

**National Association of Schools of Music  
VISITORS' REPORT**

**Rhode Island College**

**Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance  
600 Mount Pleasant Avenue  
Providence, RI 02908**

**Robert H. Franzblau, Assistant Chair**

**Date of Visit  
April 2-3, 2007**

**Visitors  
Sue Haug  
The Pennsylvania State University**

**William L. Ballenger  
Texas Tech University**

**For Institutions with Membership**

**Programs or degrees currently listed in the NASM Directory  
for which renewal of Final Approval is sought:**

**Bachelor of Arts in Music  
Bachelor of Science in Music Education  
Bachelor of Music in Performance  
Master of Music Education**

**Date:** 6-13-07  
**NASM Visitors' Report  
For Internal Distribution  
at discretion of the  
Chief Music Executive  
Any Optional Response Due  
10-1-07**

### Disclaimer

The following report and any statements therein regarding compliance with NASM accreditation Standards represent only the considered opinion of the Visitors at the time of the visit. Definitive evaluation of compliance and the accreditation decision will be made by the appropriate Commission following a complete review of the application, including the Self-Study, the Visitors' Report, and any Optional Response to the Visitors' Report submitted by the institution.

*The Visitors wish to express their sincere thanks to the administration, faculty, staff and students of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance and to the administration of the College itself for the hospitality and cooperation shown during the visit.*

#### **A. Mission, Goals, and Objectives**

Rhode Island College is a public institution founded in 1854 with a historic goal to "provide teacher preparation to young people from Rhode Island." Building on these roots in teacher education and as the state's largest preparer of teachers, the college is known today for its curricula in nursing, social work, fine and performing arts, as well as education.

The mission, goals, and objectives of the music faculty within the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance appear to be congruent with those of Rhode Island College. One of the hallmarks of the mission of Rhode Island College is the "promise of affordable access to superior higher education for traditional and non-traditional students alike..." The Visitors found ample evidence of service to both a traditional and non-traditional student population.

Another important component of the institutional mission is a commitment to offering a broad array of undergraduate arts and sciences and professional majors. This is reflected in the mission of the music faculty within the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance, as is evidenced by the offering of degree programs, from the Bachelor of Arts to the Master of Music Education, plus music instruction for the non-music major.

An eloquent Statement of Philosophy of Music Education (*Self Study*, p. 4) clarifies the music unit's commitment to teacher training.

#### **B. Size and Scope**

Music major enrollment has doubled in the last decade, and the music unit now boasts an enrollment of 170 music majors (*Self Study*, p. 6, and Appendix B). A careful study of materials in Appendix B shows enrollment growth in the degrees Bachelor of Arts in Music and Bachelor of Science in Music Education. Enrollment in the Bachelor of Music in Performance and the Master of Music in Music Education has remained constant. The Visitors confirm that there has been no increase in the number of full-time music faculty during this period of enrollment growth. To handle the increased enrollment, the music unit has hired adjunct instructors. The Providence area is rich with professional musician resources, and student fees for studio lessons cover the costs related to adjunct instruction. As a result, more than 40 adjunct instructors teach courses ranging from applied instruction to

theory and history (*Self Study*, p. 6). This appears to be a solution welcomed by the full-time faculty.

The significant enrollment increases since the opening of the Nazarian Center has resulted in pressure on facilities, and as described in the *Self Study*, room scheduling has become increasingly complex with the facility being used at close to maximum capacity. Concerns related to size and scope (regarding facilities and enrollment) will be discussed in greater detail in section F below. The Faculty is considering various ways to handle these pressures, including limiting enrollment by increasing entrance requirements (*Self Study*, p. 8).

The degree Master of Music in Music Education appears to serve teachers from the greater Providence area. During the academic year, classes are scheduled at 4:00 p.m. and in the evenings, and the "core" classes are offered in the summer sessions by rotation (*Self Study*, p. 7) allowing those already in the work force to enroll. Another degree, the Master of Arts in Teaching (M.A.T.) is also offered by the music unit. In tandem, these two Masters programs appear to provide a sufficient community of scholars, especially due to the close proximity of the student population within the greater Providence area.

Since the M.A.T. degree's primary purpose is the completion of undergraduate requirements for teacher certification, the institution did not list the degree on the title page and is not expecting the degree to be listed by NASM (*NASM Handbook 2007-2008*, XII.B.3). Issues regarding these two programs will be discussed in greater detail in the curricular section of the Visitors' Report.

There appears to be congruence among faculty resources, enrollment, and to a lesser extent, availability of appropriate performance and teaching spaces.

### C. Finances

The State of Rhode Island and Rhode Island College are currently experiencing financial difficulty. The estimated College shortfall is \$3.1 million, and all units on the campus have been affected. As a result, Rhode Island College is in the midst of changing to a "Decentralized Budget System" (*Self Study*, p. 9) as one of a series of steps to address the necessary "belt-tightening." The music unit has operated with theatre and dance since 1998, which complicates financial reporting. This situation, coupled with the long history of centralized fiscal management, means that available financial data is for the whole of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance. Financial information specific to the music unit and reported in the *Self Study* is an approximation. Gaining a complete picture of the music unit's budget and making the transition to a unit-specific operating budget that meets essential needs is an on-going process.

Despite these difficult conditions, the music unit has managed to secure funding necessary to maintain essential functions. Visitors note futures planning documents and a commitment from administration for continued support as funds again become available. Indicative of the College's strong support for the music unit is the fact that music has received approval to replace with tenure-track hires all seven faculty positions that have become available due to retirements in recent years (*Self Study*, p. 10).

Special Talent Award scholarships are available to attract students to the programs. Administered by the Office of Financial Aid, the music unit budget has increased by 100% in the last ten years. Recent significant successes with endowment building at Rhode Island College promises to yield continued growth in available scholarship dollars for the music unit.

The music executive at Rhode Island College is currently the Assistant Chair of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance. The Assistant Chair advises the Chair in matters of budget relating to the Music Unit, but the Chair of the Department (currently a member of the Theatre faculty) is the responsible administrator.

The Visitors confirmed that policies concerning tuition, fees, etc. are published in the RIC catalog. Despite the challenges to the College with the current financial shortfall, there appears to be compatibility among the mission, goals, and objectives; the current size and scope; and the financial resources.

#### **D. Governance and Administration**

There appears to be a clearly defined administrative structure at Rhode Island College (*Self Study*, p. 13). Visitors found all College administrators to be well aware of the work of the music unit, including specific needs and futures planning of the unit. Administrators were uniformly supportive and complimentary toward the music unit.

Curricular changes are generally initiated by the faculty and approved by appropriate administrative oversight through and including the Board of Governors.

Music faculty meetings are held monthly, attended by the eleven full-time faculty members. The music unit has approximately forty adjunct faculty members, and communication to this work force is accomplished through e-mail and memo formats as appropriate. A Faculty Advisory Committee (chair, assistant chair, managing director of theatre, director of dance, music representative) assists with decisions about curricula, budgets, and problems that may arise. Student communication is accomplished through public announcements at weekly recital hours and appropriate signage throughout the building.

Visitors had no opportunity to meet with the adjunct faculty as a group; however, those who were present during the visit indicated that communication to adjunct faculty was sufficient. It was not clear, however, that all adjunct faculty were aware of the NASM visit, and at least two faculty appeared to be surprised by observers visiting their classes.

The music executive's load is outlined as follows: 5/12ths administration and 7/12ths teaching. The music executive (Assistant Chair) serves in an advisory capacity to the Chair of the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance in matters of budget, hiring, salary, and tenure decisions. There appears to be a good working relationship between the Chair and the Assistant Chair. While the Chair is the signatory authority for the department, in practice, the Assistant Chair is given considerable autonomy in matters related specifically to the music unit.

The faculty expressed uniform praise for the work of the Assistant Chair. The faculty expressed concern, however, regarding the constant three-year rotation of Departmental administrators and expressed a desire to create a long-term administrative appointment for the Department, feeling it might enhance long-term advocacy of initiatives. The faculty observed that often department administrators were selected by default – since many of the full-time faculty had little interest in assuming this responsibility. Training of the music executives was more or less “on-the-job” training with the prior chair or assistant chair mentoring the new administrator. Some college-wide training was also provided relative to the newly assumed budgetary duties. Despite these concerns, it appears that the music unit is meeting NASM standards relative to governance (NASM Handbook 2007-2008, II.D).

### **E. Faculty and Staff**

Visitors found the full-time faculty to be highly qualified, motivated, and focused on their teaching mission. A remarkably collegial full-time faculty, the Visitors observed a unified commitment to the students. The unit is to be congratulated on the new faculty hires, seven of eleven full-time faculty positions have been filled in recent years. Attendance at the student meeting with the Visitors was very large, with uniform praise expressed by the students regarding the caring and nurturing environment maintained by the faculty. Students appreciate that faculty are accessible, even by phone after hours if needed. As an example of the kind of support that faculty provide, one student mentioned a make-up class offered by phone when the student had been ill, which was longer than the actual class would have been.

Visitors noted the large number of adjunct instructors, mostly in applied music. There appears to be an inconsistency in the level of engagement with students among the adjunct faculty. This may be due in part to the uneven level of performance background of the student population. Visitors wish to encourage the development of a procedure by which careful and consistent monitoring of adjunct instruction may be accomplished.

Students indicated a concern about the inconsistency in offering performance classes – with some instrumental areas providing greater opportunities, again as a result of varying availability and commitment of the applied faculty. Students were adamant, however, that many of the adjunct faculty “worked just as hard as the full-time faculty” and observed that it was probably difficult to retain good adjunct faculty. The Visitors were surprised at the relatively low pay scale for adjuncts (\$30/hour). The *Self Study* (pp. 11-12) mentions the possibility of increasing the applied music fee, but since the university does not subsidize applied instruction (students pay the full cost of the adjunct applied music instruction), addressing this situation is complicated.

The Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance employs only one support staff person. The Department is most fortunate to have such an effective, organized, and pleasant person in this position. Several times the Visitors heard faculty express the need for an additional staff person in the Department. It was reported to the Visitors that, prior to the merging of the music unit with Theatre and Dance, there was indeed a staff person for each unit (one for Music and one for Theatre and Dance). Further, given the substantial increase in enrollment in the music unit, there appears to be ample evidence available to support adding at least one

more staff person in the Department, with specific attention devoted to the needs of the music unit. A position comparable to the Managing Director of Theatre was suggested as the top priority for a new support position. Music ensemble directors (with support of the secretary and student workers) have responsibility for concert and rehearsal scheduling, preparation of posters and programs, and budgetary oversight of events. With only eleven full-time faculty members and one of these positions devoted in part to the position of assistant chair (or possibly chair) and another to the Wednesday concert series, it appears that the need for additional staff support could be justified.

Other than the staffing challenges to the music unit because of its remarkable growth, it appears that NASM standards relative to faculty and staff are being met. Additional faculty will be needed if the program continues to grow, particularly if it decides to add new graduate degree tracks.

#### **F. Facilities, Equipment and Safety**

The Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance enjoys new and renovated facilities, thanks to the opening of the Nazarian Center for the Performing Arts in 1999. Named after the College's President, the Visitors were pleased to observe within the Nazarian Center a bright, clean, and logically arranged facility. Classrooms are equipped with appropriate and current AV and playback equipment, and faculty were observed making instructional use of the equipment.

Visitors noted that there are only 15 practice rooms in the music facility. Some of the practice rooms are reserved for adjunct instructor studio space and accompanist rehearsals and one for large instrument storage, further restricting student access. The faculty is well aware of the problem, and the Visitors fielded several student comments expressing frustration with limited practice space. Piano majors mentioned the lack of a keyed practice room for pianists, as is often provided in programs offering piano performance degrees. Need for additional practice rooms has been further complicated by the increase in music major population since the opening of the new facility in 1999.

The *Self Study* mentions uneven soundproofing, and while the Visitors did note occasional sound isolation problems, everyone seemed very appreciative of the hugely improved environment for music instruction and performance that the Nazarian Center has provided, and faculty are hopeful that the few remaining problems can be addressed.

Saplinsley Hall, also a part of the new construction, is not controlled by the Department of Music, Theatre, and Dance. Music performances are scheduled in the Hall in competition with many other agencies, both on and off campus. It appears that the academic units do not have scheduling priority or, at least, that access projected in 1999 is no longer adequate to serve the growing music program. Limited access to this beautiful Hall appears to be hampering the ability of the music unit to carry out fully its performance mission and goals. Examples cited include an inability to schedule dress rehearsals in the Hall; an inability to make use of the Steinway concert grand piano except for faculty and guest artist performances; and restriction in the number of hours the facility is staffed, limiting the number of recitals that can be scheduled during peak performance times of year. As a result,

faculty members are investigating the possibility of presenting off-campus recitals in local churches as an alternative to Sapinsley Hall access. The faculty was highly complimentary, however, of the professionalism and support provided by technical staff of the Nazarian Center.

Visitors confirm the poor condition of the school-owned upright piano inventory. The music unit has found a reasonable short-term solution through a loan program with a local music merchant. However, these new instruments require frequent tuning during the course of the academic year, and it appears the tunings are not consistently completed as per the loan agreement. Further, it does not appear that keyboard majors have access to a quality instrument for daily practice. Keyboard students registered complaints to the Visitors that practice instruments are so poorly regulated and maintained as to cause unnecessary fatigue and potential physical injury. Students and faculty mentioned having minimal access to the university's concert Steinway, which was not used at the student recital but which the Visitors understand is in excellent condition. The Visitors learned in a conversation with the President that access restrictions to the piano and the hall might be relaxed, but that limitations were put in place to keep the facilities and instruments in excellent condition, and it is true that Sapinsley Hall is a beautiful facility in like-new condition.

Visitors recommend the music unit devise a plan for piano replacement, and ensure the availability of properly regulated and tuned instruments for the keyboard majors, both in rehearsal and performance settings. The Visitors commend the unit on the progress made in purchase of professional-quality wind and percussion instruments as detailed in Appendix E of the *Self Study*.

Thus, with the possible exception of practice rooms and maintenance of pianos, it appears that NASM standards relative to facilities and equipment, health and safety are being met (NASM *Handbook* 2007-2008, II.F.1).

### **G. Library and Learning Resources**

The majority of music library materials are housed in the James P. Adams Library, just a short walk from the Nazarian Center. Approximately 3,000 CD's are available for general circulation. A small listening area is maintained for LP, CD, CD-ROM and DVD playback. In addition, the Library offers the following online audio services: Classical Music Library; Naxos Music Library; and African-American Song. All music classrooms have online access, and the Visitors confirmed its use in the classroom.

The main Library is also a part of several lending consortia, further enhancing the availability of materials. Also, within a twenty-mile radius of Rhode Island College are several more colleges and universities, each equipped with music library holdings. When necessary, students travel directly to appropriate libraries to directly and quickly access materials.

The Library liaison for music is a trained musician with 30+ years of experience in the position. The Library liaison continues to be an invaluable asset for the music unit. Due to a recent retirement in the music unit, it appears that a new music unit liaison should be clearly

identified to work directly with the Library liaison. The assistant chair has been serving in this role temporarily.

Recent library acquisitions have been greatly curtailed due to the College's financial crisis; however, as a high priority, materials for specific class needs continue to be purchased. The *Self Study* (p. 30) shows reasonable annual funding for music materials when budget funds are indeed available. It is expected that funds will return when the state's financial shortfall is resolved. Library and learning resource materials appear to be sufficient for the music degrees offered at Rhode Island College (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, II.G).

## **H. Recruitment, Admission-Retention, Record Keeping, and Advisement**

### **1. Recruitment, Admission, Retention**

The department has initiated many new recruitment activities in the past decade including new print and web materials, week-long summer camps (Music Institute at Rhode Island College), many outreach activities, and partnerships with local arts agencies. The college and its teacher training programs are well known in the state. The Dean of Education indicated that 90% of teachers in the state of Rhode Island have at least one degree from Rhode Island College.

From observations in private lessons and from the student recital presented for the Visitors, it is not clear that students being admitted to the music program in all cases show aptitudes and prospects for success (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, II.H.1.b). As described in the *Self Study* (p. 34), an audition is required for entrance into the professional degree programs but not for the Bachelor of Arts program. Without entrance standards in performance and since this program requires only two semesters of applied study, the faculty are concerned about the quality of students in this degree program, one of two music programs with significant recent growth. Faculty are currently discussing the possibility of requiring an audition.

Recruitment of active students into the graduate programs has been challenging, particularly since the state of Rhode Island does not require a master's degree for recertification of teachers. The *Self Study* (p. 37) documents the college-wide decline in graduate enrollment. Recent improvements in college marketing and recruitment activities for graduate programs, plus the hiring of a new tenure-track coordinator of music education bode well for graduate recruitment in music. Whereas enrollment in graduate courses was reported to be adequate (generally 8-9 students in most evening and summer graduate courses), without a state requirement for a graduate degree, it appears that many of these teachers do not matriculate into the M.M.E. program. The new coordinator of music education keeps a database of prospective students and is attempting to contact every student who has enrolled in any graduate music courses recently, with the hope of encouraging more students to audition for acceptance into the program. Without graduate student funding, however, students are likely to continue to enroll as part-time students.

Addressing graduation rates is a priority for the music unit. Because the two music graduate programs had fewer than six graduates each in two or more years, a program review was mandated by the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education (*Self Study*, p. 7). The College was



able to retain these degree programs through 2008 (by counting the graduates of both programs together), but it is unclear that this will be allowed in the future. Thus, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences is encouraging the music unit to restructure graduate degrees, perhaps to have a single degree program for the purpose of the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education, but to provide separate concentrations to meet student need.

Undergraduate Retention appears to be in line with college and national standards. The Visitors were told that most undergraduate music students have outside jobs and many are first-generation college attendees. Faculty expressed real admiration for the persistence and work ethic of most students. As one person said, "Students college their way through work."

## **2. Record Keeping**

The Music Division office appears to maintain accurate records documenting each student's educational progress. Student files in the central office housed repertory and jury sheets and various academic forms and approvals. Access to student records (courses taken and grades) is available to advisors online, thus, printed copies of these records were not filed in the main office.

## **3. Advisement**

Advising is handled by the full-time faculty. Overall, the students reported that the advising system worked very well and that there was a culture of help and ready access to faculty and advisers. Students felt that the overall supportive atmosphere provided by the faculty had an important influence on students, who were then inspired to provide mentoring and tutoring for each other.

While students mentioned the difficulty in graduating in four years within the Bachelor of Science program and a few reported occasional problems in scheduling required courses, they did concur that a four-year curricular plan is available. The Visitors note that the *Music Student Handbook* appears to be a basic and accurate guide to the department. The advising policies described in the *Self Study* (pp. 35-36) appear to be effective.

### **I. Published Materials – Web Sites**

The published materials presented by the department in the *Self Study* (catalog and Appendix V) and the website are well conceived, clear and accurate. The Visitors noted the changes made to the *Music Student Handbook* and *College Catalog* to correct inconsistencies (*Self Study*, p. 41).

### **J. Branch Campuses, External Programs, Use of the Institution's Name for Educational Activities Operated Apart from the Main Campus or the Primary Educational Program**

Not applicable.

## **K. Community Involvement and Articulation With Other Schools**

The music unit is working hard to be a cultural resource for the community. The *Self Study* lists many examples of faculty and student contributions to the musical life of the community. The College makes its excellent performance facilities in the Nazarian Center available to area performing organizations. The unit hosts many civic and educational events, including a community band and choir and many activities for the Rhode Island Music Educators Association such as auditions and rehearsals for All-State ensembles. Several of the music unit's ensembles hold rehearsals in the evening to allow participation by qualified community musicians. The unit's outreach activities appear to be very good.

## **L. Non-Degree-Granting Programs for the Community (if applicable)**

The *Self Study* (p. 33) mentions the Music Institute at Rhode Island College as an important recruiting tool. Whereas the title might lead one to think this was a community music school, in fact, this is the unit's summer music camp (p. 66) taught by members of the faculty. It offers a one-week program for chorus, strings, and wind ensemble, including experiences in large ensembles and chamber ensembles.

## **M. Standards for (A) Independent Postsecondary Music Units Without Regional or Other Institutional Accreditation and/or (B) Proprietary Institutions (if applicable)**

Not applicable.

## **N. Programs, Degrees, and Curricula**

### **1. Specific Curricula**

Rhode Island College currently offers three undergraduate degrees: Bachelor of Arts in Music, Bachelor of Science in Music Education, and Bachelor of Music in Performance.

The three degrees share a basic two-year core in music theory (I-IV) and sight singing and ear training (I-IV) and one semester of music history (Introduction to Music Literature) plus the require General Education Class, Music Cultures of Non-Western Worlds. As described in the *Self Study* (p. 46), the faculty debated for years the wisdom of a one-semester introductory survey of Western art music. With the hiring of a new musicologist, a proposal to replace this one-semester course, Introduction to Music Literature, with a two-semester sequence in music history was developed. The proposal was approved by the College Curriculum Committee and will be implemented in fall 2007. The total number of credits in each of the three programs will not change, rather there will be a reduction in the number of required "period" music history courses.

### **Bachelor of Arts**

In addition to this academic core in music, the B.A. degree requires three period courses (to be reduced to two courses in fall 2007) and one additional theory course selected from a list

of four (see the curricular table, p. 93). This makes for a strong musicianship core of 31 credits (26%).

The performance requirement is two semesters (4 credits) of applied music and two semesters of a major ensemble (1 credit/.5 cr. each). In addition to these five credits, there are four required credits in music to be selected from a series of courses (ensembles, applied music, or theory/literature courses). These four elective credits were listed with the general non-music electives in the curricular table, rather with the "Performance and Music Electives" category. A corrected curricular table (p. 93) that included these courses would total 9 credits/7.5% under "Performance and Music Electives."

Although this percentage is closer to the expectations (10-20%) suggested in the *NASM Handbook*, the Visitors are concerned that the minimal performance requirements may not provide students with adequate skills relative to the goals of the unit. The elegant "Statement of Philosophy of Music Education" appears to reflect the unit's goal for music study at the college level for all degree programs, including the B.A. degree (*Self Study*, p. 4). It is not clear that all students in the B.A. degree develop this level of aesthetic sensitivity, particularly since students are admitted into this program without an audition (as previously discussed under H.1 "Recruitment, Admission, Retention").

While an applied jury is required at the end of each semester and a minimum performance jury is required at the end of the first year of study (called Freshman Proficiency), the standards for this proficiency did not appear to be very high. This observation was confirmed in conversations with faculty, who were concerned about overall performance standards. While the faculty are very supportive of their students and described them as open and very teachable, they observed that many students were "remarkably untrained." Public school music programs in some districts in the state have been decimated the Visitors were told, and many students simply have not had opportunities for serious musical training. Thus, it is not clear that all students in the Bachelor of Arts in Music develop "ability in performing areas at levels consistent with the goals and objectives of the specific liberal arts degree program being followed" (*NASM Handbook 2007-2008*, VII.D.3.a.(1)).

### **Bachelor of Music in Performance**

The curriculum in the Bachelor of Music in Performance appears to meet basic standards for professional baccalaureate degrees in music (*NASM Handbook 2007-2008*, VIII).

Performance standards are met by eight semesters (24 credits) of applied music and ensembles, attendance at music recitals, and performance of a junior and senior recital. All students take two semesters of class piano and a semester of conducting. Based on performances in the student recital, it appeared that performance expectations and standards in the B.M. in Performance varied somewhat, but included some very fine performers.

Musicianship skills and analysis appeared to be covered well through the basic two-year core in music theory (I-IV) and sight singing and ear training (I-IV) plus the required electives. These courses also provide students with opportunities to create derivative and original music. The syllabus for Music Theory IV listed five composition assignments (a set of

variations, a round, a two-part invention, an impressionistic piece and 12-tone piece). Developing rudimentary capacity to create music extemporaneously appeared to be handled minimally through class piano and observations of African drumming in Music Cultures of Non-Western Music. How much actual improvisation is done in this class is not clear. In the classes observed by Visitors, students watched and discussed videos of African drumming and dancing. Certainly the class provided interesting examples of improvisation, and the conversations included observations of the differences between this music, which was handed down aurally without written notation, and the traditions in Western art music.

The *Self Study* (p. 48) mentions that improvisation is also expected in applied music. A few applied syllabi (trumpet, violin, bassoon) included expectations for writing and improvising cadenzas, for example, while others did not include such a requirement. The unit might consider more consistency in performance standards to be outlined in applied music syllabi. The syllabi on file were quite varied, and given the number of adjunct faculty teaching applied music, some greater consistency might be useful in ensuring that standards are being met in all areas.

The history and repertory standards appeared to be met. The level of engagement and participation of students in music history classes was impressive. Whereas in some classes, instructors seemed frustrated by the lack of responsiveness of students, in the music history classes observed, the students appeared well-prepared for classes and were eager to share their observations.

Technology standards for the Bachelor of Music in Performance appear to be addressed minimally through music theory courses, where experience with music notation software is acquired. The MIDI lab doubles as the class piano lab and is busy most hours of the day.

There is no specific course in literature in the major performing medium. Rather students are exposed to literature through core theory/history courses, plus eight semesters of applied music and attendance/performance on the Student Recital Series. Whether this is preparing students adequately, given the minimal musical backgrounds of many students, is questionable, but it appears that students are gaining at least minimal knowledge of "applicable solo and ensemble literature" (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.A.3.a).

The *Self Study* (p. 51) mentions that standards in pedagogy are met chiefly through applied music. When asked about how this was accomplished, students were at first unsure – then some began to describe quite vigorously how instructors taught students to teach themselves, diagnose problems, and find practice solutions, and how the students applied this knowledge in their own practicing and teaching. Very few applied music syllabi mentioned pedagogy assignments or pedagogy outcomes. One studio (flute) syllabus included non-performance expectations (peer reviews, a research assignment, reading an article, etc.), and presumably this could help to meet pedagogy standards, but most syllabi did not mention pedagogy or any expectations beyond performance. Thus, it is not clear how the unit gives all students "an introduction to and experience with the fundamentals of pedagogy" in the major performing medium (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.A.3.a). Since the unit employs many adjunct applied instructors, without some department-wide standards it seems unlikely that all students will receive pedagogy instruction through applied music.

Voice performance majors acquire use of foreign languages and diction through a two semester sequence: Language Orientation I (Italian and English) and Language Orientation II (French and German) plus Italian 101 and 102 (*Catalog* p. 186).

### **Bachelor of Science in Music Education**

The curriculum in the Bachelor of Science in Music Education appears to meet basic standards for professional baccalaureate degrees in music (*NASM Handbook 2007-2008*, VIII).

Performance standards are met by seven semesters (14 credits) of applied music and seven semesters of a major ensemble in the principal applied area, plus an ensemble in a secondary area (chorus for instrumentalists, an instrumental ensemble for vocalists) for a total of 4 credits, .5 credit each. In addition, students are required to register for four semesters of chamber ensembles (4 credits, 1-credit each) and attend music recitals (Student Recital Series). Students confirmed that music education majors were given the same opportunities as performance majors. All students take two semesters of class piano and a semester of conducting. Faculty recognize that one semester of conducting is less than ideal (*Self Study*, p. 52), but compensate for this lack of course work with opportunities for practical experience through the Practicum II.

Musicianship skills and analysis appeared to be covered well through the basic two-year core in music theory (I-IV) and sight singing and ear training (I-IV) plus the required electives. As described above under the Bachelor of Music in Performance, these courses also provide students with opportunities to create derivative and original music, particularly in Music Theory IV. Developing rudimentary capacity to create music extemporaneously appeared to be handled minimally through class piano and Music Cultures of Non-Western Music and to a lesser extent through improvisation in applied music. Introduction to Music Education also provides opportunities for students to compose and improvise (the syllabus has assignments such as composing three songs without words in tonalities other than major and harmonic minor, and two improvisation activities). The Class Strings also includes several assignments involving practical approaches to teaching improvisation. Thus, it appears that composition and improvisation standards for music education students are being met.

As described above under the B. M. degree, history and repertory standards appeared to be met. The planned expansion of the introduction music history course to a two-semester sequence will strengthen requirements. Technology standards are met through music theory courses, where experience with music notation software is acquired. Music education students also are required to attend three half-day Technology Workshops connected with Music 212, 412, and 413. These workshops are offered on Saturdays and are taught by area public school teachers, covering such topics as recording techniques, setting up commonly used equipment, budgeting and appropriate software, etc.

With respect to music competencies specific to undergraduate degrees in music education (*NASM Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.1.3.b), it appears that many of the standards not met through the core classes are handled, at least minimally, through the five techniques classes,

two Practicum in Music Education classes (3 credits each), and student teaching. The practicum classes provide lab experiences, conducting, and musical leadership opportunities. Students reported having excellent opportunities to work with children, first with short teaching opportunities and eventually through longer experiences. Functional abilities in keyboard and voice are provided through Class Piano and Voice Class.

It is not clear how the program provides opportunities for students to “arrange and adapt music from a variety of sources” (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.I.3.b(2)). As mentioned in the *Self Study* (p. 53), the faculty recognizes the lack of required requirements in orchestration/arranging. The Visitors did note one arranging assignment in Class Strings, but the other methods classes did not appear to offer any instruction or requirements in arranging. The *Self Study* (p. 53) mentions “another discussion on the horizon” to take fuller advantage of the specific strengths of the new music education coordinator (who brings considerable public school teaching experience and specialization in Gordon music learning theories).

The music education curriculum does not offer specialized tracks, rather it provides experiences in general music, vocal/choral, and instrumental music – so that graduates are broadly trained in all areas. It appears to the Visitors that the curriculum meets, at least minimally, the specialization competitions in the Handbook for general music, vocal/choral, and instrumental music (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.I.3.c(1-3)). Students receive lab experience in all three settings through the Practicum Classes, and while the unit does not offer courses in methods and materials for these three settings, again the basic materials are offered through Practicum Classes (*Self Study*, pp. 55-56). Unfortunately, Practicum classes were not meeting in the usual fashion during the visit because of a public school music festival, so there was not an opportunity to observe practicum students in a class setting. Students did express concern over the lack of choral/instrumental methods classes in the student meeting, although students who had just completed student teaching in fall semester were interviewed at another meeting, and they indicated feeling well-prepared for their student teaching.

The *Self Study* (pp. 54-58) details general information about teacher preparation requirements. The student teaching semester is offered only during fall semesters. Students are not required to have completed all other requirements prior to the student teaching semester (although there are specific requirements that must be completed prior to student teaching). Students can and often do come back to campus in the spring semester after student teaching to complete course requirements and to play a senior recital. The Visitors were able to interview four students who had recently completed student teaching. The Visitors also interviewed by phone a graduate of the RIC music program who is employed as a public school music teacher and who has worked with five or six student teachers over the past decade. In addition, she regularly has RIC students observing in her classroom. She indicated that she had been very fortunate to have students who were well-prepared, open-minded and willing to work. She reported that student strengths included piano, conducting, and vocal skills. Students also gained experience in her school in an electronic music class where students without performance backgrounds could compose and learn about the history of electronic music. She reported excellent support from the RIC coordinator of music education, who supervises the student teachers.

### **Master of Music in Music Education**

It appears that the Master of Music in Music Education meets NASM standards for a specific master's degree (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, XIV.A and XIV.E). As described on the curricular table (p. 99), the program requires 18 credits in coursework to develop advanced competencies in music education and 15 credits in fields of music outside the major area. Students in this program are certified music teachers, but it is interesting that this program also requires a performance audition. Two MME students appeared on the student recital. The final project is normally a thesis; however, performers and conductors may request to substitute a graduate recital. A comprehensive review (Oral Examination) is required.

### **Master of Arts in Teaching**

The Master of Arts in Teaching is designed primarily to provide teacher certification for students who hold already a degree in music; however, it also provides a graduate degree with almost enough graduate credits to qualify as a Specific Master's Degree (16 graduate credits in the major area and 8-10 graduate credits in other studies in music). Many of the required courses are the same courses as required for the M.M.E. In addition to the 43-45 credits listed on the curricular table (p. 101, note a typo - 54 rather than 45 credits), students in this program may have many undergraduate deficiencies to complete. This program also requires a final project (thesis or recital) and a comprehensive review.

#### **2. Study of the Transcripts of Recent Graduates and Comparison with Catalogue Statements**

Transcripts reviewed by the Visitors were carefully marked, and course substitutions or changes in the curricula were noted. No significant deviations from the degree plans were found in a review of the transcripts of recent graduates from baccalaureate or graduate programs.

#### **3. Performance**

The Visitors had the opportunity to hear a cross-section of students in the Bachelor of Music in Performance degree and in the Master of Music in Music Education degree in the student recital. No Bachelor of Arts students were presented in this recital, however, and the only Bachelor of Science in Music Education students who were featured were those also pursuing the performance option. Thus, while the level of student performance represented on this recital was generally good to very good, the recitals didn't appear to be representative of all programs. The Visitors attempted to attend lessons of students at all levels in all degree programs, and based on these observations it appeared that the level of student performance was uneven – with some outstanding performers, particularly in the performance option, and others with minimal backgrounds. Similarly, while the Visitors observed outstanding teaching, the level of engagement with students was uneven.

Thus it is not clear that all students have the technical skills requisite for artistic expression appropriate for the particular music concentration (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, VIII.B.1.a). While most observed lessons (of music education and performance option students) were at

appropriate levels, there appeared to be some music education students with minimal performance abilities. Faculty also had concerns about the level of entrance and exit performance expectations for students in the Bachelor of Arts program. The department is encouraged to develop a process to ensure that all students achieve competencies in performance appropriate to their particular music concentration.

#### **4. Music Studies for the General Public**

The *Self Study* (pp. 63-64) discusses in some detail classes offered to the non-music major. The College requires a Fine Arts component for its General Education Curriculum, and the Music Division offers multiple sections of Music Cultures of Non-Western Worlds each semester, plus the Survey of Music and History of Jazz to meet this need.

The department also serves the community with its concert offerings and opportunities to perform in town and gown ensembles. The unit administers the Wednesday Chamber Music Series, which are 50-minute recitals at 1 PM on Wednesdays in the Sapinsley Hall of the Nazarian Center. In spring semester 2007, six concerts were planned, featuring guest artists and RIC music faculty. It should be noted that a significant faculty involvement is required to plan and coordinate this guest artist series (with a reduced teaching load for one of the full-time faculty, adding to the need for adjunct teaching faculty).

#### **O. Evaluation, Planning, and Projections**

Section III of the *Self Study* details the long-term evaluation and planning done College-wide and with the department, largely in conjunction with accreditation reviews (NASM, NCATE, and state reviews). The music unit is encouraged to continue this evaluation and planning, taking advantage of the new ideas and enthusiasm of junior faculty.

#### **P. Standards Summary**

From observations in private lessons and from the student recital presented for the Visitors, it is not clear that students being admitted to the music program in all cases show aptitudes and prospects for success (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, II.H.1.b), and it is not clear that all students have the technical skills requisite for artistic expression appropriate for the particular music concentration (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, VIII.B.1.a).

It is not clear that all students in the Bachelor of Arts in Music develop “ability in performing areas at levels consistent with the goals and objectives of the specific liberal arts degree program being followed” (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, VII.D.3.a.(1)).

It is not clear how the unit gives all students in the B.M. degree “an introduction to and experience with the fundamentals of pedagogy” in the major performing medium (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.A.3.a).

It is not clear how the program provides opportunities for music education students to “arrange and adapt music from a variety of sources” (NASM *Handbook 2007-2008*, IX.I.3.b(2)).



## **Q. Overview, Summary Assessment, and Recommendations for the Program**

### **1. Strengths**

- An outstanding faculty who are personally invested in the program and in their students' success
- Excellent leadership from a highly respected assistant chair
- A collegial atmosphere and good faculty morale
- Supportive administration, very knowledgeable about the music program
- Excellent new facilities, although the program has already outgrown the space
- A student-centered atmosphere
- A highly capable departmental secretary
- Students who are engaged, earnest, and very appreciative of the supportive faculty
- Strong community outreach programs
- Pre-service opportunities for music education students to observe and teach in the public schools
- A very good reputation of the teacher preparation programs among area educators, including many graduates of RIC music programs
- Adequate campus library resources (and access to other library resources) and a good relationship with the Library Liaison to the Department
- A thorough *Self Study*
- Strong general education music course offerings by the Department

### **2. A list of recommendations for short-term improvement beyond threshold compliance with accreditation Standards**

- Identifying and recruiting potential students for the master's degree programs will be challenging, particularly since Rhode Island no longer requires a master's degree for teacher recertification and since the music unit does not have access to assistantships for prospective students. The Visitors encourage the faculty to investigate options, including more aggressive recruitment and summer workshops.

- The Visitors caution the music unit to consider resource questions when considering whether to offer one graduate program (M.M.) with multiple tracks as a solution to the Rhode Island Office of Higher Education enrollment concerns.
  - The Visitors agree that adding an audition for the Bachelor of Arts program would help to raise standards. If this is not an option, the faculty might consider raising standards for successful completion of the Freshman Applied Jury, which is currently required for continuation in the major.
  - Given the generous allocation of campus performance and rehearsal space to community and educational organizations, it might be possible to negotiate with those organizations some in-kind support, such as notices of upcoming concerts in programs to help to compensate for the reduction in the music unit's publicity budget.
  - Visitors wish to encourage the development of a procedure by which more consistent mentoring of adjunct instruction can be accomplished.
- 3. An indication of the primary futures issues facing the music unit, perhaps including, but always going beyond, finances**
- Dealing with the growth in student population and the resulting pressures on facilities will continue to challenge the Department. If the unit continues to enroll students at current numbers, it needs to find a solution to the limited access to practice rooms for students.
  - Along with this space issue is the concern about quality of pianos. While the lease arrangement appears to be providing an appropriate number of pianos, the concern is the quality and the stability of tuning. Finding resources to purchase pianos, particularly quality practice grand pianos, would be a better long-term solution.
- 4. Constructive suggestions for long-term development during the projected accreditation period, based on the observations contained in the Visitors' Report**
- While the Visitors agree that the music unit is fortunate to have many highly qualified adjunct instructors available to teach classes and lessons, it encourages the department to develop some common understandings of objectives, particularly for applied music. To ensure community, it might be helpful to have greater involvement of full-time faculty with the part-time adjunct faculty, ensuring that adjunct faculty receive appropriate mentoring and performance review.
  - The unit is urged to continue to seek external funds and to make the case for additional institutional support (facilities costs, publicity, recruitment) as the transition to a decentralized budgeting process is finalized.

Solfeggietto..... Bach  
Scotland Sunrise..... Bober

**Nadia Sedgley**

Prelude in C..... Bach  
Beboppin' Tonight..... Costley

**Daniel Miele**

Cuban Nights..... Olson  
Ballade..... Burgmuller

**Grady Martin**

The Prayer..... Beyer-Sager  
When the Sun Rises..... Faber

**Katie Thompson**

Rondo a la Turk..... Mozart  
Golliwog Cakewalk..... Debussy

**Joe Zavota**

Concerto in E flat No. 2, *Allegro*..... Mozart

**Abraham Owen**

Concerto in E flat No. 4, *Rondo*..... Mozart

**Benjamin Franzblau**