

Program of Studies 2025-2026
CREC Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts Half-Day Program
MUSIC

VOCAL AND INSTRUMENTAL - CLASSICAL, JAZZ AND CONTEMPORARY MUSIC

The goal of the Music Department is for each student to develop over four years to their highest potential as a musician, including:

- Performance skills on their chosen instrument or voice, including tone quality, intonation, technical mastery, and interpretation.
- Music literacy, including reading and writing music and understanding all common musical indications and symbols.
- Aural skills, including musical memory, concentration, sight-singing and transcription.
- Collaborating with teachers and peers in an ensemble setting, including interpersonal skills.
- Awareness and appreciation of music history, the music of other cultures, and music's connection to other arts and academic disciplines.
- Combining vocal and instrumental students in ensemble settings including but not limited to jazz, blues, rock, pop and folk four days a week. Vocal and instrumental students will rehearse together during period 1 in a class called MMPP: Modern Music Production and Performance.
- All music students are strongly encouraged to take regular private lessons while attending the Academy. All students will attend department master classes, which will include faculty and student performances, lectures, and visits by guest artists.
- Courses, by music discipline, are listed below. Each year, students will take music theory and a performance class in their instrument. Students will also choose among multiple elective courses.

MUSIC COURSE DESCRIPTIONS

CLASSICAL INSTRUMENTAL

One Year: A student who attends one year will take: Performance class, Theory, and an elective class either in music or another art form.

Two Years: A student who attends two years will take: Performance class, Theory, and an elective class either in music or another art form.

Three Years: A student who attends three years will take: Performance class, Arranging and elective class either in music or another art form.

Four Years: A student who attends four years will take: performance class, Composition an elective class either in music or another art form.

(This four year overview is on average. Individual students may differ.)

ACADEMY CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

The Academy Orchestra is a required class for all music major string and wind players. Academy Orchestra is a performance driven ensemble encompassing beginner to intermediate orchestral repertoire. Students will be exposed to music from the classical canon (Bach, Beethoven, Brahms, etc.) to the modern day. In rehearsing pieces, students will also be exposed to various music theory concepts, as well as learn about the importance the works' composers play in music history.

MUSIC THEORY

There are four levels of this class, each getting progressively more involved with the subject. Theory One starts with Half Steps and Whole Steps, Rhythmic Training and Key Signatures.

Our theory curriculum focuses on Ear Training and Sight-Singing. Jazz students have the option of taking Theory Three or Jazz Theory. All four-year seniors take Jazz Theory to study advanced harmonic information and basic tonal improvisation.

JAZZ/COMMERCIAL INSTRUMENTAL

One Year: A student who attends one year will take: Jazz Ensemble, Music Theory 1, and an elective in another art form.

Two Years: A student who attends two years will take: Jazz Ensemble, Music Theory 2, and an elective in another art form.

Three Years: A student who attends three years will take: Jazz Ensemble, and an elective class either in music, and/or another art form

Four Years: A student who attends four years will take: Jazz Ensemble, and an elective class either in music or another art form.

(This four year overview is on average. Individual students may differ.)

JAZZ/COMMERCIAL ENSEMBLE

Students will learn the essential elements of performance, such as style, stage presence, performance tips, and genres required for the solid understanding of what is required of a successful member of this vital ensemble. The seven jazz genres which are covered but not limited to: swing, Bossa Nova, shuffle, samba, and ballad. All other genres (R&B, pop, funk, rock, folk, etc.) are explored in the commercial music ensemble. Additional topics include: standard chord progressions, volume, timekeeping, and how to develop effective comping, (accompanying), techniques, as well as performance in a group setting.

Students will be guided in the craft of improvisation and ensemble playing. Students will gain an understanding of such skills as chord choice, improvising scales, rhythm section concepts and group cohesion. They will also play a variety of styles.

MUSIC THEORY

There are four levels of this class, each getting progressively more involved with the subject and a practicum accompanying each music theory course.

- Theory I/Sightsinging- This course explores the musical alphabet through the circle of fourths and fifths as well as sightreading skills from the beginner to intermediate level.
- Theory II/Ear Training and Aural Skills- Seventh Chords through pentatonic scales and Blues scales as well as Ear training and Aural skills; this entails being able to recognize and notate intervals, as well as melodic passages, chord progressions, and rhythmic notation by ear.

- Arranging/Sight Reading Lab- Suspensions through Reharmonization and Voice Leading as well as creating their own arrangements solo and in small groups and sightreading them.
- Composition- Taking the knowledge the students have learned in the first three years of theory and creating their own compositions for either themselves or ensembles here at GHAA Half Day. This level is accompanied with a concert in the spring.

VOCAL MUSIC

Year One: A student who attends one year will take:

Vocal Pedagogy and Training regimen (Vocal PTR); this includes learning how the voice works from an anatomical standpoint as well as how to produce a healthy, free sound.

GHAA Contemporary Vocal Ensemble- This is GHAA Half-Day's version of choir; students learn how to blend and balance their voices, practice their sightreading and sing in 3 to 5 part harmony.

Year Two: A student who attends two years will take: GHAA Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Vocal PTR which now includes working with a modern music combo as harmony vocalist, Music Theory II/Ear Training and Aural Skills, and an elective class either in music, and/or another art form.

Year Three: A student who attends three years will take: GHAA Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Vocal PTR which now includes working with a modern music combo as lead vocalist, as well as Arranging accompanied with sight-reading lab and an elective class either in music, and/or another art form.

Year Four: A student who attends four years will take: GHAA Contemporary Vocal Ensemble, Vocal PTR which now includes working with a modern music combo as well as a jazz combo as lead vocalist, as well as Composition accompanied with Improvisation (Scat singing) and an elective class either in music, and/or another art form.

(This four year overview is on average. Individual students may differ.)

ELECTIVE MUSIC COURSES

JAZZ CHOIR

This vocal jazz ensemble performs advanced level arrangements of the works of jazz masters such as Dave Brubeck, Count Basie, Lambert, Hendricks & Ross and Manhattan Transfer, to name a few. Intricate harmonies challenge the singers, with each voice responsible for mastering and performing its own part. Appropriate Mic technique is expected and utilized in each class. Solo work is required including vocal improvisation known as “scatting.” This elite ensemble is open to all music majors who want to sing jazz.

ELECTRONIC MUSIC PRODUCTION AND PERFORMANCE

Modern Music Production and Performance (MMPP) is a core class open to all music department students, regardless of ability or focus. In this class, you will learn how to write, create, and produce your own music on professional music production software. This class will cover topics regarding songwriting, composition, sound design, synthesizers, modern production techniques, and the history of popular American music. The MMPP course also focuses on live performance, and students will have the opportunity to learn a new instrument or hone their skills on one they already know.

This year, ensembles in pop and rock music will rehearse during period 1 two days a week. Third period MMPP students will also learn the fundamentals of live sound production and get hands-on experience with professional level gear. All MMPP students will have a finished production by the end of the semester and will share their work online or live on stage.

SOUND RECORDING

Sound Recording is a class open to all majors. The students will learn how to record and produce their own music on professional music production software and recording equipment.. This class will cover topics regarding gear, plug-ins, interfacing, sound design, acoustics, modern production techniques, and the history of popular American music. The Sound Recording course also focuses on live performance, and students will have the opportunity to use their performance skills to record themselves and/or their peers from set-up to post production.

CLASS PIANO

Class Piano elective is a class open to all majors. The course is for beginning pianists with little to no experience. In this course, students will learn music fundamentals of rhythmic notation and reading musical notation on the Treble and Bass Clef staves. Students will learn healthy piano technique, chords and scales, and perform solo and duet pieces written for two hands simultaneously.

GUITAR 101

Guitar 101 is designed to familiarize students with the common and conventional methods of playing the guitar. Students will learn about the different types of guitars that exist and what purposes they may serve in music. Through examining proper technique we will be focused on how to play the guitar at a basic level. This will include understanding the fretboard and how the notes are laid out on the instrument, how to play basic chords to form songs, how to play simple scales to form melodies, and how to improvise at a basic level. This course will also provide supplemental music theory concepts relevant to the guitar so students can play and arrange songs to fit their skillset.

GUITAR 102

This course will be a continuation of what was learned in guitar 101; we will be expanding our knowledge of guitar and technique to a more intermediate skill level. This means exploring different voices of the basic chords taught in 101, transforming triadic chords into the appropriate 7th chords to enhance a song, and learning 7 note scales and modes to strengthen our melodic language. We will examine these concepts through learning songs of various genres, styles, and eras. This course will also provide supplemental music theory concepts relevant to the guitar so students can play and arrange songs to fit their skillset.

BRITISH INVASION

Exploring The British Invasion is a class open to all Majors. Through performance, analysis, and discussion, students will learn about the bands and artists that make up the era we often refer to as “The British Invasion” including, but not limited to: The Beatles, The Rolling Stones, The Who, Petula Clark, Dusty Springfield, and more. It is a performance focused class, and each week students will workshop different songs by the artists listed. Through playing the songs, in addition to listening and analyzing, we hope to develop a deeper understanding of the styles and the influence of these artists.

PERCUSSION AND RHYTHM THEORY

Percussion and Rhythm Theory is designed to familiarize students with the common and conventional methods of rhythm and timing as it pertains to music. Percussion instruments including drum sets, hand drums, shakers, and practice pads will be used to examine fundamental rhythmic and counting principles every musician must possess. Students will learn to read, write and perform rhythms utilizing common percussion techniques such as how to hold drum sticks, play various types of percussion instruments, and count effectively. The ultimate goal of this course is to build a strong rhythmic foundation that will apply to all other instruments.
