



The MIT Rambax Senegalese Drum Ensemble, led by Director Lamine Touré, performs at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum in Boston.

A New Home for Music at MIT

“MIT students tell us again and again that music is absolutely vital to their fulfillment and growth. Music teaches them the purest, most practical kind of creativity and collaboration. It grounds tomorrow’s technologists in humanity’s deepest values. And, on a campus with a vast range of cultures, music gives us all a way to understand each other.”

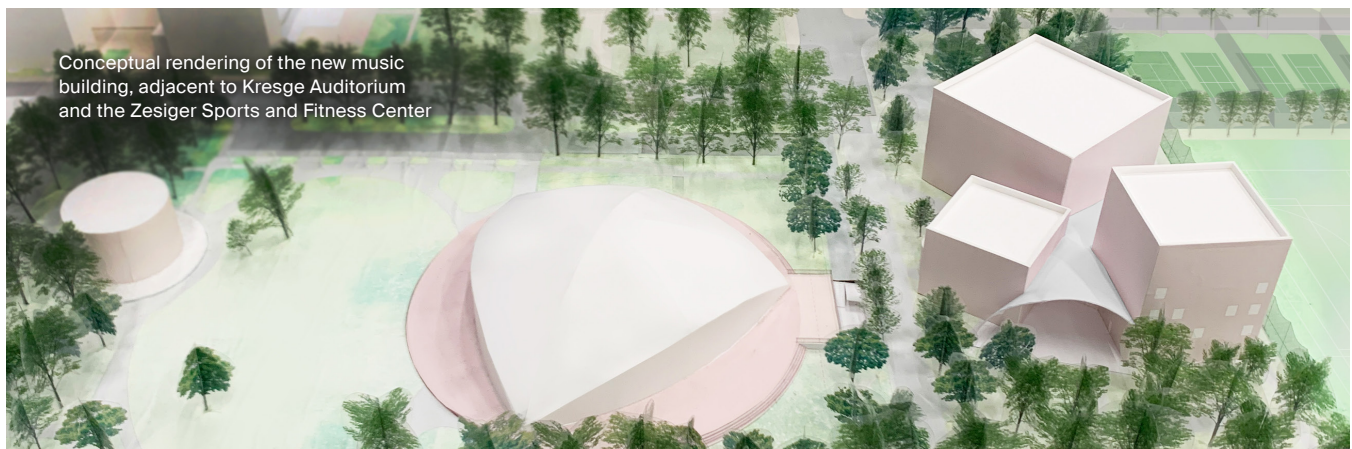
L. Rafael Reif
MIT President

MIT leaders have long recognized the arts as a fundamental component of an MIT education. Now, MIT has made a historic commitment to expanding and enhancing music education with a new, dedicated music building. Its future location at the heart of campus reflects the core place that music studies and performance hold in the lives and wellbeing of MIT students.

The Institute’s vibrant arts presence stretches from the Infinite Corridor to Eero Saarinen’s iconic Kresge Auditorium and down Vassar Street to the Theater Arts Building. This “infinite performing arts corridor” will reach its full potential with the addition of the new music facility. Located adjacent to Kresge and Alvar Aalto’s Baker House, the new building will transform music education and appreciation with versatile performance venues, optimized rehearsal facilities, and enhanced music technology spaces. Most importantly, it will be a unified home for MIT’s dynamic musical community, from conservatory-level musicians to those discovering the power of the arts.

The new facility will meet a well-demonstrated demand. In a typical year, more than 1,500 students enroll in MIT music classes, and Music and Theater Arts is consistently in the top five for undergraduate enrollment among all disciplines on campus. Music is among the most popular of the Institute’s 42 minors, and more than 500 musicians participate in one of 30 ensembles, chamber groups, or advanced music programs on campus in any given semester.

Music lovers and friends of MIT have a unique opportunity to support the new music building, the first of its kind at the Institute. The impact of this facility will be felt for generations, building on MIT’s already strong musical offerings to transform the arts on campus and beyond.



MIT'S HISTORIC COMMITMENT TO THE ARTS

Through performance, composition, and scholarship, MIT's academic programs focus on connections between music and technology, world cultures, and other humanities disciplines, cultivating an experience that is unique to the Institute. The new music building will add to the momentum generated by the Theater Arts Building, which opened in 2017, and continue President L. Rafael Reif's commitment to enhancing arts programming, leading to a redefining moment for the innovative music programs at MIT.

Performance Lab

The Performance Lab—the most advanced music teaching and performance space that the Institute has ever constructed—will be the building's signature performance venue. This uniquely flexible, large-scale space will facilitate experimentation with various performance formats, incorporating critical aspects of acoustical design for optimal listening, playing, and recording, as well as adjustable acoustics. A state-of-the-art recording studio, a new resource for the MIT campus, will also be available, offering professional-level recording for all types of instruments and ensembles.

Music Technology

The new building will provide unprecedented support for Music Technology courses with a dedicated classroom and two student production labs. Additionally, a research lab will support the hybrid exploration of music and computation, and a makerspace will be outfitted for hands-on construction and rapid prototyping of hardware. These resources will not only aid students in exploring contemporary musical performance and composition, but will also present dynamic opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration.

Music and Culture

Music can be a powerful entry point into other cultures, igniting appreciation and understanding of different peoples and places. Music and Culture programming at MIT is increasingly popular and will soon outgrow its current space. The program's larger and rarer instruments, such as the Balinese gamelan and drums used by the Rambax Senegalese Drum Ensemble, will find a permanent home in the new music building.

A Vibrant Community

Whether they are part of a Music Technology course, a student-run a capella group, or the elite Emerson Program for Private Study, students can gain lifelong benefits from engaging with music organizations and programs across campus. The new music building will not only be a place for students to learn and practice together, but also facilitate further connections through thoughtfully designed spaces that encourage collaboration and friendships through the study, performance, and appreciation of music.