

NEWS RELEASE

Wilfrid Laurier
University



Laurier to launch Canada's first master of music therapy program *Advanced degree will focus on using music as means of helping people with special needs*

For Immediate Release

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WATERLOO – Wilfrid Laurier University will be launching Canada's first full-time master of music therapy (MMT) program for practitioners, teachers and researchers of music therapy. The University senate and Ontario Council on Graduate Studies have granted final approval and the first candidates will be admitted in September 2002.

Music therapy involves the clinical use of music as a therapeutic intervention for people with special needs. It is used as an alternative to conventional medicine and has proven successful with sensory-impaired children, developmentally delayed children and adults, adolescents with emotional disorders, autistic children and people with Down Syndrome.

"More and more people are realizing the benefits of alternative forms of health care, such as music therapy," explains Charles Morrison, dean of the faculty of music. "Laurier's undergraduate program is one of only four music therapy program in the country – and the only institution with an on-campus music therapy clinic – so it is only natural for us to create a graduate program that will allow therapists to further their research skills and pursue advanced clinical training."

Only about a dozen undergraduate music students are admitted to the honours bachelor of music therapy (BMT) program following their second year of study. Entry is based on musicianship, standing in required psychology courses and perceived empathy.

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The new MMT program, which is also the faculty of music's first graduate program, will admit only four to six students in each of two annual streams. A one-year program for students who already hold an honours BMT will begin in 2002. A two-year program will be added in 2003 for students with degrees in other disciplines who meet the academic and music performance admission requirements.

Laurier expects demand for the MMT program will be significant. The program has been just a rumour for the past two years, but has already generated 50 to 60 inquiries.