“Music is the universal language of mankind.”
Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

Or is it? According to ethnomusicologist John Blacking, a former Andrew W. Mellon Professor of Music at Pitt, “Music is not a universal language. … Musical systems are more esoteric and culture-specific than any verbal language.”

Around the world, a wide cross section of music emanates from iPods, radios, and computers as people begin and end their day listening to music. Televisions are faithfully set to record the next episode of the smash musical drama series _Glee_ or a variety of music and dance reality shows. Music plays in concert halls, churches, schools, grocery stores, department stores, offices, and elevators. Music is everywhere, woven into the very fabric of our lives, but is it in fact a universal language transcending cultural, religious, and political beliefs?

At the University of Pittsburgh, students from all academic backgrounds and interests have the opportunity to discover and discuss ideas such as this as well as experience music through the many courses, programs, and performances offered through the Department of Music. The department’s curriculum encourages the academic integration of musicology (study of music as a branch of knowledge or field of research), ethnomusicology (study of world music), jazz studies, composition, theory, and performance. By experiencing music from many vantage points, students are free to discover new ideas and explore beyond the borders of a single discipline or subdiscipline.

“Our goal is to provide a high-quality liberal arts program informed by faculty research and creative activity in which undergraduate students can advance their musical knowledge and skills,” says Mathew Rosenblum, professor and chair of the music department. “Because of our liberal arts focus, the department plays a very important role in attracting and retaining the best undergraduate students to the University of Pittsburgh. We offer the opportunity for students in all academic areas to continue to perform music in an orchestral, jazz, choral, or chamber music setting as well as continue their studies in music theory and history in both the Western and global context.”

The department offers a bachelor’s degree in music with a concentration in Western art music or jazz studies. In addition, individual music classes are available to all students on the Pitt campus interested in broadening their musical knowledge. In 2009, nearly 4,000 undergraduates enrolled in music courses to fulfill their general education requirements.

Students interested in continuing their music education have been steadily increasing. Since 2004, the number of double majors has tripled, with 60 percent of all music undergraduates declaring a double or triple major. Students combine music with majors as diverse as business, mathematics, neuroscience, physics, political science, computer engineering, and English literature.

The department encourages students to participate in a wide variety of performance activities, including private lessons, concerts, and ensembles. “The performance opportunities that the Department of Music offers just do not exist at competing colleges and universities because those institutions have music schools that reserve ensemble enrollment for the core music majors,” explains Rosenblum. “The talent in our ensembles is some of the best I have ever encountered, intellectually and musically, from all departments. It is so rewarding to see students who may not even be music majors perform very challenging repertoire.”

Most music classes are held in the Music Building, which houses a piano lab, practice rooms, the Theodore M. Finney Music Library, the Electronic Music Studio, and the Ethnomusicology Lab. Close by, in Bellefield Hall, students have access to a renovated auditorium and the William R. Robinson Digital Recording Studio, a state-of-the-art 32-track recording facility.

With recent graduate placements at Princeton University; the University of California, Los Angeles; and other notable institutions, students coming out of Pitt’s Department of Music are well prepared. “Our undergraduates go on to pursue graduate work in music and music education as well as a lifetime of musical involvement,” says Rosenblum.

For more information about the Department of Music, visit www.music.pitt.edu.

**DID YOU KNOW?**

- 2010 Pitt graduate Stanley Steers, who double majored in music and physics, was a 2007 Barry M. Goldwater Scholarship winner.
- The Music Building was the original home of WQED, the first educational television station in the United States, and the original site for the production of Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood.
- Between 2007 and 2009, Department of Music faculty members published seven books and 11 articles, wrote 16 compositions, released six CDs, presented papers at 30 conferences, and organized four conferences.
The Sounds of Jazz at Pitt

Internationally recognized as having one of the premier jazz programs in the country, the Department of Music offers undergraduate students an extraordinary opportunity to study and perform alongside some of the world’s greatest contemporary jazz scholars, composers, and musicians. Through course work, seminars, lectures, and public performances, as well as the use of state-of-the-art technology, students can receive extensive musical training in jazz studies.

Music majors electing to concentrate in the jazz program take courses in jazz improvisation and arranging, jazz history, African American music, musicianship, music theory, and performance as well as general education requirements in other fields of study. Students also are encouraged to participate in the Pitt Jazz Ensemble, recognized around the globe as one of the best collegiate jazz groups performing today. Founded by acclaimed musician and educator Nathan Davis, the Jazz Ensemble is composed of dedicated musicians who perform works ranging from classic to contemporary jazz. Every spring, they play a concert with notable jazz artists such as James Moody, Benny Golson, and Larry Coryell.

The Department of Music provides students with an incredible opportunity to participate in Pitt’s Jazz Seminar and Concert, the first event of its kind in the country. Celebrating its 50th anniversary in 2010, the Jazz Seminar and Concert highlights the world’s foremost jazz artists in a three-day series of free educational seminars culminating in an all-star concert. Previous participants have included Art Blakey, Clark Terry, Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Clarke, and Herbie Mann.

Student engineers and musicians gain valuable experience using industry-standard equipment in the William R. Robinson Digital Recording Studio. This state-of-the-art multitrack digital recording facility offers students hands-on experience in the latest recording techniques and technologies. Students also have access to the University of Pittsburgh Sonny Rollins International Jazz Archives, which bring together original manuscripts, historic recordings, photographs, autographed concert posters, and musical instruments and personal items from jazz legends and their families.

For more information on the jazz programs at Pitt, visit www.pitt.edu/~pittjazz/index.html.

Faculty Profile

The Power of Music

More than 25 years ago, Andrew Weintraub, professor in the Department of Music, had a profound experience that would forever change the course of his life. As an undergraduate student studying classical guitar at the University of California, Santa Cruz, Weintraub had a professor who sparked such an overwhelming interest in Indonesian culture and music that he went on to earn his master’s and doctoral degrees in ethnomusicology, focusing on the life and culture of the Sundanese people of West Java.

At the University of Pittsburgh since 1997, Weintraub has done much to move the discourse on Indonesian culture forward. As a recipient of two Fulbright fellowships to research the music of Indonesia, he completely immersed himself in the culture. “Living with the Sundanese people for a period of six years, being exposed to their culture and customs, has absolutely influenced the way I live my life,” says Weintraub. “Their compassion, humility, and generosity of spirit resonate with me and have ultimately made me a better person.” Weintraub has written two books and many articles on Indonesian culture and music and has received critical praise for his book, Dangdut Stories: A Social and Musical History of Indonesia’s Most Popular Music (Oxford University Press, 2010).

Weintraub’s passion for Indonesian culture led him to direct Pitt’s Gamelan Ensemble, which is composed of Pitt students as well as members of the local community. Through the playing of the predominantly percussion instruments, including tuned gongs, metal-keyed instruments, and drums, students learn about Sundanese culture. “Music of all types leads to a greater understanding of ourselves and connects us to people around us,” explains Weintraub. “By embodying the movements used to produce sound on the instruments, and by learning to listen to the other members of the ensemble, students experience music in a unique, personal, and ultimately very powerful way.”

Even through the undergraduate courses he teaches, from the Music of Southeast Asia to the popular Music of the Beatles, Weintraub provides an understanding of how music fits within particular social and cultural environments. “The nearly 200 commercial recordings of Beatles songs reflect how this path-breaking group blended instruments, innovative chord progressions, and non-Western music. Not only were the Beatles great musicians, they were musical pioneers,” explains Weintraub. “The 1960s were a time of creative cultural freedom and of social experimentation, and the Beatles led the way for many of us.”

In addition to his teaching and research endeavors, Weintraub is founder and lead singer of the Dangdut Cowboys, the only non-Indonesian dangdut group outside Indonesia. The band’s YouTube videos have been viewed more than 150,000 times since December 2007. “Although the band has now taken on a life of its own, my original intent in forming the Dangdut Cowboys was for research purposes and as an educational tool for students. Through embodied performance, students can more fully understand Indonesian aesthetic, cultural, and social phenomena,” says Weintraub.

News & Announcements

• Dean’s Stars

Undergraduates who complete the fall term with a minimum of 12 credits of letter grade and a term GPA of 4.0 will see a $50 award posted to their PeopleSoft accounts. If your son or daughter qualifies for this award but does not receive the $50 by the end of January 2011, please contact us at pittpridegas@pitt.edu.

• May 2011 Graduation

The 2011 University of Pittsburgh Commencement Convocation will be held at the John M. and Gerrard E. Petersen Events Center on Sunday, May 1, 2011. Academic departments offer host special receptions to recognize graduating seniors. If you have a senior graduating this spring, please contact your student’s academic department for more information about planned festivities. You can find a complete list of academic departments at www.pitt.edu/academics.html.

• Summer Sessions

The School of Arts and Sciences will offer summer session classes. Students can choose from more than 500 classes in 4-, 6-, 12-, and 14-week sessions to meet their academic needs in most disciplines. Students can complete both general education requirements and upper-level courses. Registration for summer sessions begins February 21. For details, go to www.summer.pitt.edu.

• Academic Resource Center Receives Sankofa Award

In recognition of its commitment to the educational success of African American students, the School of Arts and Sciences Academic Resource Center (ARC) received the 2010 It Takes a Village Sankofa Award from the University of Pittsburgh African American Alumni Council. This award, presented during the 2010 University of Pittsburgh Sankofa Homecoming festivities in October, honors the many significant contributions ARC has made to support and serve African American Pitt students.
When most people play music on their iPods, computers, and radios, they are doing so for their own musical enjoyment. However, when senior Sean Malloy, a triple major in music, math, and Spanish, hears a song, he pays particular attention to the musical patterns. To this accomplished composer, the notes work together in a harmonious relationship with and have a direct correlation to advanced mathematical theorems and concepts.

Malloy demonstrated his theories of math and music are intrinsically interwoven when he was commissioned as part of a group of composers to provide original music for artist Cecil Balmond’s sculpture H$_2$ at the Carnegie Museum of Art in Pittsburgh. Inspired by the exhibit, Malloy based the notes of his compositions on Sierpinski’s triangle, a fractally generated pattern, and the phrasing on the Fibonacci series, applying its fractal proportions to duration and rhythm.

“Music is inherently a series of relationships that people can understand,” explains Malloy. “Math is essentially composed of numerical relationships that we assign and put values on, such as formulas and sequences. Because both of these disciplines are expressed through representative notation, once we bridge that notation, we find where music and math come together.”

Malloy’s love of music began early on in his childhood. At age 13, he already had composed his first musical piece, and by the time he was in high school, he had written an entire musical score. His most recent composition, Sandman Suite, made its world debut this fall on Pitt’s campus, performed by the University of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra.

“It’s a surreal experience to have your own work performed by your peers,” says Malloy. “Working with the symphony orchestra opened my eyes to the differences and challenges of writing for such a large ensemble. Before the dress rehearsal, I had to rewrite the entire wind section’s parts because I forgot to put in the necessary breath marks.” Inspired by film and television composer Danny Elfman, Malloy continues to work on another composition for full orchestra to complete his Bachelor of Philosophy degree through Pitt’s University Honors College.

Outside the classroom, Malloy is president of the Heinz Chapel Choir. Additionally, he has worked with the Musical Theater Club, Delta Phi Epsilon, Free the Planet, and many other organizations on various musical projects. In 2009, he formed his own a cappella group, C Flat Run, an eight-member organization.

As he looks ahead to graduate studies, Malloy reflects on his time in the music department. “It has been such a phenomenal experience to work with the dedicated faculty and perform with students across the entire campus. There is no other department that touches every student’s college experience, whether or not they are taking an introductory class, taking private lessons, performing in an ensemble, or attending one of the many performances held on campus.”

Ensembles Provide Musical Diversity

Students who have a love of music and want to continue their performance activities at the University of Pittsburgh are encouraged to participate in the many exceptional music ensembles offered through the Department of Music. Because these ensembles are not restricted to music majors, students in all disciplines come together in collaboration with their peers, faculty members, and the community at large to perform a variety of music, including Western art music, jazz, popular music, and music from non-Western cultures.

Numerous performance opportunities exist for students interested in choral singing. As the oldest nonathletic extracurricular activity on campus, the Men’s Glee Club sings for a variety of campuswide and community functions, including graduations, receptions, alumni gatherings, and sporting events. For more than 70 years, the Heinz Chapel Choir has presented a cappella music from a wide variety of traditions. In addition to its fall and spring concerts, the choir presents an annual series of four Christmas concerts that are widely attended and usually sold out long in advance. The Women’s Choral Ensemble performs repertoire ranging from traditional sacred and secular classics to international folk songs, popular music, and show tunes.

The University of Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, composed mostly of nonmusic majors who have a strong commitment to music, performs music from the Baroque period to contemporary pieces. The Pitt Jazz Ensemble, internationally recognized as one of the best collegiate jazz groups performing today, presents an annual spring concert of classic and contemporary jazz with many well-known jazz artists. Three ensembles specialize in music from non-Western cultures. The Pitt African Music and Dance Ensemble introduces students to the various techniques of drumming, dancing, and other artistic expressions of Africa; the Gamelan Ensemble performs the music of the Sundanese people of Indonesia on percussion instruments; and the department’s newest musical endeavor, the Carpathian Music Ensemble, performs Gypsy, klezmer, Armenian, Moldavian, Ukrainian, and Macedonian music. In addition, there are numerous chamber music ensembles that students and faculty can join.
Concert Series Showcase Eclectic Mix of Artists

From the hard hop sounds of Sonny Rollins to the sacred works of Johann Sebastian Bach, students, faculty members, and the local community can hear performances by outstanding guest vocalists and instrumentalists through the Department of Music's concert series.

As the first professional music ensemble in residence at Pitt, IonSound Project gives a concert of new works by Pitt's graduate students. The ensemble, assisted by the Cantata Choir, performed one concert each term using period instruments.

For many years, the Bach and the Baroque ensemble, under the direction of Professor Emeritus Don Franklin, presented the music of Bach and his contemporaries. The ensemble, assisted by the Cantata Choir, performed one concert each term using period instruments.

A wonderful way for students to gain experience and to perform new repertoire is through the Thursday Noon Concerts. They allow students and faculty members to perform solo or ensemble music in an informal setting. For information about Pitt's concert series, visit www.music.pitt.edu/performance/concert-series.