort Zone
- Home: A Musical
- A Portfolio of Compositions: Sonata for Solo Piano and Flamenco Suite for Sextet

Mary Hunter, A. LeRoy Greason Professor of Music, B.A. (Sussex), M.A., Ph.D. (Cornell), specializes in European music of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, music as social practice, and the history of performance.

Cristie Collins Judd, professor of music, B.M., M.M. (Rice), M.Mus., Ph.D (London), is a music theorist with special interests in the analysis of early music, music of Renaissance, and the history of music theory. Professor Judd is Bowdoin’s dean for academic affairs.


James W. McCalla, associate professor of music, B.A., B.M. (Kansas), M.M. (New England Conservatory), Ph.D. (California–Berkeley), specializes in twentieth-century music, music and literature, and jazz history.

John P. Morneau, director of the Concert Band, B.M. (New Hampshire), specializes in conducting, adjudication and clinics, and woodwinds performance.

Vineet Shende, assistant professor of music, B.A. (Grenville), M.M. (Butler), D.M.A. (Cornell), specializes in composition, electric music, music of Asia, and music theory.

Roland Vazquez, string coach and conductor of the Orchestra, B.A., M.A. (CUNY), M.A., Ph.D. (Cornell), specializes in conducting, chamber music, string performance, and music history.

After Bowdoin

Our graduates have gone on to such prestigious graduate schools as Yale, Indiana, Michigan, Eastman, and Juilliard, studying performance, conducting, music theory, and musicology. Others are teaching music in secondary schools or have taken jobs in arts administration. Some have become folk or pop artists, and others are enjoying careers as composers. Yet another group continues making music as amateurs while pursuing careers in such fields as business, medicine, education, and government.