

Graduate Students Studying Music at the University of Texas

Student Profile

Information on the number of graduate students studying music at the Butler School of Music is not readily available. Begrudgingly, the School of Music is housed within the College of Fine Arts which does keep track of demographic information (Blanchard, 2012). Students pursuing either a M.A. or P.H.D. in Fine Arts broke down as such:

- 605 Total Students
- 338 pursuing an M.A. 267 pursuing a PhD
- 15% from a foreign country.
- 271 men. 334 female. (University of Texas at Austin, 2011)

Based on a lengthy discussion with a doctoral student in the Butler School of Music, these College of Fine Arts numbers appear to be representative of music school.
(Podgorsek, 2014)

Graduate Music Program

“Human understanding, social relevance, the ability to work and play together, and many other outcomes are now typically expected of school music programmes. [sic]” (Carruthers, 2008)

There are nearly 50 tracks that a graduate student studying music at the University of Texas can take. Ultimately they can be broken down into two broad categories: performance and theory. Each of these two broadened tracks relies on a healthy dose of both performance and theory. For instance, a student studying music composition will be required to have his or her original compositions performed. Full time Master’s candidates graduate within 2 years while full time PhD and DMA students graduate between 4 and 5 years. The program differentiates between PhD and DMA. Where a PhD will tend to be more of a focus on theory a

DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) is more performance based. The lecture recital which must be approved to receive a DMA can amount to “a culmination of an entire life’s work” (Podgorsek, 2014).

Main Uses of the Library System

Students studying music at the graduate level use the library system for the following reasons:

- To listen to recorded music. The Butler School of Music does not have a recordings library of its own, so it must work with the Fine Arts Library to acquire recordings relevant to the students’ studies. Compact Discs are still the most popular medium for listening to recorded music. Students have the ability to burn the compact disc onto a hard drive for future consumption. Being able to access the works of music that are being studied is critical to studying music.
 - This means it is essential for a librarian servicing music students to have some general knowledge of the music being studied. Familiarity with the reserves lists for courses is a must.
- To access sheet music. Although UT’s School of Music is home to a performance library that includes much of the music that is required for the program, the school is not a library and space limitations are an issue. Students come to the Fine Arts Library to access the more diverse and extensive array of sheet music.
 - Librarians need to be able to navigate the sometimes impenetrable stacks of thin sheet music folios to acquire sought after materials. This may sound trivial, but sheet music stacks at the Fine Arts Library can be a maze! (Wilson, 2008)
 - Not every piece of sheet music is available at the Fine Arts Library. The Inter-Library Loan system is relied upon heavily to get sheet music to students. Librarians need to be ready to show patrons how this system works.

- To use the notation software. Since the dismantling of the Music School's music lab, the Fine Arts Library has become the only place on campus that hosts music notation software such as Sibelius and Finale. Students in music composition are especially interested in using these programs.
 - Being able to walk a student through the software is paramount. Currently, only two librarians at the Fine Arts Library are proficient in these two programs (Podgorsek, 2014). The School of Music is the second largest school in the College of Fine Arts, so the library should have mandatory training of all employees on these services. If that is too much to ask, online tutorials are also popular for graduate students (Sloan & McPhee, 2013).

Other Uses of the Library System

- As a study space. Musicians work in groups or solo depending on their current project. Space needs to be set apart so these students can collaborate without being bothered or bothering anyone else. Carrels and private rooms should also be offered so students who need to study alone can do so.
- For the technology. Getting a professional degree in music can mean that you plan on playing music professionally. Students need to be able to use programs such as Photoshop to build their brand. Graduate students in the School of Music play between 10 and 15 concerts a year (Podgorsek, 2014). These concerts need promotion.
 - The Fine Arts Library is currently the only place on campus where staff and faculty can checkout camcorders (Lay, 2014). Students of music use this service to record concerts and performances.
- To keep up with their profession. Current publications relating to the music profession need to be subscribed to by the library system. Research databases need to be kept and updated as needed.
- As a space to perform. On Saturday, March 22, 2014, after the Fine Arts Library had closed, the large central floor of the library was cleared of study spaces and comfy

chairs to make room for an Orchestra. Under the direction of doctoral candidates, 15 students from the Butler Graduate School of music performed original compositions (Excessive Noise Concert, 2014). This is a wonderful opportunity librarians can give to these students.

- For this to work without a hitch, entrances should be electric or have double wide doors. Instruments can be massive.

Conclusion

Graduate students studying music at the University of Texas are a special case for librarians. They have needs unique to their field of study. Whether it be helping a student get his steel drum kit through the door or couching a PhD on the latest update to Finale, there are many considerations librarians must take when serving music students.

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