

## Music school embraces file sharing

Boston music school is giving away music lessons that are free to be downloaded, copied and passed around using popular file-sharing networks such as Kazaa.

By BENNY EVANGELISTA  
San Francisco Chronicle

The recording industry has gone to war against file sharing, but a prestigious Boston music school is embracing the technology.

The school, which has an alumni roster that includes Quincy Jones, Diana Krall, John Mayer and Melissa Etheridge, began giving away music lessons this week that are free to be downloaded, copied and passed around using popular file-sharing networks such as Kazaa and LimeWire.

The school hopes its new program, called Berklee Shares, helps teach future musicians and recording industry executives to accept, not fear, online file sharing as the new future of the music industry.

"We thought it would be a good idea to encourage a debate on this subject, that file sharing is not going to go away," said Dave Kusek, associate vice president of the 3,800-student school.

The school does not advocate giving away music for free but says the record industry should find new ways to profit from file sharing, he said.

"Suing customers is the wrong thing to do," he said. "They're never going to stop it unless they shut down the Internet. So why not embrace it?"

That message runs counter to one being promoted by the Recording Industry Association of America, which has engaged in a controversial strategy to combat illegal file sharing by filing federal copyright infringement lawsuits against 341 individuals who the trade group claimed were offering songs for others to download.

An estimated 60 million Americans, and tens of millions of people outside of the United States, have downloaded songs for free using file-sharing programs, a popular activity that the record industry says is also the root cause of a 31 percent drop in CD sales since mid-2000.

An RIAA spokeswoman said the distinction between what her group and the college advocates is that the choice is Berklee's, not "the choice of some profiteer who is choosing to distribute their intellectual property without their permission."

The school's new program is an extension of the courses the college offers through its online education program started in November 2002, [www.berkleemusic.com](http://www.berkleemusic.com). The online music school offers 15 courses, at \$600 each, and now has about 600 students.

For Berklee Shares, the school offers 80 individual lessons in downloadable formats like MP3s, QuickTime movies and PDF files. The courses, which come with embedded audio and graphics, cover a range of music lessons, such as "basic hard rock trumpet" and "arpeggios for keyboards."

There are also music business courses, including an apropos lesson titled "Lawyers' Role in the Music Business."

Berklee is also encouraging people to download the courses from the college's Web site, [www.berkleeshares.com](http://www.berkleeshares.com), and share them freely with others, especially using file-sharing programs like Kazaa and LimeWire.

File sharing is a key promotional tool for the vast majority of musicians who derive their income or enjoyment from performing, not by selling records, Kusek said.

Related Links

### QVISION

Find out if you're protected from file sharing at the QVISION website.



Read other things going on at the Berklee College of Music at its homepage.



Find out file sharing statistics for the last couple of months at the Redshift Research website.

"Our charge is to teach students young and old about what the business is going to be like in five years, and for us to say those file sharers are evil ... is just not practical," he said.

Kevin Martin, whose band The HiWatts found success by offering free song downloads in an online promotion sponsored by the makers of Yoo-hoo Chocolate Drink, was encouraged that a music college was promoting file sharing.

"I'd rather you download my music and come see me live than buying my record and not come see me," Martin said. "You have to embrace the change, and the major labels have not embraced it."

*Story produced by  
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