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Music, B.A.

Throughout the history of humanity, music has been one of the most universal, essential, and enduring of human endeavors. As a Music student, you will be able to perceive music in an enlightened and discerning way, respond to the expressive qualities of music with sensitivity and appreciation, and be capable of sharing your perceptions and responses with others through the vocabulary and activities intrinsic to music and the scholarship of music.

Experience Your Learning

A significant part of your experience as a Music major is participating in an ensemble, where you'll flex your musical and performance skills.

Mariachi de Humboldt performs for community festivals and events, to accompany students in the Mexican Folklorico Dance class and club, and in formal concerts.

The Humboldt Calypso Band prides itself in maintaining an accurate and authentic connection to the roots of the steelband movement and the innovative musicians of Trinidad & Tobago.

Our choirs emphasize healthy vocal technique, musicianship, and performance skills.

Students can audition for the Humboldt Symphony, which has been a large ensemble course offering in the Music department for more than 80 years.

The award-winning Jazz Orchestra is as comfortable playing the best of contemporary big band jazz as it is playing the classic Swing Era music.

The Opera Workshop is an auditioned group of singers who rehearse and perform traditional and contemporary musical theater repertoire.

The Percussion Ensembles perform classical, contemporary, experimental, and world music.

The Wind Ensemble performs four on-campus concerts per year and tours every other year.



Did you know?

- Students and faculty collaborate regularly in performances, of which the Music department presents more than 100 every year.
- The vibrant local music scene and citywide events regularly feature Music students.
- We have 16 grand pianos, including two Steinway 9-foot concert grands, 26 electronic pianos, two harpsichords, a compact Baroque style tracker organ, and a Hauptwerk "virtual" organ.
- Founded in 1986, the Calypso Band was the first ensemble of its kind in the California State University system.
- We have one of the largest collections of chamber music on the West Coast.



Academics & Options

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The music major consists of a 45–46–unit core (providing foundation courses in music theory, music history, and music performance) and three separate major concentrations. All entering majors begin in the music studies concentration. Students who wish to focus on Music Education (Pre-Credential) or Applied Music (Performance/Composition) work with their studio teachers to prepare audition material to be accepted into those programs.

Concentrations

Applied Music (Performance/Composition) requires a successful audition. Beyond the Music core, students complete four semesters of advanced studio lessons, a senior recital, 3 units of advanced electives, and a career skills course.

Music Studies emphasizes a liberal arts orientation with a broad view. Beyond the Music core, students complete an additional 5–6 units of technology and career skills courses.

Music Education (Pre-Credential) prepares students to teach music in elementary, middle, and high schools. A broad spectrum of course offerings provides opportunities to learn all aspects of music education. Students who complete the Music Education (Pre-Credential) concentration are excellently prepared to student teach and complete the California Teaching Credential.

Music Minor

The Music Minor integrates performance and intellectual understanding of music. Minor students take 18 units including studio lessons or performance classes, ensembles, foundational courses in Music History, Keyboard Musicianship, and Harmony, and a wide choice of elective courses that can support your musical interests and needs.

Scholarship and Work Opportunities

The Music Department offers a variety of yearly scholarships to current, freshman, and transfer students.

Students are often hired to work as stage managers, ushers, recorders, and lab monitors, and to assist with ensemble set-up and poster distribution.

Careers

A Music degree (and the creative, problem solving, and critical thinking skills that come with it) puts you on a path to multiple musical and non-musical careers. Here are some of them:

- Choir Director
- Credentialed Educator
- Performer
- Music Critic
- Musicologist
- Music Publisher
- Music Therapist
- Soloist
- Studio (Private) Teacher



The diverse experience the department provided has been essential to my success as a music educator. High expectations with high support from the professors pushed me to expect more from myself as a student, performer, and future educator. Humboldt is a great option for those looking to have individualized support from their professors, many ensemble opportunities in both vocal and instrumental music, and getting to live in the most beautiful place in California."

Jon Souza ('01, Music Education), choral music teacher at Gilroy High School and Solorsano Middle School. Voted "Teacher of the Year" for Santa Clara County Arts 2022 Leadership Award.