

So... You want to be a Music Major?

Hello potential Music Majors!

We've put together a li'l sheet for you in order to help you achieve your dreams of pursuing a career in music. We've been there and done that, so take our advice—you'll be glad you did.

We don't mean to scare you or turn you away from being a music major but whether you're music performance, music education, music business or music therapy, being a music major in college is no "walk in the park." It is fairly competitive and requires a LOT of serious, hard work and time investment. That hard work and time investment starts right now—in high school. In order to survive in music school (or even just to be accepted into a music program), you have to immerse yourself in music study now. Music is a craft and it takes time (and effort) to develop. You CANNOT wait. We're serious. "I'll practice tomorrow" is not something that any serious music major ever says. You have to do it now and you have to do it well.

We put this together for you to give you an idea of what you should be doing in order to be admitted into a music program and in order to be successful within that program. It starts in 9th Grade. If you're older than that, you have to make up for lost time. Start now; don't wait. Work hard, and never let yourself make excuses for why you're not working hard. You can do things besides music, but if you're a music major, music (and academics) must always be your priority. When in doubt, ask us—we're happy to help!!!

"We all have dreams. But in order to make dreams come into reality, it takes an awful lot of determination, dedication, self-discipline and effort." –Jessie Owens

"The artist is nothing without the gift, but the gift is nothing without work."

–Emile Zola

9th Grade

- 1. Solo/Ensemble Participation including Class A Solo**
*also do as many other events as you can—do not drop any events—make them happen with diligent practice
- 2. Piano Lessons**
*Even if you're a skilled pianist, you need to start these lessons ASAP. You'll be using those skills through three years of theory in college.
- 3. Summer Music Camp**
*Not only will you learn valuable skills, but you'll get to see what living on a college campus is like and you'll make connections with college staff—it's like a "try before you buy" experience. And don't forget, we can give you scholarships to help pay for it!
- 4. Private Lessons on your Primary Instrument**
*By the time you go to college, you need to know all the little details about playing your instrument. Trust us, there are lots that you don't even know exist yet. See us for instructor recommendations.
- 5. Concert Attendance**
*Go to as many performances as possible, both at other schools (including choir/orchestra) and professional (Knightwind Ensemble, Milwaukee Symphony, etc.). You'll start to recognize what a great sound is and start to be able to critique not-so-great sounds.
- 6. Co-Curricular Participation**
*Brass, Wind and Fire, PULSE, Dixieland Brass Band, Musical Pit Orchestra, etc. Do everything that's offered.
- 7. Volunteer!**
*Occasionally there will be opportunities for you to do things within your HS band program or to help the MS band programs. Do them—take every shift; invest as much time as you can. It's experience and training for the future.

10th Grade

- 1. Solo/Ensemble Participation including Class A Solo**
*Do more than you did last year!
- 2. Piano Lessons**
- 3. Private Lessons on Primary Instrument**
- 4. Summer Music Camp**
- 5. Concert Attendance**
- 6. Co-Curricular Participation**

7. Volunteer!

8. Tutor at Middle Schools

*Both Badger and Silverbrook are great places for you to start using what you know. Even if you're not going into education, it's still a good idea to do some teaching. You'd be amazed at how much better you become at your own instrument by helping others learn theirs.

9. Leadership Training

*Audition for Drum Major.

11th Grade

1. Solo/Ensemble Participation including Class A Solo

*Do more than you did last year!

2. Piano Lessons

3. Private Lessons on Primary Instrument

4. Summer Music Camp

5. Concert Attendance

6. Co-Curricular Participation

7. Volunteer!

8. Tutor at Middle Schools

9. Leadership Training

*By this time, you're either a drum major or section leader. If not, you still have one more year to make it happen!

10. Chamber Music Participation

*By this time, you should be sitting at one of the highest chairs in Wind Ensemble. If that is true, you'll likely be asked to do Chamber Music. Say yes. 😊

11. Career Exploration/Visit Colleges and Meet Professors

*The more you can network, the better. You want to make an informed decision.

12. UWAY/UJAY/MYSO

*Audition for The University of Milwaukee Youth Wind Ensemble (UWAY), The University of Wisconsin Youth Jazz Ensemble (UJAY) or The Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra (MYSO). These are invaluable experiences. It will also give you the opportunity to work with actual university professors and to work with peers from all around Wisconsin who have similar passions/pursuits as you.

12th Grade

1. Solo/Ensemble Participation including Class A Solo

*Do more than you did last year! (You can perform up to 10 events)

2. Piano Lessons

3. Private Lessons on Primary Instrument

4. Summer Music Camp

5. Concert Attendance

6. Co-Curricular Participation

7. Volunteer!

8. Tutor at Middle Schools

9. Leadership Training

10. Chamber Music Participation

11. Career Exploration/Visit Colleges and Meet Professors

12. UWAY/UJAY/MYSO

13. General Music Theory and AP Music Theory

*Each of these classes is a semester-long class offered at WBHS. Make sure they're in your schedule or you'll likely end up having to take extra classes in college (as opposed to testing into a higher theory class) which means extra money and extra frustration! Might as well do it in HS when it's free!

We hope this helps guide you and prepare you for a career in your chosen musical field. As always, see a music teacher for further help or with questions—communication is key and we're happy to help you succeed! Best wishes!! 😊