Why Music at Brandeis?

Brandeis offers students the unique opportunity to study music in a broad-based program that integrates performance, historical study, composition, and cultural studies. All music students work with world-renowned composers, musicologists, and performers inside the classroom and out.

Curriculum Overview

The bachelor of arts degree in music introduces students to the theory, history, composition, and performance of music. European classical music and jazz are the centerpiece of study in the program. The major is divided into four tracks: composition, performance, history, and cultural studies. The department also offers a minor.

Composition: Students who choose the composition track complete two years of music theory, a three-semester survey of music history, and three electives, two of which must be courses in the music department. The third elective can be chosen from courses offered in other departments, but must be approved by the student's adviser.

Performance: The performance track is designed for highly qualified students who want to concentrate on singing or on their instrument. Admission to the program takes place after an audition, typically at the end of the sophomore year. Students complete two years of music theory, a three-semester survey of music history, and three electives focused chiefly on performance, chosen in consultation with the student's adviser. Students in this track must present full-length recitals in their junior and senior years.

History: Students in the music history track complete two years of music theory, a three-semester survey of music history, and three electives. The electives, to be approved by the student's adviser, may be chosen from courses offered outside the music department; they should, however, focus on a particular time or place.

Cultural studies: The cultural studies track encourages students to develop a broad understanding of music in its cultural and social contexts. Students complete one year of music theory, two semesters of the music history survey, a course in world music, and a course on globalization in music. Students choose five electives from offerings in the creative arts, humanities, and social sciences in consultation with their adviser.

All music majors are required to perform in a departmental ensemble. The ensembles include chorus, chamber choir, early music ensemble, orchestra, wind ensemble, and jazz ensemble.

Completion of the minor requires one year of music theory, two semesters of the music history survey, and one elective.
Opportunities beyond the Classroom

Students have the opportunity to work with the Lydian String Quartet, a resident ensemble recognized worldwide for their live performances and numerous recordings. The Lydians coach instrumentalists, offer individual lessons, perform student compositions, provide classroom demonstrations, and offer a series of subscription concerts.

The Brandeis-Wellesley Orchestra combines the best instrumental talent from Brandeis University and Wellesley College to perform challenging works from the orchestral literature several times each year.

Singers may choose from a wide range of ensembles including the Early Music Ensemble, Chamber Choir, and University Chorus.

A state-of-the-art electronic music studio, directed by a leader in the field, is available for use by advanced students with an interest in electronic music composition.

Career and Education Options

Past graduates of the program have furthered their studies at the best graduate programs and conservatories in the nation. Others have pursued careers in education, performance, and arts management.

Faculty

Following is a list of department faculty members and their areas of specialization:

- **Mary Ruth Ray**, chair and faculty adviser (performance track)
  
  Viola, Lydian String Quartet

- **Martin Boykan**
  
  Composition, analysis

- **Eric Chafe**
  
  Music of Monteverdi, Bach, Wagner

- **Yu-Hui Chang**
  
  Composition; theory and analysis

- **Eric Chasalow**, graduate adviser (composition)
  
  Composition, analysis, electronic music

- **Judith Eissenberg**
  
  Violin, Lydian String Quartet

- **Joshua Gordon**
  
  Cello, Lydian String Quartet

- **Neal Hampton**
  
  Director, Brandeis Orchestra; jazz history

- **Allan Keiler**, graduate adviser (musicology)
  
  Nineteenth-century music; theory and analysis

- **Michael McGrade**, faculty adviser (history track)
  
  Chant, sacred polyphony of the late-fifteenth and early-sixteenth centuries, Baroque music

- **Sarah Mead-Ramsey**
  
  Director, Brandeis Early Music Ensemble

- **Robert Nieske**
  
  Director, Jazz Ensemble; jazz bass

- **James Olesen**
  
  Chorus, Chamber Choir

- **David Rakowski**, undergraduate advising head and faculty adviser (composition track)
  
  Composition; theory and analysis

- **Daniel Stepner**
  
  Violin, Lydian String Quartet; performance and analysis