

9 Things to Learn Now So You Succeed as a Music Major in College

By Dr. Christy Huskey



Hi, I'm Christy!



I've been playing piano since I was 7 years old. I began teaching my first piano students in college and loved it so much, it became my profession. My graduate degrees in piano and piano pedagogy have given me the opportunity to teach Class Piano courses to music majors for almost two decades. Now I teach piano in my home piano studio and accompany area choirs. But what I really love is teaching high school musicians who are preparing to become music majors. I know the challenges they will face, and I can give them a head start on the musical skills they need to have to be successful. Now I have created the College Prep Piano Course, a fully online course, that allows high school musicians to develop skills in playing piano at their own pace. I hope this download gives you a glimpse into what you can do to prepare to have a successful first year as a music major.





1

Learn to Play Piano

Freshmen Music Majors are often placed in Class Piano. This class can be overwhelming because you are in so many other music major courses. Learning to play piano now will make your first semesters as a music major easier and more successful.

2

Learn to Read Music on the Grand Staff

Name the notes on the Treble clef AND Bass clef quickly and accurately. This skill is necessary for Class Piano, Music Theory, and Sight Singing & Ear Training courses. The better you read notes on the grand staff, the better you will be at all your music major courses.

3

Learn Intervals

Learning interval sizes and interval qualities will be a big advantage in freshmen music major classes such as Music Theory, Class Piano, Sight Singing & Ear Training.

4

Learn Key Signatures

Knowing key signatures is the key (no pun intended!) to fluently reading music on your primary instrument, in Class Piano, in Music Theory, and in Sight Singing & Ear Training.

5

Learn to Sing by Joining Choir!

As a Music Major, you must have basic singing skills no matter your primary instrument. All freshman Music Majors take Sight Singing & Ear Training so being able to match pitch and sing on pitch is essential. Joining choir in high school will help you develop the ability to sing on pitch and be ready to succeed in your college Music Major classes. Bonus: choir is a fun class!



6

Learn Solfege

Learn your Do, Re, Mi's – literally! This is a key skill for Sight Singing & Ear Training and you will have a big advantage if you know solfege before taking this class. Bonus Points Learn the hand signals that go along with singing solfege.

7

Take Private Lessons on your Primary Instrument

Music majors take “applied lessons” or private lessons on their main instrument. Begin taking private lessons as a junior or senior in high school to level-up your playing skills and learn effective practice habits before college study.

8

Enter Contests and Festivals

Participating in contests or festivals will give laser focus to your practice and performance skills. This will also help you prepare for college auditions. Prospective music majors must audition just to be accepted into the music department of their chosen university. However, there are scholarships and financial aid available for those with the strongest musical skills. A strong audition will go a long way to help you win those scholarships.

9

Take AP Music Theory

Taking AP Music Theory along with Piano lessons is the best way to prepare for college music study. Students who do well in this class can often get college credit for Music Theory 1. If your school doesn't offer this course, search for online options. You will be glad you did!