

Parent Handbook

2019-2020

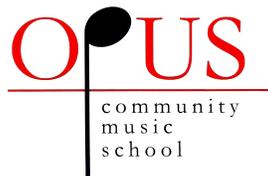


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Opus CMS Faculty & Staff Directory, 2019-2020

Faculty:

Piano:

Pamela Wiswakarma.....pwiswakarma@opuscms.org
Timothy Hartnett.....thartnett@opuscms.org
Dr. Lisa Weiss.....lisa.weiss@opuscms.org

Strings:

Anna Bross: violin & violaannabross@opuscms.org
Nathania Munoz, violin.....nathania.munoz@opuscms.org
Bagus Wiswakarma: violinbwiswakarma@opuscms.org
Zoi Tzu-Jou Yeh, cello.....zoi.yeh@opuscms.org

Woodwinds:

Barbara Anastasion, clarinetbanastasion@opuscms.org
Dr. Grace Ju-Yeon Wang: Flutegracewang@opuscms.org
Mark Runkles: oboe & saxophonemarkrunkles@opuscms.org

Staff:

Executive Director:

Pamela (Ela) Wiswakarma.....pwiswakarma@opuscms.org

Artistic Director:

Dr. Mark Runkles.....markrunkles@opuscms.org

Media Director

David Anderson.....david@opuscms.org

Program Manager

Anna Bross.....annabross@opuscms.org

Financial Assistant

Rebecca Borger.....billing@opuscms.org

Student Coordinator

Barbara Anastasion.....banastasion@opuscms.org

Faculty Faces



Anna Bross, Violin & Viola

Inspired by Disney's *Fantasia* to play violin at age 4, violist **Anna Bross** hasn't been able to stop performing ever since. She has gone from playing in Grandma's living room to pursuing her dream in Symphony Orchestras and Chamber Groups all across America. She has performed in Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Michigan, Washington, and in the Washington DC/Baltimore area, where she currently resides. Anna has a tremendous passion for teaching, and has maintained a private violin and viola studio since 2008. She aims to help guide her students unique musical voice to form lasting and meaningful connections with their audiences and the people around them. In addition to her own studio, Anna is currently on the violin/viola faculty at the Opus Community Music School in Eldersburg, MD. Ms. Bross received her Bachelor's degree from Northern Illinois University in 2011 and her Master's Degree from the Peabody Conservatory in 2013. Her primary teachers include Anthony Devroye, Li-Kuo Chang and Maria Lambros.

Nathania Munoz-Kirby, Violin & Viola

Nathania Munoz has had a versatile career in teaching and performing music. Originally from the beautiful Dutch-Caribbean tropical island of Curaçao, Nathania began studying music at the age of 9, shortly after her family moved to the US. Nathania received her Bachelors in Violin Performance and her Masters in Music Education at Pensacola Christian College. Throughout the years, her passion for music, along with her 22 years of experience on the violin has led her to travel, perform, and teach internationally and at a professional level. She has experience directing and teaching at international music camps, as well as conducting choirs, string ensembles and teaching strings at elementary, high school and college level in Florida, Texas, Maryland, Curacao and Peru. Nathania currently resides in Westminster, MD where she is the proud mother of a beautiful newborn girl. Her passion for teaching and working with her students while seeing them develop has her teaching at several studios in the region. Nathania greatly incorporates technique and musicality in her teaching and she hopes to pass her passion of music onto her students.



Bagus Wiswakarma, Violin & Viola

A native of Indonesia, **Bagus Wiswakarma** studied violin at the Hochschule fuer Musik und Theater Hamburg, Germany (Prof. Winfried Ruessmann). Additional pedagogical studies include the Amadeus Quartet, Brandis Quartet, Schleswig Holstein Music Festival in Europe and Asian Youth Music Workshop. Mr. Wiswakarma is a concert soloist and Founder/Director of the Chamber Music Series (Jakarta, Indonesia 1999 – 2006). He also served as the Director of the International Music School (Jakarta, 2000 – 2006) and Music Director of the Jakarta Philharmonia 2003– 2005.

Zoi Tzu-Jou Yeh, Cello

Cellist **Zoi Tzu-Jou Yeh** is a native of Taiwan and has had extensive performance and education experience in areas of solo, chamber music. She holds a Masters in Cello Performance from the Peabody Conservatory of Music under the tutelage of renowned cellist Amit Peled. For her outstanding achievements in chamber music, she was awarded the Grace Claggett Ranney Prize in 2015. She has had masterclasses with artistes such as Steven Isserlis, Paul Katz, Schmuël Magan, David Krieger, Karel Fiala and Matt Haimovitz. A proponent of historical performance, she also studies the baroque cello with John Moran and has performed as a soloist with the Baltimore Baroque Band. She is currently pursuing a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Cello Performance at Peabody Conservatory of Music. Zoi-Jou currently plays on a 1947 Gaetano Gadda on generous loan from the Chimei Museum Foundation.



Timothy Hartnett, Piano

As a member of our piano faculty, pianist **Tim Hartnett** brings over three decades of experience to Opus. His advanced pursuit of both piano performance and pedagogy began under the tutelage of Karen England of the Howard County Music Teachers Association in 1991. Later, he studied with Dr. Michael Adcock of the Washington and Peabody Conservatories, at UMBC with Dr. Audrey Andrist, and with Dr. Hsiu-Hui Wang of Goucher and Howard Community Colleges. Along the way, he was voted Most Musical in senior yearbook, and was the recipient of multiple music scholarships. Currently, Mr. Hartnett is pursuing a graduate performance diploma through the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music and is the recipient of the Bravo Award, which provided a grant to pursue his diploma. He also studied and still performs in jazz settings, recently serving as the consulting editor of the John Bresnik Jazz Piano method. As a teacher, Mr. Hartnett has been an efficient and successful mentor for all ages and levels with a philosophy that emphasizes a strong foundation in both music history and theory in addition to technique. Recently, he has acted as an adjudicator in many of the area's major competitions. Among his students have been future piano majors, competition prizewinners, scholarship recipients, and many who have succeeded in piano and theory exams. Formerly an instructor with Mike's Music in Ellicott City as well as his own private studio, he joined Opus in 2016, where he led the effort to establish the school's piano curriculum. In addition to his music education, Mr. Hartnett holds a Masters of Science in Applied Mathematics from the Johns Hopkins Whiting School of Engineering, and works as a cybersecurity analyst on the National Vulnerability Database project at NIST. He resides in Dayton, MD.

Dr. Lisa Weiss, Piano

Professor **Lisa Weiss** came to Goucher in 1986 as a result of the college's desire to experiment with a position that was new to the institution: a full time performance faculty member in the music department. She currently teaches private and classroom piano, directs a lecture series for music majors and minors, co-directs the Goucher Musical Theater and Opera program, and is a frequent collaborator and accompanist for both students and faculty. She has chaired the music department, led two study abroad music programs in Italy, and was for many years the director of the student Chamber Music Seminar. She was also a recipient of the Todd Professorship, an honor bestowed on one professor every five years at Goucher. Dr. Weiss holds a B.A. from Harvard University, an M.M. from The Yale School of Music, and a D.M.A. from The Peabody Conservatory, where she studied with Leon Fleisher. She also holds an M.F.A. in creative writing from Lesley University and has published several stories in the flash fiction genre. She began playing when she was three and made her solo debut with the Boston Pops at age seven. Of her New York debut, *New Times* critic Wil Crutchfield wrote, "...a musician worth attention and able to hold it." She concertizes regularly as a soloist, chamber musician, and vocal accompanist. A versatile pianist, her recent performances include a new work for piano and electronics by Baltimore composer Samuel Burt, performed at Artscape "World's in Collusion" event this past summer, and ongoing collaborative-improvisatory piano and dance projects with "What's Written Within," a dance company on Martha's Vineyard. She remains passionately committed to her lifelong practice: learning and performing the incredibly vast, varied and important repertoire for solo piano.





Pamela Wiswakarma, Piano

Ms Wiswakarma's professional degrees include Vordiplom-Dinieren (Conducting) and Diplom-Rhythmik, Diplom (Hochschule fuer Musik und Theater Hamburg, Germany), Music Lehrerin (Eurhythmics music teacher) and a Bachelor of Arts (Music Education, St. Mary's College, Maryland). She has special experience in the area of Piano Methods and is expert in the area of Eurhythmics and Movements. Pamela is an experienced teacher in preprimary, primary and secondary school, in areas of music, dance and drama. Ms Wiswakarma's extensive teaching, conducting and music director experience includes Australian International School Kemang Kampus, Jakarta; Sekolah Ichthus South, Jakarta; Sekolah Mentari, Jakarta; Bambino Kindergarten, Jakarta; Sekola Cita Buana; PPIA International Choir, Jakarta; Yayasan Musik International, Jakarta; The Harburger Maenner chor and the Harburger Frauen Chor and the Phoenix Orchestra in the Friedrich-Ebert Halle, Hamburg-Harburg, Germany; The Harburger Maenner Chor and the Harburger Frauen Chor in the Friedrich-Ebert Halla, Hamburg-Harburg, Germany; The DESY Orchestra, Hamburg, Germany; The Hamburg Bach Society Orchestra, Germany. She has served as Guest Conductor for Orchestral Ensembles and Choirs in both Europe and America. Ms Wiswakarma won 1st Prize as conductor in the Choir competition in the Winsener Stadt Halle, Winsen, Germany in September 1996. Ms Wiswakarma has been a private piano instructor in Hamburg, Germany and a piano accompanist for concerts and recitals in Europe and America. In addition to her teaching and conducting experience, Pamela has also performed as a singer in the Baltimore Symphony Choir, Baltimore, Maryland.

Barbara Anastasion, Clarinet

Barbara Anastasion teaches clarinet and is also the student coordinator for OPUS. She is a 18 year veteran instrumental music teacher in Carroll County, MD. She teaches 4th grade band, 5th grade band, 4th gradorchestra, 5th grade orchestra, and has experience teaching elementary vocal/general music as well. She has taught privately since 2000 in Harford, Baltimore, and Carroll Counties. Barbara began playing the clarinet in 4th grade, and also doubled on the tenor saxophone for jazz band in high school. She is a music graduate of Towson University, having studied under Ed Palanker, Dan Silver, and Chris Wolfe. She received her Master's Degree in Curriculum and Instruction in 2008. Barbara is also a National Board Certified music educator. She is an alumni member of Kappa Kappa Psi, National Honorary Band Fraternity. Barbara is actively involved in the state level of the MBDA (Maryland Band Directors Association) and is the All State Band Auditions co-chairperson. She assists with recruiting the adjudicators for the auditions, and organizes the on-site check-in/registration for the hundreds of students that audition during the two weekends of auditions each November. She serves on the executive board of the MBDA. She also adjudicates for the State Solo and Ensemble Festival each spring. Barbara directs the handbell choir and children's choir at her church. She is also currently the color guard instructor for South Carroll High School. Barbara has an elementary aged daughter who takes violin lessons at OPUS and loves to sing and dance, and a pre-school aged son who loves to bang on things!



Dr. Grace Ju-Yeon Wang, Flute

Praised by the Journal of Music as "remarkably elegant...sensitive and brilliant" flutist Grace Ju -Yeon Wang enjoys a versatile career as a soloist, chamber musician and educator. Having performed worldwide across Asia, Europe, Africa and North America, she has performed on stages including Seoul Arts Center, Sejong Center for the Performing Arts, The Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, Carnegie Hall and multiple appearances at the Kennedy Center. Grace is a prize winner of the American Protégé International Flute Competition, Rochester Flute Association Competition, Baltimore Music Club Competition, South Carolina Flute Society Young Artist Competition and was selected as a semi-finalist for Astral Artists National Auditions and the Concert Artist Guild Victor Elmaleh Competitions. As founder and flutist of Daraja Ensemble, she has made appearances at the Riverdale Mansion, Washington Arts Club, Amadeus Concert Series, and many more. The Quintet held the Fellowship Quintet Residency at the University of Maryland from 2015-2017 and were finalist for the International Chesapeake Chamber Music Competition. In 2016, the quintet traveled to Tanzania, Africa to start

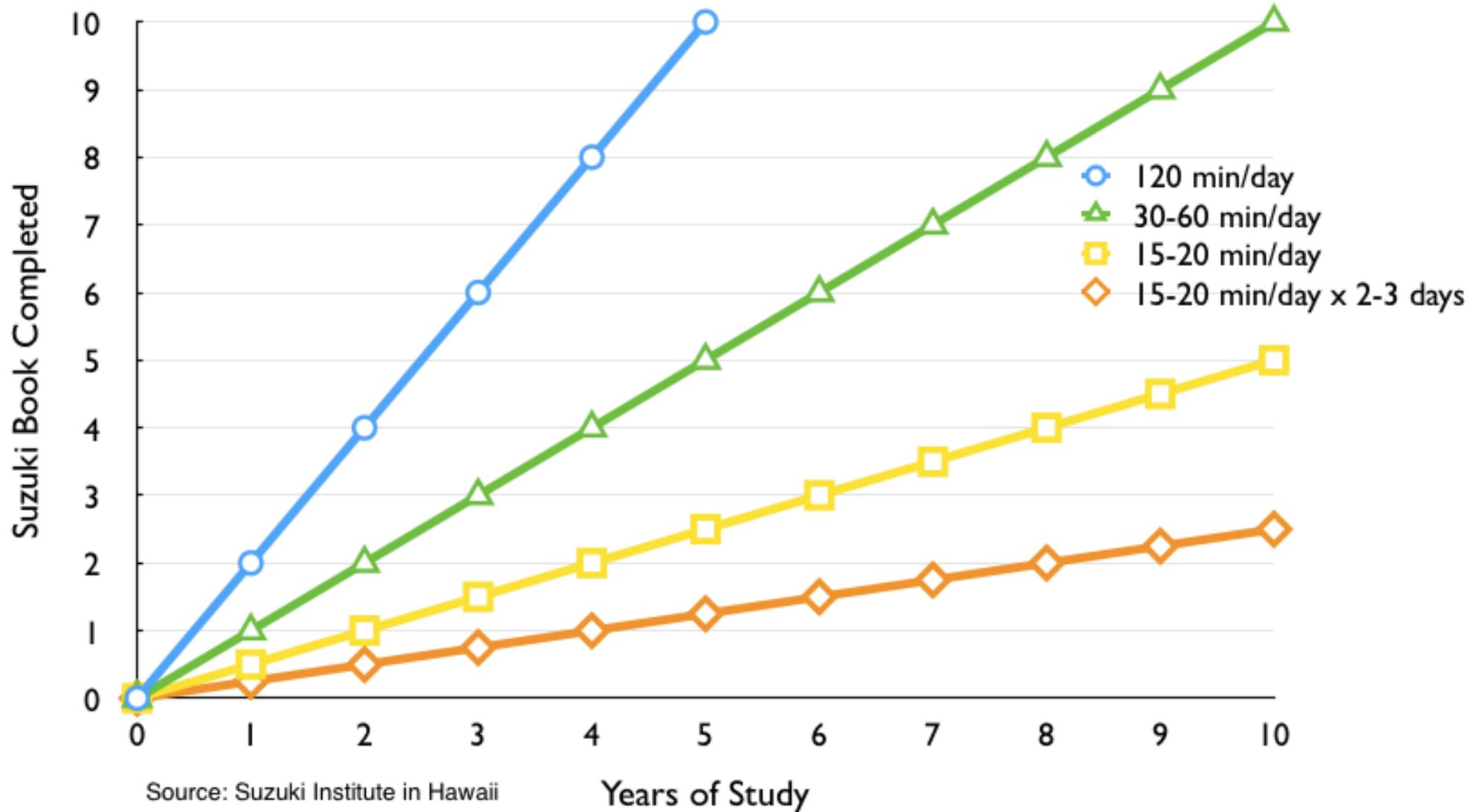
a new music education program for the schools in the sugar plantation area. As a chamber musician she has performed nationwide as a member of the TIMF Ensemble and Lunar Ensemble and was invited to premiere Daniel Thomas Davis's piece "Book of the Lake" commissioned by the Walters Art Museum in Baltimore, Maryland. She has studied with Marina Piccinini for her Master's and Graduate Performance Degree at the Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University and holds a Bachelor's Degree from Seoul National University. Currently she is pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts at the University of Maryland under the tutelage Sarah Frisof. As a passionate educator of solo and chamber music, Grace has given masterclasses throughout the US and Asia, and serves as faculty member at DeMatha Catholic High School, Honors College Prep and Woodbridge Music Institute.

Dr. Mark Runkles, Oboe & Saxophone

Appointed in 2015 as an Instructor of Oboe and Saxophone with Opus Community Music School and a Faculty Clinician with Academy of St. Cecilia Youth Orchestra in Damascus, Mark Runkles completed his Doctor of Musical Arts in Oboe Performance at UNLV. Dr. Runkles earned his Master of Fine Arts in Oboe Performance and Master of Arts in Jazz Studies from the University of Iowa and his Bachelor of Arts in Oboe Performance from St. Mary's College of Maryland. He formed the Twin Arch Duo, which plays a mixture of standards and his own contemporary jazz compositions, with guitarist Charlie Trapp in 2013. In 2008, Dr. Runkles performed a series of Jazz Vespers services in Scotland. He served as the Assistant Principal Oboe with the Chesapeake Orchestra from 1999-2004 and performed on 2nd Oboe with the Las Vegas Philharmonic from the winter of 2009 through 2012. Dr. Runkles is an oboe student of Stephen Caplan, Mark Weiger, and Vladimir Lande and a saxophone student of John Rapson and Don Stapleson.



Completion of Suzuki books by years of study and minutes of practice/day



Attitude

By Charles Swindol

The longer I live, the more I realize that the impact of attitude on life. Attitude, to me, is more important than facts. It is more important than the past, than education, than money, than circumstances, than failures, than successes, than what other people think or say or do. It is more important than appearance, giftness, or skill.

It will make or break a company... a church... a home. The remarkable thing is we have a choice every day regarding the attitude we will embrace for that day. We cannot change our past... we cannot change the fact that people will act in a certain way. We cannot change the inevitable. The only thing we can do is play on the one string we have, and that is our attitude... I am convinced that life is 10% what happens to me and 90% how I react to it. And so it is with you... we are in charge of our Attitudes.

Inspiration

"Tell me and I'll forget. Show me and I may remember. Involve me and I'll understand."

-Benjamin Franklin

"I know that most joy in my life has come to me through my violin."

-Albert Einstein

"Never hurry, never rest."

-Shinichi Suzuki

"It always seems impossible until it's done."

-Nelson Mandela

"It's not because things are difficult that we dare not venture.

It's because we dare not venture that they are difficult"

-Seneca, Roman Philosopher

"It's the little details that are vital. Little things make big things happen."

-John Wooden, Hall of Fame NCAA Basketball Coach

"To achieve great things two things are needed; a plan, and not quite enough time."

-Leonard Bernstein, Conductor and Composer

"Those who have achieved all their aims must probably set them too low."

Herbert von Karajan, Conductor

Our Parents + US = OPUS

Our dream is for Opus to become a vibrant community whose presence inspires others far beyond the walls of the studio. As you may already know, OPUS is more than just a place to take private music lessons. Opus is a place to gain a well-rounded music education that fosters technical, creative, individual, and social skills. These skills are developed through training with your instrument and with others.

One of the most rewarding and exciting aspects of music is experiencing the joy of playing with and for others and building relationships through the common bond of music. Research has shown again and again, that students' great success is influenced **by parent involvement**. Our teachers and parents share a common goal. We want to nurture the musical development of every student, and affect the people around us in a meaningful way.

With this in mind we hope you will help us lay great foundations for our students and our school, with Our Parent's + US. Join us and become involved in enhancing the OPUS community with activities and events for our families. Join us at our monthly meeting, and parent support club, held every "First Friday" of the month at 7pm in the ensemble room at the studio downstairs, and help us build our support team!

Our Parents will help the studio by:

- Organizing great recital receptions!
- Organizing events such as Fun Picnics, Movie Nights, Performance Field Trips & Concert playing trips like Hershey Park!
- Beautification: enhancing the outer beauty of the facility by weeding the yard, a quick dusting of a studio or vacuuming the floor. We also need a "waste wrangler" to take trash home/coordinate drop offs. (We are happy to offer service hours to students for these helpful tasks as well)
- Fundraising for studio growth, and for fun activities to enrich the students and staff!
- Building our community by sharing your ideas!
- Having fun!

Opus CMS, Lesson Policy 2019-2020

Studio Behavior:

- Please arrive at least 5 minutes before lessons. This allows you to have time to hang up your coats, use the bathroom, WASH HANDS, file fingernails, and have all supplies ready to use by the start of the lesson time. One parent or adult caregiver is asked to attend all lessons of children up through age 11.
- Observers are always welcome in the teaching areas, and are requested to be respectful of the focus and concentration necessary for a good lesson.
- Family members and friends are welcome to sit in the reception area where coloring books, magazines and coffee are available.
- Parents or adult caregivers are asked to be responsible for their children at all times.

Missed Lessons:

- Lessons missed by the teacher for any reason will be made up.
- Up to two lessons missed because of weather cancellations will be made up.
- Because private lessons are one teacher and one student, at least 24 hours notice must be given to qualify for a makeup. If you have a fever, then less than 24 hours may be given, at teacher discretion.
- Students will be allowed to make up one excused lesson (due to student absence) each semester.. Make-up weeks are scheduled at the end of each semester.
- Any student with two unexcused absences will be contacted by the school and/or the teacher, and may be removed from the program.
- No portion of tuition, paid or outstanding, will be refunded or canceled because of absence, dismissal or withdrawal of the student unless written notice of withdrawal is requested, received, and approved by the Executive Director.

Frequently Asked Questions

Instruments:

- What size violin/viola/cello will my child need? How do I know?

Children beginning to play string instruments have an advantage over other instruments, because there are smaller sized instruments made especially for children. The size of the violin is determined by the size of the child, and our instructors will help you know what size instrument you need.

- Does Opus rent instruments?

Not yet! We are working to build an instrument library for the Carroll County area. If you have instruments (in playing condition) and or technician services you can donate, please drop us a line! For now, please give us a call for instrument rental referral.

- Recommended Vendors

Gaile's of College Park, Perrin Violins of Baltimore, Baltimore Brass in Ellicott City

Scheduling:

- What day and time will my lesson be?

The time and day of your lesson will be arranged directly with your teacher. Most often, the teacher will let you know what open times they have in their schedule, and you may choose the one that fits your schedule best!

- How do I know who my teacher will be?

If you do not already have a teacher at Opus, you can make an appointment for **one** FREE trial lesson with any of our teachers. We will recommend a teacher that we think might suit you best by instrument and availability.

- What length of a lesson should I sign up for?

In general, we recommend a 30 minute lesson for beginners, 45 minutes and hour lessons for older or 60 minutes for advanced students. A good goal for home practice time is to practice at least as long as your lesson length.

Registering for Lessons:

- How do we register for lessons?

You can register for lessons directly from our website. Go to www.opuscms.org/registration for more information

- How do we pay for lessons

Once you have registered, you will receive a bill automatically via email. You can pay with cash or check. Checks can be mailed to OPUS Community Music School, 6217 Sykesville Road, Eldersburg, MD 21784, or deposited in our Payment box on the main floor of the studio, next to the office.

Festivals:

- I need an accompanist for an event, and I'm playing away from Opus.

We have accompanists who can coach and accompany you. Opus faculty charge \$40 for each 30 minute rehearsal, \$50 for a 45 minute rehearsal, and \$60 for a 60 minute rehearsal, and \$50 for each performance. Typically one or two rehearsals will need to be scheduled per performance. For events outside of Carroll County, a destination surcharge of up to \$100 may be charged.

Pricing:

- How does pricing work?

The prices listed on the website that you see listed are per semester, unless otherwise noted.

- Do I have to pay the full amount up front?

You certainly can! But you also may take advantage of our installment plans, which feature payments in two or four equal payments for only a small additional charge. Our "early bird" discount is available for payment in full by request.

- How does the Sibling discount work?

Available by request, The first student you register pays the normal tuition, then each additional child you register gets a 10% discount on private lessons. It's our way of saying, "Thanks!" to our most involved families.

- How do scholarships work?

The amount of scholarship is dependent upon the funds available in the Opus Scholarship Fund and the number of students who apply for financial assistance. Scholarships must be applied for each semester and are not automatically granted for continuing students.

Accessibility

- My child needs an auxiliary aid or service. What do I do?

The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to the Carroll County Government and its programs, services, activities, and facilities. Anyone requiring an auxiliary aid or service for effective communication or who has a complaint should contact The Department of Citizen Services, 410.386.3600, 1.888.302.8978, MD Relay 7-1-1/[1.800.735.2258](tel:18007352258) as soon as possible but no later than 72 hours before the scheduled event.



Student & Parent Guide

Here you will find a brief walk through of all the features found in your My Music Staff (MMS) student/parent account. We are excited about the potential of this new program, and hope you and your teacher will take full advantage of its

Login:

To login, visit www.opuscms.org/login and enter your login credentials. If you have forgotten your login credentials, send an email to info@opuscms.org, and we will send you a password reset email. You can change your login credentials later in the settings menu.

Home Screen:

On your home screen after you login you will be able to see your next scheduled event, the hours of practice that have been logged this week, and your attendance record over the past 90 days in three colorful boxes at the top of your screen. On this screen, you can also see any recent notes, borrowed items, makeup credits, or assigned repertoire that your teacher has put in MMS for you, along with your available downloads.

Calendar:

In the calendar, you can see all your scheduled lessons, register for Opus events, and Cancel your lessons when necessary. To register for an Opus event (Ex. Recitals and Dress Rehearsals) find the event in the calendar, click on the event and select "Register." To cancel a lesson, click on the lesson you will need to miss, then select "Cancel Attendance," and your teacher will be notified automatically. Note: Makeups will only be issued for canceled lessons if they are canceled at least 24 hours in advance, with a limit of one persemester.

Studio Info:

Contact information for Opus and your teacher can be found here, along with your current make-up lesson total.

Studio News:

Access important studio announcements here! It is a good place to check for information regarding registration, recitals, volunteering, etc. that has already gone out in studio-wide emails.

Account & Invoices:

Here you can view any charges, payments, and invoices sent to your Opus account, and your current balance. For questions regarding billing, you may contact our Financial Assistant, Rebecca Borger, at billing@opuscms.org.

Attendance & Notes:

Here you may view your attendance over the course of your lessons at Opus. You can see when makeup credits were issued and why, as well as when they were used. You may also access any notes your teacher has given to you through MMS, and print an attendance report should you have need.

Library & Downloads:

If you have borrowed a book or an instrument from Opus, a record of it will be shown here, along with your due date for the item. You can also access important documents for the school available for download, such as our studio calendar, instrument rental contract, and our 100 days of practice form.

Practice Log:

This useful little tool is a way for you and your teacher to track the frequency and quality of practice time. Your teacher can see any logs you make, and if you have any questions or notes for your teacher, you can write them in your practice log entry for the day. This is a great way to communicate with your teacher about how practice goes during the week, and is just as helpful to your teacher as it is to you! **Scholarship students are required to use this tool.**

Repertoire:

Here you and your teacher have the option to track your progress on specific pieces of repertoire. You can add the piece you are working on, and set it's status to: "Requested, Recommended, In Progress or Completed" Your teacher may even upload the sheet music to certain items here, in case you have lost your copy and need an extra before your next lesson.

Email History:

Here you can see the history of any emails sent to you via My Music Staff. You can see the text of the email, where it was sent to, whom it was sent by, the subject, and the date of the email.

Settings:

Should you need to change any of your personal information or login credentials, you can do so from this menu, located in the top right corner of your My Music Staff page. You can even add a profile picture!

How to Register for Studio Events:

This registration process is used for Master Classes, Dress Rehearsals, Recitals, and other events at Opus. Follow this process to make sure you secure your slot!

1. Login to your MMS Account
2. Select "Calendar" from your left hand menu
3. Find the event you would like to register for and click on
4. Click the "Register" link that appears on the popup and follow the remaining instructions.

Please contact us if you are experiencing difficulty with this process, and we will be happy to help!

Student Recitals

Opus hosts multiple student recitals per semester and has many opportunities to help you prepare!
Please take advantage of all the events you can!

Master Classes:

- Opus holds two Master Class days per semester. On each day there are multiple sessions available for sign up. Master Classes are hour long group-style lessons. The cost of one Master Class is included in your semester tuition.
- A student will play their recital piece for their Recital Prep Teacher, along with some fellow students, and receive help from the teacher, as you would in a lesson, along with written comments from others to read later.
- This is a low key, relaxed, and fun way for a student to get used to playing with their accompanist, and/or playing for a slightly larger audience than they are used to!

Dress Rehearsals:

- Dress rehearsals are essentially a practice run through of the concert. Typically they take place in the recital location.
- The dress rehearsal is designed to help the performer feel more comfortable in the recital space, and to help them get used to playing with/on the venue's piano. It can be nerve racking to play in a new place!
- You do not have to dress in concert clothes for the dress rehearsal. However, depending on your wardrobe, it may be advantageous to do so. If you are playing in a suit jacket, or high heeled shoes, etc, wear these garments to your dress rehearsal.
- You must sign up for the Dress Rehearsal that corresponds to your recital time, but exceptions can be made upon request.

Recitals:

- You must have participated in either one master class or a Dress Rehearsal to qualify for our End of Semester Recital.
- We divide students into two to three different recitals on the same day. Check the Studio Calendar for specific dates and times. Sign up is first come first serve, as there is limited space for each recital.
- Sign up for recitals is done through your My Music Staff account, see our MMS FAQ for more information.
- Dressy clothes are expected. No jeans, tee shirts, flip flops, or torn clothes.
- Plan to arrive 15-20 minutes before your recital start time so you can unpack, tune if you need to, and warm up.
- Receptions are held after recitals, and usually need volunteers! Please bring a snack or treat to feed a dozen people! More detailed information and Sign-Ups for reception volunteering will be provided closer to recital time.
- Besides our end-of-semester recital, Opus has multiple performance opportunities each semester. Students who cannot attend the end-of-semester recital are encouraged to perform in these events instead!

Solo Student Recitals

Wow! You have chosen to perform a solo recital, congratulations! This is no small commitment, and we at Opus are here to help guide you through this experience. The following is a step-by-step guide for you to set up your very own solo recital!

Step One: Tell your teacher you want to do a solo recital!

Your teacher will be your primary guide through this experience. The two of you will choose and prepare your repertoire and go over any questions you may have. See our recitals advice page for more helpful tips!

Step Two: Decide on a date, time, and place.

We recommend at least 1 semester's worth of lessons to adequately prepare with your teacher. The ensemble room at the Opus studio is available for you to use as a recital venue. ***The room must be reserved at least 60 days in advance of your recital.*** Your teacher can help you reserve this room using MMS. You may reserve a venue outside of Opus to the agreement of you and your teacher.

Step Three: Find an accompanist if you need one.

This step is *important* to do early! We have talented pianists on our faculty that would love to play with you if they have time. ***Accompanists must be requested at least 60 days in advance of your recital.*** Talk to an accompanist directly to submit your request. There is no guarantee that a specific accompanist will be available, but you are more likely to get something scheduled if you ask early. See our Faculty Directory for our Piano Faculty's contact information.

We require you to have at least two rehearsals with your accompanist. Your teacher may have recommendations on when rehearsals take place, but ***note that rehearsals are to be scheduled directly between you and your accompanist. Your teacher will not schedule these rehearsals for you.*** Rehearsals should be added to the MMS calendar by your accompanist.

Step Four (Optional): Organize a Reception!

The downstairs lobby is available as a reception hall. Opus is happy to provide tables, tablewares (if available) and tablecloths for your use. Please wash all tablecloths before returning them to us. Please leave our space better than you found it, remove all trash/recycling and vacuum the area before you leave.

Pricing:

See website for pricing information

Tips for a Successful Recital

8 Weeks Before the Recital

You want to be able to play through your entire piece with relatively few bumps. It's normal if at this point we are still playing at a thinking tempo! The next four weeks you should be working on slowly getting it up to full speed, and smoothing out the finer details and finding the spirit of the piece.

4 Weeks Before the Recital

You want to be able to play your song at performance tempo fairly comfortably even if you sometimes make mistakes. If you are making mistakes, that's okay! Remember that they are good if we learn from them! :) It is useful to have a few points in the song where you can restart should things get tricky. This will save you from having to start all over should anything happen!

2 Weeks Before the Recital

Your recital piece should feel pretty comfortable now, and if we are making mistakes we should be able to recover from them quickly. Remember a polished piece has notes, dynamics, and spirit! Practice playing for family and friends! The easiest way to simulate the nerves of a performance is to play for real live people. It is okay to be nervous! Being nervous for something means that you care a lot about it a lot, and want it to go well! If you have hit the milestones above you will do just fine. :)

1 Week Before the Recital

Just relax. You've got this! You know what you are doing and how to manage the odd "Oops." Play your piece for fun and enjoy listening to yourself. If you are enjoying what you are playing so will others!

The Day of the Recital

You have worked SO hard on your recital piece so take this opportunity to show off your hard work and enjoy yourself! Remember that everyone in the audience is so excited to hear you play, and wants you to do well! Plus there will be cookies afterward. ;) Plan to get to the recital location early to give yourself enough time for potential delays, plus any warm up time you may need. Always tune to the piano that will be used on stage, there should be someone nearby to help you should you need it. Remember also to have good manners while other children are playing, they worked hard on their pieces too! And while they play, remember to listen for something you love. :)

Opus Concert Club

Attending concerts is SO important to our development as musicians, and here at Opus we want to encourage you to go to as many concerts as possible! We came up with a rewards program for our students to participate in to further this goal called the *Opus Concert Club!* Each student will receive a punch card at the beginning of the Fall Semester, and if you fill up your card, you become a member of the club. Keep an eye on the “Community Events” board at the studio for concerts in the Eldersburg area throughout the year!

The Rules:

- For every recital you attend, you can receive a punch on your Concert Club Card.
- You must be attending, not performing, in the recital. If your name is on the program, it will not count.
- Concerts of ALL kinds count toward your punch, not just classical music performances. School performances, festivals, and even rock shows can all count!
- Programs or tickets are brought to your teacher to receive your punch.
- BONUS: If you attend a performance where an Opus faculty member is performing, it will count for *double punches!*
- You have two semesters to complete your card (10 punches), bring your full card to us before or at our Celebration Event to receive your badge.

The Rewards:

- Everyone who receives 10 (or more!) punches will become an official member of the Opus Concert Club, and receive a button badge proclaiming their membership to the world! Wear it to the recital on your lanyard along with your 100 days pins to show your accomplishment!
- Members will also see their names and pictures added to a place of honor in the studio.
- Recognition at End of Semester recitals
- Members will receive a FREE ticket to our Concert Club Celebration held in the summer. Last year, we held a movie night for our members, this year, who knows?!

Supporting Opus

Opus is a registered 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization that relies on community volunteers and support. Here's how you can help!

Volunteering:

Opus needs volunteers in a variety of different categories, and students can earn service hours!

1. Concert & Reception volunteers

Recital receptions need volunteers to help setup and tear down the receptions as well as providing some food and supplies as needed. These receptions happen approximately six to eight times per year. Volunteers are organized through Sign-Up Genius by each event, and typically have weeks of notice in advance.

2. Facility maintenance volunteers

Facility maintenance volunteers help with cleaning the studio, weeding and pruning in the summer and / or snow plowing and shoveling in the winter, as well as occasional special projects like painting and moving pianos. Volunteers are requested through email and usually have days of notice (in the case of weeding and pruning), or hours of notice (in the case of snow) in advance.

3. Board / committee members

Opus relies on a strong, active board and committee members. Opportunities exist for volunteers to help with the Development Committee, the Scholarship Committee, the Finance Committee, and the Board.

4. Opus Library

We have a growing library in the upstairs of the studio that needs help organizing and categorizing. If you have unused music books or sheet music in good condition, consider donating them!

Donations:

- 1. Instrument Donations** If you have an instrument in playing condition, that isn't being used, consider donating it to OPUS! Your donation is tax deductible, and OPUS uses these instruments to help students who cannot afford to buy an instrument on their own.
- 2. Monetary Donations** Opus is a 501(c)(3) organization and of course all donations are tax deductible to the full extent of the law. We are very grateful for any amount and if your work has an Employer Match Charitable Donations program, your donation will have a greater impact! Some companies already have a Charitable Foundation already established where you can nominate Opus.

Scrip Gift Cards:

What if you could help support the Opus CMS simply by making your everyday purchases? Opus is excited to roll out a new fundraising program called Scrip that enables you to do just that! Scrip fundraising allows you to

purchase gift cards from Opus at face value—if you order \$200 worth of gift cards, you get \$200 in gift cards. So how does Opus make money? The Opus Scrip coordinator can order those gift cards from the Great Lakes Scrip Center at a reduced price. The difference is an instant rebate for the Opus CMS.

The Great Lakes Scrip Center offers over 300 of the biggest brands in gift cards including grocery, department stores, gas stations, restaurants, home improvement, and more. Just order gift cards and use them in place of cash, check, or credit cards when you shop at places like Martins, Safeway, Shoppers, Kohls, Walmart, Target, Starbucks, Panera, Chilis, Home Depot, etc., and earn rebates for Opus! Families can easily raise \$500 or more per year to help Opus.

Here's how to set it up!

1. Go to www.ShopwithScrip.com. If you haven't already created your own account, create an account using the OPUS Family Enrollment Code: 5755ECCF4L185
2. Place your order for Scrip cards from the huge selection of retailers (lots of grocery stores, restaurants, department stores, etc).
3. Bring cash or a check made payable to the Opus Community Music to pay and pick up your cards. If you're set up with PrestoPay, you can also pay for your order online.

Amazon Smile:

- **What is Amazon Smile?**

Amazon Smile is a simple and automatic way for you to support your favorite charitable organization every time you shop, at no cost to you. When you shop at smile.amazon.com, you'll find the exact same low prices, vast selection and convenient shopping experience as Amazon.com, with the added bonus that Amazon will donate a portion of the purchase price to your favorite charitable organization. You can choose from nearly one million organizations to support.

- How do I shop at Amazon Smile?

To shop at Amazon Smile simply go to smile.amazon.com from the web browser on your computer or mobile device. You may also want to add a bookmark to your browser to make it even easier to return and start your shopping at Amazon Smile.

- Which products on Amazon Smile are eligible for charitable donations?

Tens of millions of products on Amazon Smile are eligible for donations. You will see eligible products marked “Eligible for Amazon Smile donation” on their product detail pages. Recurring Subscribe-and-Save purchases and subscription renewals are not currently eligible.

- Can I use my existing Amazon.com account on Amazon Smile?

Yes, you use the same account on Amazon.com and Amazon Smile. Your shopping cart, Wish List, wedding or baby registry, and other account settings are also the same.

- How do I select a charitable organization to support when shopping on Amazon Smile?

On your first visit to Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com), you need to select a charitable organization to receive donations from eligible purchases before you begin shopping. Amazon will remember your selection, and then every eligible purchase you make at smile.amazon.com will result in a donation.

The Five Things That Matter Most to a Successful Lesson Experience

1. Have faith in your child, your teacher, and yourself.

Every child grows at a different rate. It is important to respect your child's efforts and not compare his rate with the rate of others. Put your child first by focusing on the quality of the journey more than a destination. One of the best ways to demonstrate faith and respect to your teacher is by allowing one teacher at a time. Be a silent observer during group and private lesson. A child hears the quietest parental sigh much louder than anything his teacher could say or do. Give the discipline up to the teacher at lessons unless they ask you to step in. Follow through with assignments and listening at home.

YOU are the most important and influential teacher your child will ever have. One of the most important lessons to help learning is that it is okay to make mistakes. Give yourself the many tries needed as you learn to play the instrument you are helping teach to your child. The more proficient you get at guitar, violin or piano – the more confidence and empathy you gain.

2. Be consistent with listening, practicing and lessons.

The more you play the recording, the more internalized the music, the easier it is to produce a beautiful ringing tone with expressive musicianship. Students that consistently listen learn and memorize pieces with much more ease than those who do not.

When practicing is a daily habit, much of the struggle is eliminated. Do not say, “we will make the practicing up tomorrow.” Five minutes is better than nothing... and you can always find five minutes.

Treat private and group lesson as a special event... not to be squeezed between many other activities (where you might come late and leave early). Your child will know this activity is important if you treat it that way.

3. Communicate with your teacher and other parents.

Let your teacher know if you are struggling in the practice sessions at home. Since some conversations should not be had in front of your child, use email or phone (ask your teacher which method is best for them).

Be sure to talk with your private or group teacher if you have questions or concerns about assignments, behavior, expectations, anything! We know you want the best for your child; we do too!

Other parents are vitally important for sharing joys and struggles and solutions together!

4. Take notes and mirror your lesson in practice.

Though you should not interrupt the flow of the lesson (and break important focus) it is important that you are clear about all assignments so you can follow through in home practice. Have your teacher check over your notes before you leave and reiterate the instructions for the practice week ahead. You are the “home teacher” but are expected to do only what is covered in the lesson. Your teacher is very careful not to move forward before a specific level of mastery is achieved. Do not move your child to the next step until your teacher gives the green light to do so. The practice packet is extremely helpful for the teacher to know what the child has been doing all week, and assess and adjust assignments accordingly. This is also helpful for a parent and child to see what is ahead and stay on task with daily expectations.

5. Be creative and enthusiastic in practice!

It is hard to be creative and enthusiastic when you are tired, hungry, stressed, rushed, etc. This holds true for your child as well. Find the best time for both of you to enjoy some time together. Many families find several short practices are more successful while others find one dose a day does it. Be sure physical needs are met so you and your child can focus. Your enthusiasm will be contagious... here are some creative ways to begin practice since “once begun is half done.”

Treasure hunt: write pieces or practice assignments on popsicle sticks then hide them around the room and have your child find them and do them.

Beat the clock: Who can be ready to practice by a certain time each day?

Practice candle: let a candle burn during practice time. Agree on a celebration of time together when the candle is used up.

Set a goal: of 50 (or 100!) days of practice in a row and celebrate with a family activity of your child's choice.

Count repetitions: with raisins, peanuts, or skittles.

Some other helpful tips in working with your child and keeping them actively engaged are to “ask” rather than “tell.” Praise the effort. Look for what is working, and most importantly, focus on one point at a time. (This usually means ignoring other factors).

It is easy to get frustrated or overwhelmed. Taking a breath and remembering why we want this for our children can center us. Thank you for letting us work together for you and your family. Enjoy the journey!

Taking Notes at Lessons

Practical Tips for Parents

By Heidi Ehle

Continuity is a crucial part of learning an instrument, and the link that provides continuity between lessons and practice is your precious notes! Having been a Suzuki parent, I know that in a busy day sometimes you sink into the chair at the lesson and think, “Ah, 30 minutes of down time.” Then you find yourself daydreaming, and before you know it the lesson is over. You glance down at your notebook, and see “Review Allegro” ... hmmm, not much to work with. You hear your teacher compliment your child on the lesson, but you are not exactly sure what went on.

At this point you may ask your teacher, “What shall we practice this week?” This will probably get a somewhat annoyed response as the teacher thinks, “OK, do I have to re-run the entire lesson at fast forward?” although she’s glad you at least asked. Or you don’t ask and figure you’ll just get through practice somehow.

Helpful Hints

While you may need some clarification at the end of the lesson, the teacher expects you to pick out major points for practice during the lesson. Here are some tips:

1. Look for a theme, especially with very young children. There is what Suzuki teachers call the “one point lesson.” If you hear the same aspect mentioned again and again, circle it at the top of your notes (i.e., thumb position, clear high notes, where is your foot, D’s correct).
2. In review songs, what is the teacher’s focus? Sometimes it is just a fun warm-up, but more often there is a specific goal. Children do not like mind-numbing repetition. Find the teaching point in the review (i.e., beautiful E’s, breathing, fingering D to C, air use on high notes, etc.).
3. Write down how to do things. “Last two measures of Minuet I” is not enough. How did the teacher break it up? Did you follow the process so it can be duplicated at home? (i.e., do this small group 5 times with no slurs, then add slurs, then speed up, through the A, be careful of the C#.)
4. In scales and exercises, try to notice how they are worked on (i.e., fruit salad, slur patterns, speed, position or tone aspects). Just writing “Do F Major scale” is usually not enough.
5. If you can’t follow where we are in the music, make a copy of the piece as your own study

- copy. Whether you read music or not, you'll find this makes a huge difference.
6. Listen for cues. Your teacher is constantly aware of your presence—and how mentally present you are. Whenever you hear the word “practice,” heads up! Also listen for colorful language: sail your tone out the skylight, staccatos like hammering little nails, BIG beach ball bouncing. Try to use these words again in the practice. Listen for location phrases: “in the last measure of that line, where it starts on B-flat and goes up, where it says crescendo.” These location tips are often for your benefit, as the teacher and student already know where they are working.
 7. Observe and adore your child. Relish the chance to do this. Watch body language, facial expressions, how your child learns, what feelings flicker past. It's very interesting, and you may find something to talk about later, or you may just cherish the memory 10 years from now. However, keep your reactions, especially negative ones, to yourself during the lesson.
 8. Need time to space out? OK. There are times you can, like when the teacher goes off on a long technical workout and you already have the gist of what is being done. But listen for cue words to bring you back to attention.
 9. Help your teacher: Put all materials recently used on the stand at the beginning of the lesson. Ask for clarification of practice tasks at end of lesson. Ask about review if your teacher did not mention it. Try not to do noisy things like rattle newspapers, tear checks, crinkle cellophane, etc. It's easy to forget that listening captures all sounds—and we are listening. Bring up general practice or schedule problems at the beginning of the lesson. Starting these important and timely conversations at the end of the lesson can wreak havoc with the teacher's attempt to stay on time. Keep the teacher informed about events that may affect the child in a significant way (moving, illness, divorce, school troubles, etc.). These things have an impact which the teacher observes, and wants to respond to appropriately. Lengthy explanations are not needed, but a word will enable the teacher to respond in a sensitive, effective way.

Daily Chore or Joy? Why Listen?

By Janice Peters

Our lives are all so busy so it is easy fall prey to the temptation of skipping daily listening or daily practice or both. So think of what happens when we skip? Why do we need to be faithful to both?

Imagine trying to learn a foreign language without ever having heard it spoken. Now think how much easier it is with an “immersion” experience. When Suzuki devised his “mother tongue method,” he capitalized on the fact that learning the language of music works much the same way as learning any language.

So why listen to the recordings? Here are a few good reasons:

1. First, listening to good quality music is enjoyable. It increases our musical sensitivity and this enjoyment motivates the listener to continue listening.
2. It is so much easier to master the rhythms and use correct intonation (playing in tune) when the correct example is already stamped on the mind. This also enables self-correction as the learning takes place. Once imprinted, the music enters the subconscious mind and a “musical intuition” (brain- finger connection) forms.
3. Listening actually allows the brain to experience the music before you play it. This is like “practicing for free” without doing the work! (However, this cannot substitute for the consistent daily practice!)
4. Being able to hear or sing the piece in the mind makes learning easier. Listening gives us this ability. It is akin to visualizing a perfect golf swing or a well-executed tennis serves prior to playing. Research has shown this really works!

So help make your child’s learning easier. Play the work piece on endless repeat each morning. Also include the previous (“polish”) and subsequent (new) pieces. This music will remain playing in the brain all day. (How many of us have had an annoying radio or TV jingle play over and over in our mind wishing we “could turn it off?”) Also listen in the background other times during the day (as in the car), concluding at bedtime.

Need a reminder? Put a clothespin or a hair clip on your bathroom towel, toothbrush, or pajamas to remind you to turn on the music at bedtime. Stick a sticker on the light switch of your child’s room. Tie a “reminder ribbon” on the car steering wheel instead of around your finger. Use a twist tie on a kitchen cabinet, breakfast coffee or cereal box, or in the silverware drawer. You can have fun with this, too. Hide clues and have a daily “treasure hunt” or draw from a hat each day to see who turns the recording on and off. Have a family contest to see who comes up with the most

creative suggestions. Also, those automatic timers (for turning on lights), which can be set to turn on and shut off at predetermined hours, work well.

Play the entire CD or tape on a regular basis as well. You can have fun with it, too. Try dancing the rhythms or “head, finger or feet dancing” or make up your own fun. Be creative!

You have chosen to give your child the gift of instrumental music. Imagine how much quicker and easier you’ll both enjoy this treasure as you listen each day.

You’ll make new discoveries each time you hear the music, and your child will be on the way to experiencing the joy of finer playing with ease, coupled, of course, with diligent daily practice. So, HAPPY LISTENING! Start now.

Home Practice Essentials for Fostering Practice Independence

Adapted from the book *Expanding Horizons: the Suzuki Student Grows Up* by Mark Bjork

The dynamics of the Suzuki Triangle change from year to year and sometimes even day to day. Eventually, your child will need to become responsible for their entire home practice.

Analysis by the student should be part of every practice at home to help your child later assert independence in their violin practice.

Here are some sample questions that when asked in this order will foster in your child the maturity to decide what and how to practice. Use this like a script until you and your child have comfortably integrated these questions (or your own version) as a part of your daily practice.

1. How do you think you played?
2. What do you think you could improve?
3. What did your teacher suggest to take care of that problem?
4. How many times do you think that should be repeated for it to become easier?
5. How secure does that feel now?
6. Are you ready to try that section/piece all at once?

It is assumed that you will give your child ample time to answer your query.

Please be sensitive to your child's thought and response time. Remember that this is a chance for them to learn to analyze how to practice problem areas.

Parents must also be sensitive to when the child tires of the responsibility of making the decisions and needs the parent to take over. Maturity such as this is not achieved all at once, so use this practice method a little bit each day to grow their independence slowly over time!

This will prove to be an invaluable skill later in their violin practice.

The Practice Process

Mr. Bjork outlines as an interesting approach to decide what to practice using the analogy of a doctor's visit.

1. The Examination: Play a piece, decide if anything can be improved.
2. The Diagnosis: After identifying the problem, decide how to correct it.
3. The Medicine: Do the necessary work to affect a "cure."
4. The Check Up Exam: Play the piece/section again to see if the cure has been achieved.
5. The Follow Up Exam: Decide if the medicine needs to be administered again or if the cure should be reviewed at the next practice in order to maintain excellent health of the piece/section.

25 Practice Tips for the Parent who has Run out of Ideas after the First Week of lessons:

1. Vary the practice location. During the summer, practicing outside can make both of you enjoy the practice a little more.
2. Pick a different location for each task on your practice list. (Example: Warmups in the laundry room, one review song in each bedroom, new song in the bathroom, etc.)
3. Play for stuffed animals, super heroes, favorite dolls, a blanket, etc. Serve refreshments after you perform.
4. PRACTICE EVERY DAY. If possible in several short sessions, especially for the young.
5. Surprise your child by telling him that you want him to pick 5 things off his practice list and just give you a concert that day instead of practice. Remember NOT to give any criticisms since its a concert.
6. Use something to count the number of times something is done perfectly such as rocks, colored paper clips, pennies, beans, buttons, popcorn, raisins, anything.
7. Keep a practice log. At the end of 25 hours do something special. For very young children you may want to make the goal achievable by the end of one week.
8. Number all the tasks on your practice list from 1-12. Roll the dice to see what number comes up and do whatever corresponds with that number.
9. Give young students a ticket each time you practice. Tickets may be cashed in later.
10. Make slips of paper to put in a hat and the child draws them out. The slips offer specific suggestions.
11. Occasionally have a treat after a good practice or before a practice session. Do it as a surprise. Don't bribe the child by saying "if you practice, we'll have some cookies."
12. Prepare a concert for another parent or Grandparents. "Let's show them what you can do!" or "Let's surprise them!"
13. Take some time to plan your practice session
14. Be sure to take and keep good notes in your Lessons Notebook.
15. Praise, praise, praise! Specific, enthusiastic, and sincere!
16. Ask your teacher to borrow her violin version of the Chutes and Ladders game for a week.
17. Perform a concert for your video recorder and watch it afterwards.
18. Break up your practice session with exercises such as somersaults, sit-ups, cart wheels, jumping jacks, etc.
19. Check out books in your teacher's studio. These are on loan at any time and there is a wealth of information and motivation there.
20. Have a calendar that the child gets to draw something or glue something on each day after practice.
21. Do anything that works.
22. Nothing works forever.
23. Remember that YOU should control the practice.
24. Remember that your child is NOT likely to "take ownership" or responsibility of their own practice. Most children are not self motivated to work.
25. Listen, listen, listen, listen, listen! To your CD. It will solve many problems.

Resistance:

Some Ideas for Getting the Job Done in Spite of It

By Edmund Sprunger

Cover the basics. Make sure the technique works well enough so the child can feel successful in the short and long term. Attend group classes and concerts. Listen to the Suzuki tapes. Listen to lots of other music well. Take careful notes at lessons.

Give the child lots of choices. A child must be given genuine choices, or it doesn't work. Craft your questions in such a way that the child can have a real choice. (e.g. If you know a child needs to practice "Allegro," do NOT ask "Do you want to practice 'Allegro'?" INSTEAD – "Do you want to practice 'Allegro' before 'Song of the Wind,' after we practice 'Song of the Wind, or after we practice 'Perpetual Motion'?") When you give children choices and are flexible at every opportunity you possibly can be, it makes it easier not to give choices when you can't (there may be times when it is crucial to play "Allegro" after "Song of the Wind").

Request what's working well. Ask children to do what they're already doing well. This is difficult to resist. Catching kids goofing up is a no-brainer.

Consider ignoring it. Remember that ignoring some behaviors may be a wise move.

Don't just do something, stand there. Let the child struggle. Praise the process later. (Parents: This move is not just to show the teacher you know how to praise, but to give genuine praise. Kids can smell the difference miles away.)

Sing! SING! Make sure you're both thinking of the same song.

Be honest about cooperation. "Co-operate" doesn't mean "do what your parent or the teacher says," it means "We work together." Ask the child to report on the work you're doing, and you report on the work the child is doing.

Ask; don't tell. Ask the child to report whether the desired outcome happened ("Play 'Long, Long Ago,' and then I'm going to ask you if the bow colored one spot on the string.") If the child's report does not accurately reflect what happened, before labelling the child a "liar", consider the following possibilities:

1. The child may not have understood the instructions (I always consider this a graceful and polite place to start)
2. The child may need to save face (What is the child risking if he admits he did it incorrectly?)

Ask yourself "How does the child benefit from this behavior?" Know that the child is working to get something, not simply trying to make the parent work harder. If he were, what would be in it for him? Remember that the child may not consciously know what he hopes to get, in which case he won't be able to tell you what he wants directly (See "...resistance as a gift").

Play games. Play games the child can and wants to win: Cards, Pennies, Peel-off stickers

Use the resistance. Ask for it. ("Push your head into my hand.")

Allow the child to pick the practice time. Play is the child's work, and getting interrupted can be a big irritation. If the child still fusses, develop a full picture for the child of the behavior you want. Instead of saying "Don't fuss" you say "Quietly stand in rest position and get ready for a bow when the timer goes off" (or whatever "NOT fussing" means to you). If child fails to produce the desired behavior when it's time to practice, the the parent gets to choose the practice time the next day.

Discuss goals. Talk to the child to see if you both want the same thing. (e.g. "You know, I would like nothing better than to have you be able to do it by yourself. That's why I'm doing it with you now.")

Discard words like "concentrate" and "focus". I usually consider these words to be useless with anyone under the age of... well, with anyone of any age. Instead, give the child something to focus on ("Stay in rest position while I count to five" ---or--- "Listen for evenness in the sixteenth notes in the last movement").

Ask yourself questions. "When a child resists me I feel ____." "A perfect child would always ____ and never ____." "a person who wanted to make me resistant could ____."

Think of resistance as a gift. Consider that resistance might be the child's way of helping you. Resistance may be the child's way of cooperating by showing the adult what doesn't work. In this sense, it may be a gift. (It may be a gift and irritating!)

Remember that slow practice is difficult. This does not mean that a child can avoid doing it. What it does mean is that it's o.k. For a child to be frustrated and to loathe doing it --- while at the same time the child does the slow, careful practice. You can't control feelings.

Follow through with consequences, both negative and positive. If you tell a child you will take her to the zoo on Saturday if she practices every day this week, be sure to take her to the zoo if she holds up her end of the bargain. If she doesn't hold up to her end of the bargain, don't take her to the zoo. A promise is a promise, and kids thrive on stability and dependability. A child whose parents don't follow through on consequences (including negative ones) is likely to become angry and / or scared. (See Clarke, Jean: Growing up again)

Know that children can't understand our frustrations. It's more likely that we can understand theirs. We can go down to their level, but they can't come up to ours.

The Ins and Outs of Progress

By Lamar Blum

Our recent Recital Week gave all who attended a glimpse of music students in action. Pieces had been polished and rehearsed. Students dressed up. Parents provided tempting treats. The excitement of wanting to hear each student play buzzed through the group. An anxious look at the program told students when they would play. Every recital was filled with the same agendas and expectations. Every recital held beautiful music played by students with little experience as well as those who have been playing for many years.

A comment that surfaces after a program is, “Hasn’t Janie progressed a lot? She was in Book 2 last year, and here she is playing a Book 4 piece!” That is a great thing to recognize, but I’m wondering about the student who hasn’t covered so much obvious musical ground. Are they still progressing? The outward signs of a student making progress are clear. The student learns many pieces, plays with more expression, has more and better control of how to navigate the instrument, looks like he/she enjoys what he is doing, and is able to communicate musically with the audience.

Let’s set these wonderful elements aside for a moment and take a look at some not-so-obvious things that can still be called progress. It is difficult to determine inward progress as it is happening. Let’s say a student played on recital this year but played a piece only two pieces farther than last year’s piece. Did this student progress? Yes, but it doesn’t seem like very much. In this scenario, the parent might become discouraged. As a teacher, I would not think there is a lack of progress if the attitude of the parent is one of patience and trust in what the teacher is doing. If the parent has the child’s best interest at heart and if practice time is a regular event, something is happening inside the child.

Progress is usually defined as movement. Movement isn’t always forward. It will be sideways, backwards, diagonally and sometimes up and down in the learning process. The important learning goes on inside each of us no matter what the subject. As adults, we are capable of telling what goes on inside. It is more difficult to discover what is going on inside your child.

Suzuki tells of the persistent patience of a mother working with her child. A mother working with her child was having trouble with the bow flying from her hand. The child was able to play “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star” within six months. However, control of her bow hold eluded her for a long time. It seemed this skill was impossible. The mother and the teacher did not give up. When the child was

at last able to hold the bow throughout the song, the child and parent were very happy.

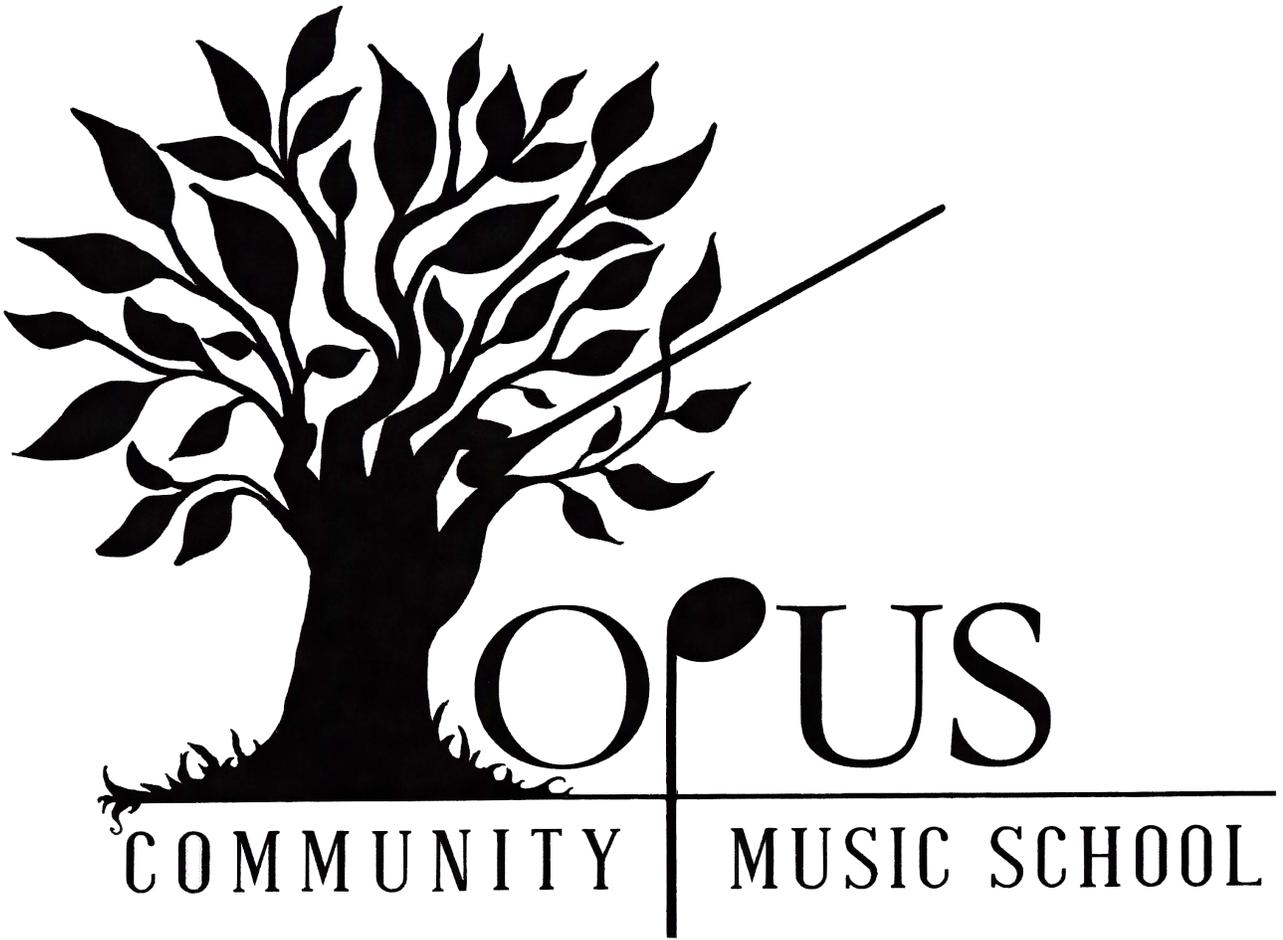
I quote from Suzuki, “An invisible growing faculty helped to breed a new ability until it finally became visible to all.” It maybe a long time before we can tell what our child’s “invisible growing faculty” is, but it’s there. As was the case in this child, what keeps a student from outward progress is not usually instrument related. She had suffered from infantile paralysis and was finding her way back to health by using the violin.

I enjoy challenging a student when I believe that their mind is on something besides the piece to be played in a lesson. I remind them that our mind is like a CD with lots of information on it. I ask that the student take out that CD—we sometimes push the imaginary eject button—and put in a blank one. Then, I ask them to play their piece. It is amazing how well they can play when an entertaining visualization is used.

As I perused Webster’s Dictionary to clarify the definition of progress, I found words like “gradual, steady improvement,” “an official journey [of a sovereign]” and “to continue toward completion.” I would hold each of these phrases up for your consideration. We are looking for gradual, steady improvement. That is the kind that runs deep and holds meaning for you and your child. You are on an official journey with your child through life. We don’t have to be kingly for this role to be relevant. But life is official and Suzuki wanted your child to benefit the most from making beautiful music. And, lastly, the phrase “to continue” sounds important to me. I have heard many people state their regrets about not continuing a child’s music lessons. Once we find ourselves in the “regret zone,” it is difficult to retrieve the momentum of the musical experience. I believe it is better to continue while evaluating ways to make the situation enriching for your child. Even when children are resisting, there is something of benefit going on inside.

All of this is said to encourage you to focus on the inward journey of your child’s musical experience. It’s our job as adults to help our children make headway, rise, grow, gain ground, step forward, forge ahead, shoot ahead, dash ahead, go ahead, move ahead (according to Roget’s Thesaurus) and most of all...KEEP GOING.

Reprinted from “The Write Note,” Winter, 2005, a publication of the Suzuki School of Elgin.



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2019-2020 Calendar

SEPTEMBER 2019						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
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30						

OCTOBER 2019						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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28	29	30	31			

NOVEMBER 2019						
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DECEMBER 2019						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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JANUARY 2020						
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FEBRUARY 2020						
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MARCH 2020						
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APRIL 2020						
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13	14	15	16	17	18	19
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MAY 2020						
Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
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11	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31

Important Dates:

Fall Semester: SEP 4th-DEC 22nd
 Fall Break: NOV 27th-DEC 1st
 Winter Break: DEC 23rd- JAN 5th
 Spring Semester: JAN 13th-MAY 3rd
 Spring Break: APR 8th- APR 14th

Studio Events:

Fall Semester:
 Master Class: NOV 23rd
 Recital Dress Rehearsal: DEC 7th
 Makeup Week: JAN 6th-12th
 Spring Semester:
 Master Class: APR 18th
 Recital Dress Rehearsal: APR 25th
 Makeup Week: MAY 4-10th

Performance Calendar:

Opus Faculty at Fairhaven: SEP 3rd & FEB 18th
 Opus Pocus: OCT 27th
 Fall Student Recital: DEC 14th
 Fall Recital Snow Backup: DEC 15th
 Spring Student Recital: MAY 2nd
 Caroll County Arts Council Faculty Recitals: OCT 12th & MAY 9th
 Adult Student Soiree: MAY 15th