

# Bachelor of Music Therapy Program

Information and Application Package



**CAPILANO**  
UNIVERSITY

Dear Prospective Applicant,

Thank you for your interest in the Bachelor of Music Therapy Program at Capilano University. I have designed this package of information to guide you through the process of making your decision to apply to the program and prepare for the audition and interview.

Capilano University offers the longest running Canadian Music Therapy education program. Of the six Canadian training programs, Capilano offers you the largest permanent faculty of music therapists, which allows a diverse and rich learning environment.

Music therapy education at Capilano University has been designed to offer a balance between theory and practice. We focus on both didactic and experiential learning. Music therapy is a very rewarding profession. It can also be a challenging one. Life experience and emotional maturity are important qualities. In our admissions procedures, we emphasize "readiness". We advise you to acquire some experience in your community as a volunteer, within clinical or preventative settings, before applying to the program.

You are welcome to complete the first two years at a college or university of your choice if it offers transferable credits. Page 8 of this package, the Prerequisite Worksheet, lists the courses needed for these two years. Capilano University offers these courses through programs in the School of Performing Arts. If you are interested in doing the first two years at Capilano University, you will need to apply to the [Diploma in Music program](#) (classical) or the [Jazz Studies program](#). Information on these admission requirements is available on the Capilano University website. Be sure to mention that you hope to continue your studies in your third and fourth year by transferring to Music Therapy. Admission from these programs into the third year of the Music Therapy program is not automatic.

If you have questions after reading through this package, please reach out to me by phone (604-986-1911, local 2307) or by email at [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca).

Sincerely,  
Susan Summers, PhD, AVPT, MTA  
Program Coordinator  
Bachelor of Music Therapy Program

Revised July 2026

Capilano University is named after Chief Joe Capilano (1854–1910), an important leader of the Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish) Nation of the Coast Salish Peoples. We respectfully acknowledge that our campuses are located on the unceded territories of the səliłwətał (Tseil-Waututh), shíshálh (Sechelt), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) Nations

There are several ways to contact us:

Telephone: 604-986-1911 Local 2307

Email: [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca)

Address: The Coordinator  
Music Therapy Program  
Capilano University  
2055 Purcell Way  
North Vancouver, BC  
Canada V7J 3H5

**Submission deadline each year: March 15**

Where this date falls on a weekend, the following Monday will be an acceptable submission date.

## Information about the Profession of Music Therapy

### What is Music Therapy?

The Canadian Association of Music Therapists defines music therapy as “a discipline in which Certified Music Therapists (MTAs) use music purposefully within therapeutic relationships to support development, health, and well-being. Music therapists use music safely and ethically to address human needs within cognitive, communicative, emotional, musical, physical, social, and spiritual domains.

### The Profession

Music therapists are employed in hospitals, clinics, long-term care homes, schools, community organizations, and private practices. They work with clients of all ages, with physical and psychological challenges, and on a group or individual basis. As an integral part of a treatment team, music therapists assess client’s needs and abilities, set treatment goals, design, and implement programs, and evaluate and report on client progress.

### The Program

Capilano University initiated music therapy training in Canada in 1976 and at present, there are six training programs in the country. The Bachelor of Music Therapy program at Capilano offers the third and fourth years, as well as pre-professional practicum (formerly known as the internship), leading to the Bachelor of Music Therapy degree. This degree program is designed so that students may enter third year with a variety of backgrounds: music, general arts, education, nursing, etc. You are welcome to complete all four and a half years at Capilano University.

This program provides students with the opportunity to gain knowledge and develop competencies in such areas as music therapy practice, clinical disorders, assessment, planning and intervention, improvisation and music of many eras and cultures, interpersonal and counselling skills, group dynamics, basic research, and documentation. Students also develop competencies in communication, music, teamwork, therapeutic skills, professionalism, knowledge of human growth and development, critical thinking, and theoretical foundations.



Students learn to integrate a variety of music therapy styles with a focus on the interactive qualities between the clients, the therapist, and the music. There is a strong emphasis on

the combination of practice and theory as well as upon creativity and therapist self-awareness.

The program blends academic and experiential course work. Students deepen their experience of music, creative expression, and the role of the arts. They are encouraged to explore their values, beliefs, feelings, and communication patterns, to increase their effectiveness in the field. Each of the four terms includes a unique field trip or practicum where students are given increasing responsibility to design, implement and evaluate their own client treatment programs, under clinical supervision.

Continuance in the Bachelor of Music Therapy program will be contingent upon an adequate level of personal, academic, and clinical skills as jointly evaluated each term by the music therapy faculty. Music therapy is a helping profession in which music therapists work with clients who are in a state of disability. In the therapist-client relationship there is an assumption that the therapist is in a well enough state of health and well-being to mediate client difficulties with an appropriate clinical approach. In other words, the therapist must function in clinically suitable ways, be emotionally stable, and able to respond generally vis-à-vis the client's needs.



The therapist is the helper. The role of the Bachelor of Music Therapy program, in addition to student education, is to safeguard the standards of practice of the professional music therapy community through monitoring student readiness to work with members of the community-at-large who are at risk because of disability, disease, cultural and social deprivation, and otherwise disadvantaged. Safety of clients is essential.

### **Music Therapy Program Philosophy**

The program faculty believes in the profound capacity of music to be transformative. We believe in the unique value of each human being and in their innate abilities to grow, to become self-aware and to be resourceful. In this program, we believe the development of these capabilities is best facilitated in a mutually respectful, creative environment in which the student is encouraged, inspired and challenged. We include traditional and transpersonal perspectives while grounding them in the unique context of music therapy.

## Bachelor of Music Therapy Program Content

For a full listing of course descriptions, please [visit the courses tab](#) on the program website.

| <b>Third year – First term</b><br>September – December |                                           |      |
|--------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| MT320                                                  | Improvisation 1                           | 1.5  |
| MT330                                                  | Clinical Skills                           | 3.0  |
| MT350                                                  | The Influence of Music                    | 3.0  |
| MT360                                                  | Music Therapy I                           | 3.0  |
| MT364                                                  | Health Conditions of Adulthood            | 3.0  |
| MT380                                                  | Intro to Counselling Skills               | 1.5  |
| PMI                                                    | Private Music Instruction – Concentration | 2.0  |
| PMI                                                    | Private Music Instruction – Secondary     | 1.0  |
|                                                        |                                           | 18.0 |

| <b>Fourth Year - First term</b><br>September – December |                                           |      |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| MT 420                                                  | Improvisation III                         | 1.0  |
| MT450                                                   | Music and the Creative Arts I             | 1.5  |
| MT460                                                   | Music Therapy III                         | 3.0  |
| MT490                                                   | Practicum II                              | 4.0  |
| PSYC301                                                 | Group Dynamics                            | 3.0  |
| PMI                                                     | Private Music Instruction – Concentration | 2.0  |
| PMI                                                     | Private Music Instruction – Secondary     | 1.0  |
|                                                         |                                           | 15.5 |

| <b>Third year – Second term</b><br>January – April |                                           |      |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| MT361                                              | Music Therapy II                          | 3.0  |
| MT370                                              | Health Conditions of Childhood            | 1.5  |
| MT391                                              | Practicum I                               | 4.0  |
| MT321                                              | Improvisation II                          | 1.5  |
| PSYC222                                            | Introduction to Psychopathology           | 3.0  |
| PMI                                                | Private Music Instruction – Concentration | 2.0  |
| PMI                                                | Private Music Instruction – Secondary     | 1.0  |
|                                                    |                                           | 16.0 |

| <b>Fourth Year – Second Term</b><br>January – April |                                           |      |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|------|
| MT451                                               | Music and the Creative Arts II            | 1.5  |
| MT461                                               | Music Therapy IV                          | 3.0  |
| MT462                                               | Principles of Research                    | 3.0  |
| MT491                                               | Practicum III                             | 4.0  |
| PMI                                                 | Private Music Instruction – Concentration | 2.0  |
| PMI                                                 | Private Music Instruction – Secondary     | 1.0  |
|                                                     |                                           | 14.5 |

| <b>Post Basic Requirements</b> |                            |    |
|--------------------------------|----------------------------|----|
| MT511                          | Pre-professional practicum | 15 |

Total program credits: 79.0  
Total degree credits: 121

## Program Faculty

[Susan Summers](#), PhD (Antioch), MMT (BC Open University), dipMT (Cap) BPE and BEd (Calgary), AVPT, MTA; Instructs courses, practicum and Private Music Instruction voice. Susan is a Certified Music Therapist who has worked for over thirty years with older adults in long-term care and end-of-life care.

[Kiki Chang](#), PhD Candidate (York), MA (Concordia), MEd (Toronto), RP, MTA. Instructs courses and practicum. Kiki is a Certified Music Therapist who has worked in long-term care, in hospital settings, and with children.

[Carolyn Neapole](#), MA (Concordia), BMT (Capilano U), AVPT, SEP, MTA. Instructs courses, practicum and internship. Carolyn is a performer and Certified Music Therapist working with a variety of mental health and acute care populations.

[Sheila Lee](#), MA (Victoria), BMT (Capilano), BA (UBC), MTA. Instructs courses and practicums. Sheila is a Certified Music Therapist and counsellor working with children in hospital and community settings.

[Sue Baines](#), PhD (Limerick), MA (NYU), BMT (Laurier), BMus, FAMI, MTA. Instructs MT420 and Private Music Instruction piano. Sue is a performer, researcher and a Certified Music Therapist in community practice.

[Kerry Burke](#), BA (Antioch), Dip.MT, MTA. Instructs MT320. Kerry is a Certified Music Therapist who has worked with children in community settings for over forty years.

[Dikla \(Dee\) Barer](#), BHK (UBC), MScPT (Queen's). Instructs MT364, the health conditions of adulthood. Dee is a physiotherapist in clinical practice.

[Emily Teng](#), MMT (Nordoff-Robbins, London), BMus, MTA. Instructs Private Music Instruction piano. Emily is a music therapist working with a variety of clients in contractual practice.

[Eric Hadley](#), MC (City University), BMT (Capilano U), RCC, MTA. Instructs MT361 and Private Music Instruction guitar. Eric is a Certified Music Therapist who has worked with children, youth, adults and older adults in care.

[Ian Fildes](#), BMT (Capilano), MTA. Ian instructs Private Music Instruction guitar. Ian is a Certified Music Therapist who works with adults, youth, children, and people with mental health and addiction challenges.

[Amber Tarling](#), BMT (Capilano U), MTA, ARCT. Amber instructs Private Music Instruction voice. Amber is a Certified Music Therapist and voice/piano teacher who works with children and adults.

[Camilla Schroeder](#), BMT (Capilano U), MTA. Instructs Private Music Instruction guitar. Camilla is a performer and Certified Music Therapist working with older adults in long-term care, oncology and palliative care.

[Dana Bernier](#), B.H.Ecol (Manitoba), BSc (honours) (Manitoba), MA (Manitoba), PhD (Waterloo). Developmental Psychologist. Co-instructs the Research course.

[Louise Cournoyer](#), PsyD. (Sherbrooke), Med (UBC) MA Counselling Psychology (SFU). Psychology instructor Co-instructs the Research course and teaches the Psychopathology and Group dynamics courses.

## Information about Capilano University

The music therapy program is situated on the main university campus in North Vancouver. While Capilano University has regional campuses, the main campus is in North Vancouver. Capilano University has earned an international reputation for quality teaching, programs, and services.

The University has the equivalent of over 10,000 full-time students, which makes it a mid-sized university. Students of all ages and a variety of cultural backgrounds find there are a variety of degree and career-ready programs. Capilano became a teaching university in 2008, with 50 years of educating students as a community college, with an emphasis on employment-related programs.



The North Vancouver campus has a natural and beautiful environment all year round. When you visit here, you will be impressed with the natural beauty of the North Vancouver campus. A walking tour of the campus takes less than 15 minutes.

The music therapy program is housed with other music programs in the first two floors of Fir building.



The mission of Capilano University is to enable student success. You will find a variety of student services available to students, including a Learning Commons, Counselling Department, Writing Centre, Accessibility Services, Centre for International Experience, Learning Specialist, full-service Library and Indigenous Student Services. Other services include a Child Care Centre, Athletics, and Recreation.

At Capilano University, students are safe, comfortable, and challenged, and find the individual attention that can make a difference to their professional and personal achievements. It is our goal to ensure that our students come first — not only at Capilano University, but also in all their pursuits.

### Prerequisite Worksheet: Basis of Admission Courses

| Prerequisite Course                         | Credits | Capilano U Course Number                                                                                                                                    |
|---------------------------------------------|---------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| English: Academic Writing                   | 3       | ENGL 100                                                                                                                                                    |
| English Literature                          | 3       | A second ENGL 100 level course                                                                                                                              |
| Intro Psychology I                          | 3       | PSYC 100                                                                                                                                                    |
| Intro Psychology II                         | 3       | PSYC 101                                                                                                                                                    |
| Psyc Elective (200+ level) <sup>1</sup>     | 6       | 2 PSYC courses 200 level or higher                                                                                                                          |
| <a href="#">Science and Technology</a>      | 3       | Ex. BIOL 104 or 112, EDUC 240, KINE courses, PHIL 110. See note below                                                                                       |
| Music courses                               | 12      | Can be any music course 100 level or higher, aiming to have a variety of courses that address music reading, music theory, ear training, and music history. |
| Humanities/Social Science/General electives | 9       | Can be MUS/PMI/ENSM/JAZZ courses or other electives                                                                                                         |

**Please note:** Refer to the [courses tab of the program website](#) for course names and options, and the [BC Transfer Guide](#) for pre-approved transfer credit.

<sup>1</sup> Exclusions include Psyc 222: Psychopathology, Psyc 301: Group Dynamics, and Psyc 212 or 213: Research as they are offered in the Music Therapy program, so they can't be used to satisfy the Psychology Elective Requirement.

<sup>2</sup> A variety of Biology, Math or Science courses can be used to meet this requirement; Consult the [Science and Technology Cap Core listing](#) for specific CapU courses.

After you've consulted the BC Transfer Guide, the Program Coordinator can informally answer questions about the prerequisite courses; the formal transfer credit process takes place through the CapU Registrar's Office after you've been accepted to the program.

## Application Portfolio for Entry into the Third Year

In advance of the March 15<sup>th</sup> application deadline:

- Complete an online application through the [How to Apply page](#).
- Upload official transcripts of your college or university coursework with your online application. In most cases, your final grades may not yet be completed; please plan for a few weeks for transcript delivery and processing.

Note: if you are already a Capilano University student we have your high school transcript and Cap U student record on file.

Send your Application Portfolio with the following components:

- **2 letters of reference** addressing personal and academic suitability.  
The reference letters can be someone who can speak to your character and your suitability for this program, such as previous teachers, community service, music therapist, or supervisors of volunteer service. *Please have the person writing your reference letter email it directly to the coordinator at:* [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca)

Send the following portfolio items via email to [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca). Please ensure all documents are in **PDF** format.

- **Current resume**, including your education, work history, volunteer history, and anything that relates to your experience and skills
- Complete the **music therapy program application** form which is on our webpage or is available from the Coordinator at [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca)
- **1,000-word “Life History” essay** including personal, familial, and cultural aspects, also including history of health or emotional difficulties, any other challenges you have experienced, and how you have worked with them.
- **500-word essay on “Why I wish to become a music therapist”.**

Alternately, the portfolio or reference letters can be mailed to:

The Coordinator, Music Therapy Program  
Capilano University  
2055 Purcell Way  
North Vancouver, BC V7J 3H5

**Submission Deadline each year:** March 15

Where this date falls on a weekend, the following Monday would be an acceptable submission date.

Refer to page 11 for information on scheduling an interview-audition.

## **Tips for Preparing the Application Portfolio**

1. **Application Form:**  
We prefer that you apply online well ahead of the program Application Portfolio deadline. Please submit the separate music therapy application form as well as the overall CapU application form.
2. **Official Transcripts:**  
Request/send your official transcripts to the Registrar, Capilano University, even if your final grades are not yet completed. After your acceptance to third year, a finalized transcript can be ordered.
3. **Letters of Reference:**  
Ask your references to write a current letter of recommendation outlining your strengths and areas you continue to work on. Ideally, you will not see this letter. The reference can either send the sealed letter to the Music Therapy Program Coordinator or give them to you to include in your portfolio. The referee can also email the letter as a pdf with a handwritten signature, directly to the program coordinator.
4. **Resume:**  
A standard format resume is acceptable and may outline academic history, employment, volunteer history, etc. and any other elements that represent who you are.
5. **“Life History” Essay:**  
This is your opportunity to tell us about your life, your family, any challenges you have had, and any health or emotional difficulties you have experienced and how you dealt with them. While you don’t need to have a challenged life to be a therapist, how you’ve dealt with personal challenges informs the interviewers about your character, personal resources and self-awareness.
6. **“Why I wish to become a Music Therapist” Essay:**  
Write about your motivation, interest, and desire to be a music therapist.
7. **Portfolio Format:**  
Portfolios will be assessed on their content. It is not necessary to prepare a decorative folder with individualized plastic sleeves or index pages



## Interview and Audition

An interview and audition appointment is made by contacting the School of Allied Health at 604-986-1911 local 3069 or [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca). Applicants will participate in a mid-February interview/audition or late April or early May. Appointments are generally one hour and involve the elements listed below.

### 1. Audition:

- a) Applicants will be asked to perform two pieces of music that offer contrasting emotions on their primary instrument demonstrating technique and expressiveness. If an additional instrument is played, one short piece may be included. If an accompanist is required, please make your own arrangements.
- b) Applicants will be asked to demonstrate piano skills if piano is not their primary instrument. Any genre of music is suitable.
- c) Applicants will be asked to demonstrate guitar and voice skills. Typically, a folk or children's song works well although a song from any genre of music is suitable.

### 2. Ear Training Assessment:

Applicants will be assessed for practical ear training (for example, singing back a simple phrase that has been played on the piano).

### 3. Review of Prerequisite Courses and Academic History:

The interview team will review your academic history.

### 4. Personal interview:

Applicants will be asked about their family history, their "Life History" essay and other elements that assess suitability for entry to the program. Selection criteria used for the audition-interview can be found on the following page.

Note: In some cases, virtual interviews may be acceptable as well as video replacements for in-person auditions. Please consult with the Program Coordinator regarding this option.

## **Selection Criteria**

Admission decisions will be based on the portfolio, audition, and interview. Applicants will be assessed on the following criteria:

- Musicality on primary instrument, piano, guitar, and voice;
- Self-Awareness and insight;
- Emotional maturity;
- Strong communication skills (verbal, written and comprehension);
- Strong social skills;
- Good academic history;
- Readiness to enter a therapy-education program; and
- Completion of prerequisite courses.

Admission to the Bachelor of Music Therapy program is competitive.

Decisions are normally made after the February interviews/auditions and in mid-May after the second round of interviews/auditions. Letters indicating acceptance or non-acceptance will be sent by email from the Registrar's Office.

## **Observing a Music Therapist**

As part of making your decision to enter the Capilano University program we strongly recommend that you observe or job-shadow a music therapist working with clients prior to the audition-interview. Not all music therapists work in situations where you would be able to observe.

If you are in BC, you can contact the Music Therapy Association of BC (MTABC) for names of music therapists who you may observe: [info@mtabc.com](mailto:info@mtabc.com). Include information about yourself, days you are available and your geographic location.

If you are outside of BC, please contact the Canadian Association of Music Therapists for information on provincial associations that can assist you: [camt@musictherapy.ca](mailto:camt@musictherapy.ca) or 1-800-996-2268.

If you are outside of Canada, please check for your national music therapy association.

## **A Note to Applicants**

The faculty of the Bachelor of Music Therapy program encourage applicants from a wide variety of backgrounds and cultures. For any number of reasons, including culture and family style, some applicants find the application and audition-interview process challenging. The following information may be helpful in making your decision to apply and in preparing your application.

The program values include self-exploration, growth and transformation, holistic and multicultural perspective, life-long learning, resourcefulness, flexibility, open-mindedness, creativity, spontaneity, balance, and a good deal of heart.

During the interview portion of the audition, two music therapy faculty members will talk with you about your life, your family of origin, and any challenges that you may have experienced. The faculty recognize you might be nervous. They also recognize that talking about your family or your life difficulties to strangers may be very uncomfortable and unfamiliar - in many cases is culturally challenging. If you have concerns about this, you are encouraged to talk to the Program Coordinator well ahead of the audition-interview.

The faculty are also aware that talking about or showing emotion is unfamiliar to some people and some cultural backgrounds. The questions in the interview will be sensitive to your background but please know that the elements of emotion and self-disclosure are important parts of being a music therapist, from our perspective. The interview portion is partly to assess how you would fit into this particular program, how you would fit with the other students, how you would respond to the experiential exercises that are offered in some of the classes and your overall suitability to our approach to music therapy education.

If you have any questions about the application process or the interview and audition, you are encouraged to talk with the Program Coordinator. When you have arranged to meet with the Program Coordinator, you are very welcome to bring along a family member or a friend.



## **Music Therapy Program Information Meetings**

The Bachelor of Music Therapy Program faculty offer information meetings a few times a year, both in-person and virtual. The meeting covers information about the profession of music therapy, the prerequisite courses to enter the program, the audition-interview, and an overview of the curriculum in third and fourth year. We also cover where music therapists are working in Metro Vancouver, and how new graduates create and obtain work. For information on the dates and times of the Information Meetings, please check the music therapy program page. You may also attend in person [Explore CapU](#) which is annual event.

## **Meeting with the Program Coordinator**

Please know the Program Coordinator is available to answer any questions you have about the program and the profession. If you live locally, you are welcome to set up a meeting on the North Vancouver campus with the Program Coordinator. For those that live farther away, you are welcome to have your questions answered through a telephone or zoom conversation.

## **Music Therapy Program Website**

Please refer to the [Bachelor of Music Therapy](#) website. If you are not finding the information you are looking for on the program website, please contact the Program coordinator directly at [mtherapy@capilanou.ca](mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca) or call 604-986-1911 local 2307.

## **Additional Online Resources**



[Music Therapy program YouTube Channel](#)



[Music Therapy program Facebook](#)



[Music Therapy program Instagram](#)

## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q. How long does it take to complete the degree?**

**A.** The prerequisite courses usually take two years of full-time study. Once accepted into the music therapy program, there are two more years of full-time study – 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year. The pre-professional practicum (formerly known as the internship) usually takes from 6 to 10 months depending on the number of days a week. The full degree is approximately 4.5-5 years.

**Q. Are there summer courses or may I start the program in January?**

**A.** No. The program operates on a September through April calendar, with a break in December. We close for June and July; the Program Coordinator and faculty will be less available during this time.

**Q. I am missing one or two prerequisite courses; can I apply before the March 15 with the intention to take those courses during the summer?**

**A.** Yes, certainly. It is beneficial to have a plan for obtaining the missing prerequisites when you arrive for the interview-audition.

**Q. How can I ensure a prerequisite course will be accepted and transfer to Capilano?**

**A.** Check the [BC Transfer Guide](#). For questions not answered through the guide, you can send specific course questions to the Admissions dept at CapU. The coordinator is not able to advise or pre-approve transfer credit, as this is a formal process that occurs through the Registrar's Office once you have been accepted to the music therapy program.

**Q. How much does the program cost?**

**A.** Check the "[Tuition Tab](#)" of our program website for current tuition and fees

**Q. Do I need a "Criminal Record Check" for entry to the program?**

**A.** Yes, but not prior to the interview/audition. Instructions on the process of obtaining a Criminal Record Check will be included in an acceptance package and will be completed in early September.

**Q. Are immunizations required for this program?**

**A.** Yes. Since music therapy is a health care program, and you would be in practicums with vulnerable adults and children, a variety of immunizations are required before you can register for the first practicum that is offered in the second semester, including the annual flu shot. The immunization for COVID-19 and annual flu vaccine is a program requirement if it is required by the Ministry of Health or by individual long-term-care and hospital sites.

**Q. How do I find out more information on the job market in BC?**

**A.** For information on the career and employment market in British Columbia contact the [Music Therapy Association of British Columbia](#), and in the rest of Canada by contacting the [Canadian Association of Music Therapists](#).

**Q. How do I find out about other programs in Canada and the U.S.A?**

**A.** For further information on Music Therapy contact:

**Canadian Association of Music Therapists (CAMT)**

PO Box 103,  
Hensall, ON NOM 1X0 [www.musictherapy.ca](http://www.musictherapy.ca)

**American Music Therapy Association (AMTA)**

8455 Colesville Rd, Suite 1000 301-589-3300  
Silver Springs, MD 20910 U.S.A. <https://www.musictherapy.org/>



## **The Guitar and Music Therapy**

### **Playing the guitar in preparation for auditioning to Music Therapy program:**

- Be able to strum with the right hand - basic strum in 4/4 and 3/4
- Be able to do two basic chord progressions in the keys of D, G and A major:  
All suggested keys: I IV I V<sup>7</sup> I IV V<sup>7</sup> I  
For the key of G only: I vi ii V<sup>7</sup> I
- Be able to sing and play the guitar while maintaining eye contact.

### **Buying a guitar:**

For music therapy, you will need a steel, six string, acoustic guitar that fits your body and is easy to play. Since the guitar is used with clients, we recommend a mid-range, good quality instrument. If you're buying a guitar, our instructors recommend Seagull brand or Simon & Patrick folk cedar "woodland" style guitars as they are Canadian made, very good quality and moderately priced.

Other types of guitars are acceptable. For example, Taylor makes several smaller guitars as does Martin. Be sure to ask the sales representative to check the guitar size is a fit for you (neck size fits your hand; body of guitar fits for seated playing).

The Vancouver area store that is used to selling Seagull and Simon & Patrick guitars to Music Therapy students is Long and McQuade in North Vancouver.

### **Other purchases for the guitar:**

- Guitar strap - preferably a wide one to distribute the weight across your shoulders. Fabric style straps are easier to adjust while leather ones are typically wider and more difficult to adjust;
- Soft Guitar case rather than a hard case - a hard case weighs three times as much as the guitar and carrying it can cause injury to overworked wrists. Do not be deceived by inexpensive soft cases – you need padding for protection, including rain protection;
- Guitar strings - come in a variety of brands and styles. The beginner guitar player is encouraged to buy medium-light gauge good quality silk-wound strings for comfort and to decrease risk of injury;
- Capo – buy either a screw type or clamp type – the stretch capos are difficult to adjust;
- Tuner – learn to use a battery tuner that you clip to the headstock; and
- Metronome – purchase a good quality metronome or download one for your device.

### **Protecting your guitar:**

- Do not leave your guitar unattended in a car - thefts from cars in the Vancouver area are common and a guitar left in a car is risky;
- Do not leave your guitar in the hot sun or in the trunk of a car on a sunny day as the glue loosens, the neck may shift out of position, and then resets when the temperature drops;
- Do not play your guitar in the hot sun as it can ruin the finish; and
- If your guitar gets cold, open the case a bit to let it warm up slowly or it can ruin the finish.

### **Learning and Practicing:**

You may be the type of person who learns well through lessons, or you may see it as an instrument that you can learn on your own. Either way is fine. Please consider your posture when practicing the guitar – practice in front of a mirror rather than hunching over to see your chord hand.

- Practice 5 – 10 minutes twice a day in the beginner stage;
- Begin playing in a seated position in a hard chair and do not lean on the back of the chair;
- Do not practice through pain – rest if your fingers, arms, or neck hurts. Consider consulting a guitar teacher regarding hand position and ergonomics;
- As the guitar becomes more familiar, vary your practice style – use the guitar strap and practice standing up; and
- Be very aware of pain, tingling or discomfort – these may be signs that you should stop playing and rest for a few days. If pain persists, consult a health care professional.



## The Piano and Music Therapy

Information for non-piano majors

### Playing the piano in preparation for starting the Music Therapy program:

- Be able to play a melody with the right hand and a bass line/pattern with the left (right/left hand independence).
- Be able to locate chords with either hand - basic chords (I, IV, V and vi) in the keys of C, D, F, G and B flat.
- Be able to sing and play the piano simultaneously.

### Playing level for entry to third year:

- The follow segment demonstrates a basic level of playing that you should have prior to beginning the music therapy program in September.



The next page gives other examples of the functional technical level of playing that is required for entry to third year. Any genre of music style is acceptable, although a focus on geriatric, folk and children's songs would be an asset. Be able to sing and accompany yourself with chords on the piano. Do not include songs or repertoire that could be considered oppressive.

Aft - er the ball is ov - er,

Aft - er the break of morn,

After The Ball Is Over  
Charles K. Harris

*mf* *p*

Allegretto in F  
J. B. Wanhal

## The Voice and Music Therapy (Information for non-voice majors)

### Singing in preparation for starting the Music Therapy program:

- Be able to sing a major scale accurately ascending and descending, ideally without accompaniment (acapella)
- Knowing both the lowest and highest note you can sing is helpful (your “vocal range”)
- Be able to breathe from the diaphragm/belly (see this [video](#) for how to take an expanded breath)
- Be able to sing and play the piano and guitar simultaneously
- Be able to sing back (match) intervals either sung or played on the piano

### Singing level example for entry to third year:

Oh, give me a home where the buf - fa - lo roam, where the

5 deer and the an - te - lope play. Where

9 sel - dom is heard a dis - cour - ag - ing - word, and the

13 skies are not cloud - y all day.

### **Learning and Practicing at home:**

1. Have a loose body. Align your knees over your toes, your shoulders over your knees, and your ears over your shoulders. Your neck should be aligned with your spine.
2. Warm up gradually. Humming, bubbling, and sighing are all non-invasive techniques that allow you to warm up your vocal folds and release any tension. There are many Youtube videos available for helping with vocal warm-ups. [Kathleen Hansen](#) offers some fantastic warm-ups and vocal exercises while focusing on vocal health.
3. Find songs you enjoy singing that work in your vocal range. Finding a singer who sings in your vocal range can be helpful.
4. Evaluate yourself by recording and listening back. Are you connected to the lyrics? Are you clearly articulating the words? Can you follow the shape of the melody smoothly? Are you connecting with the rhythm of the song? Music therapists use music as a bridge to connect with others and therefore need to know how to make music without performing or “being perfect.”
5. Stop before straining; resume later. Aim for 3-5days/week for 15–30 min, depending on your level of experience.

### **Tips for Good Vocal Health**

- Drink plenty of water to keep your vocal cords hydrated
- Warm up your voice before singing or speaking for long periods
- Avoid yelling, screaming, or speaking over loud noise
- Get enough sleep to help your body and voice recover
- Use good posture to support healthy breathing and sound production
- Breathe from your diaphragm instead of shallow chest breathing
- Avoid smoking and limit caffeine and alcohol because they can dry out your throat
- Avoid clearing your throat too often; sip water or swallow instead
- Wash your hands and avoid sharing drinks to reduce illness
- Manage allergies, colds, and acid reflux, since they can affect the voice
- Humidify dry air when possible
- Listen to your body — pain or hoarseness is a sign to stop and rest

**\*\*** When singing with the guitar and the piano, keep your posture strong and aligned. Consider recording yourself or using a mirror to gain more self-awareness.



Everyone has a voice and has sung before coming to the music therapy program!  
You may have had formal training or lessons (classical, jazz, etc.) or you may not have.  
There is no one right way to learn to sing safely and appropriately for you!

## Ear Training and Music Therapy

Successful Music Therapists have a keen ear for pitch, tuning, harmonic progressions, chord recognition, and the ability to sing in tune. While the prerequisite Ear Training, Sight Singing and Theory courses teach this material, not all students complete the courses with the necessary practical ability.

To do well in the Music Therapy program, you will need to have the following skills:

- Finding the starting note to a song
- Sing a melody unaccompanied
- Singing on key

If you believe you have difficulty with any of these skills, you are encouraged to work with a teacher or mentor prior to the audition-interview. A conversation with the program coordinator well in advance of the audition-interview, in terms of resources and supports, may also be helpful.



## Examples of Alumni Clinical Work

A few of our grads work at medical rehabilitation centres and hospitals working particularly with children who have brain injury and adolescents who have spinal cord injury. Many of our grads work in facilities for children with autism working individually with young children who have severe difficulty communicating and relating yet they respond remarkably to music and the therapy services offered by the music therapists.

One of our grads works at a women's hospital working alongside women who are pregnant. The music therapist offers relaxation services and even works in the delivery room for at-risk procedures. Other music therapists work with women and families in shelters for traumatized women.

Two of our grads work at an inner-city centre with people who have AIDS, mental health difficulties, and drug misuse problems. The participants at the centre often prefer expressing through music than through words.

One of our grads worked at a Native Health Centre in the Health Promotion branch assisting First Nations participants to use their healing practices along with music as a therapy for expression, community, and health.

A number of our grads work in a hospital setting facilitating music therapy groups and individual sessions in a psychiatric ward. Some of those grads also work in the palliative care ward and eating disorders unit in the same hospital.

One of our grads works in a women's prison assisting clients with adjustment, family and life issues through music therapy sessions. One of our alumni has created work within the LGBTQIA2S+ community.

A number of our grads work at children's hospitals with at-risk psychiatric teens. The teens work on social, expressive, and coping themes through music therapy.

Many of our grads work with seniors who have Alzheimer's disease or other dementias, assisting the clients in social and expressive goals in groups and individual session, calming anxious clients through music, and with decreasing staff stress through monthly relaxation groups.

Many of our grads own their own business, employing other music therapists. Their team works with infants, children with developmental challenges, adolescents in the school system, adults in mental health, palliative settings, and with the elderly in long-term care.

If you have any questions about employment for music therapists, feel free to contact:

|                                           |                                                                  |
|-------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Canadian Association of Music Therapists: | <a href="http://www.musictherapy.ca">www.musictherapy.ca</a>     |
| Music Therapy Association of BC:          | <a href="http://www.mtabc.com">www.mtabc.com</a>                 |
| Music Therapy Program Coordinator:        | <a href="mailto:mtherapy@capilanou.ca">mtherapy@capilanou.ca</a> |