

Feature Story: “Best Music Schools” Future Focused

National Standards: 9, 11

In Tune publishes special reports on “going to college for music” each year in its October and February issues. The stories differ, focusing on everything from ways to afford tuition to auditions to “the vibe” on campus, and more.

The lead story in this October’s issue is about looking ahead – imagining what campus life might be like for music students once the pandemic passes. In that In Tune’s readers are in grades 7-12, many will be preparing for college life one or more years from now, and still more have yet to contemplate that step, this is a feature about their prospective futures.

Prepare

Research talking points on the kinds of music programs available to music students. The reality is that there are music programs for studying every aspect of music and the music industries. Performing is one opportunity. However, becoming a music teacher, music equipment manufacturer, concert promoter, agent, publisher, manager...the more paths you identify, the more options students might identify with.

Key points in the article:

- The pandemic may re-shape some college music programs, but some may revert to the way they were before COVID.
- It’s critical to think about what you, as a student, are interested in before evaluating schools.
- Creating a list of questions related to your interest can help you sort through college websites and materials.
- When asked, many music college graduates say that they wish they had taken more music business programs, regardless of the field they ended up in.
- An important consideration when evaluating a music college is its connection, and its faculty’s connection, to the music industries, as well as its success in helping graduates find next steps.

Begin

Poll your students to see if they have a sense of what they might like to study, if in fact they were to study music in college – either as a major or minor.

- If they don’t, ask them what they like about music.
- Ask if there is something related to music they like.
- Ask them to research whether there is a music college or program that offers courses in what it is they like.

Review vocabulary words from the article below:

- **EXPERIENTIAL** - involving or based on experience and observation.
- **ENTREPRENEURSHIP:** the activity of setting up a business or business
- **CONSERVATORY:** college for the study of classical music or other arts.
- **AURAL:** relating to the ear or the sense of hearing
- **REPERCUSSIONS:** an unintended consequence occurring some time after an event or action
- **ACCOMODATION:** a convenient arrangement; a settlement or compromise.

Discuss

Ask students to list all of the different jobs in the music industries, or related to music.

After creating a long list, ask each which job they might be interested in. Then have them research colleges that have preparatory programs leading to those careers.

Expand

Provide a thumbnail of the careers of Al Di Meola and Steve Vai. Play their music and then review the segment of In Tune's "Best Music Schools" where those artists participate in a discussion about their time at the Berklee College of Music.

Ask whether going to college for music helped these artists, and if so, how? Might they have succeed without going to college? Why?

Close

Some might believe that success in music is driven exclusively by talent, and in very rare instance, when talent is so prevalent, that argument can be made. But in just about all instances, have a background, education and experience in allied fields will serve an artist's career. There are also careers in music that have little to do, directly, with artistic talent, but with other skills. Discuss those careers, but also how a musical background – learning an instrument, etc. – will aid or support those careers.