

Seven important truths to understand about pursuing a degree or a career in music

It's not enough just to love music. Making a career as a musician is very different from being a music lover! It's hard work, and the competition is extremely stiff. Keep in mind that if you become a professional musician, there will probably be days when you don't love music very much at *all*, but you'll still have to go to work.

You have to practice. Especially if you're interested in becoming a performer, you should expect to spend several hours per day—every day—practicing your instrument.

You probably won't get rich. A handful of musicians become wealthy and famous. Most of us don't. And many musicians work as freelancers, which means they don't have the advantage of a reliable income or employer-provided health insurance. It's a good idea to develop some other marketable skills that can support you, if necessary, while you build your music career.

You may have some catching up to do. Many professional musicians, especially those pursuing careers as performers, began taking private lessons when they were three or four years old. If you didn't have that opportunity, that doesn't mean you can't be a musician; it just means you may have to work harder to get there—and it may mean that you're going to need to spend more than two years at OCC to be prepared for a successful transfer or employment.

The music world is all about relationships. Temperamental geniuses may get media attention, but good colleagues and communicators get jobs! Besides being good at your craft, be good to the people you meet in the field—*all* of them—and you'll gain a reputation as someone other professionals are eager to work with.

Versatility is key. Take as many different classes, try as many different things, listen to as many different styles of music, and master as many different skills as you can! You'll become a better all-around musician with each new experience, and no matter what musical profession you're pursuing, you'll find that you're more qualified and more marketable if you've got a variety of abilities and a broad base of knowledge.

We're here to help! We want to understand your interests, your abilities, and your dreams so that we can help you choose the right courses and achieve your academic and professional goals. Please understand that while OCC's academic counselors are exceptionally well qualified to help ensure that you fulfill your graduation requirements, they **CANNOT** assess your musical abilities or advise you on what music classes are appropriate for your level and interests; you need to meet with a music faculty member for that!

