

## General FAQ's

Frequently Asked Questions: This page contains answers to common questions of students and parents:

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### **Renting an instrument**

Renting can be a good choice for a beginning band student. If you decide after a year or two that you do not want to play that instrument or want to upgrade to a more professional instrument, this is an easy alternative.

The downside of renting is that you usually pay the full retail price for an instrument, unless you pay it off early. Most music stores have incentives and are interest free.

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### **Purchase an instrument**

This is a great choice for those who know what instrument they want to play.

The cost savings can be as high as 35% lower than renting. Brands of instrument worth looking at purchasing are Selmer, Bach, Yamaha, Buffet, King, Vito and Conn items. Each brand has some good models, and some bad. Again, ask your teacher the questions about this topic.

If you go to purchase an instrument, and the price is very inexpensive.....BEWARE!!!. Many of these instruments are not worth buying. If something goes wrong with them, most of the time they cannot be repaired. Many repair places do not work on these

cheaper horns as they fall apart when being repaired.  
If you have questions on a particular instrument or brand, go ahead and ask and I will give you an answer as factual as I can.  
Do NOT buy the instruments that are colorful! Although they look “fun”, they are on the low end of quality.

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## **HOW TO HELP YOUR CHILD PRACTICE**

by Ralph Hultgren

Practice is the most important component of your child's weekly routine for developing as a musician. The fundamentals presented in their lessons are made real and substantiated in well constructed practice.

There are a number of areas that must be considered when assisting your child in both practicing and planning their practice.

Essentially, you need to ensure that the child has:

- \*a reasonable physical environment
- \*an established time and procedure for practice
- \*some idea of what it is they should be practicing
- \*a chance to perform
- \*constructive and positive responses from you

### **A Reasonable Physical Environment**

Not all of us have a perfect environment in which the young musician is able to practice. Some of us have the piano in the living room, some have the children practice in the study or in their room. What is important here is to consider a few points that may turn that non-perfect venue into a more useful space and also allow the child to feel comfortable to practice in.

### **Consider the following:**

- \*the area needs to be acoustically suitable
- \*the area needs to be ventilated and to have sufficient light
- \*suitable arrangements need to be made for the water that comes out of wind instruments
- \*consideration must be given to neighbors, siblings and people

sleeping during the day.

\*a suitable chair should be available

\*a music stand needs to be available that will allow for adjustments as they grow and in line with practice standing and sitting

\*a safe place to store the instrument, stand and music may need to be provided, especially if there are little fingers around

### **An Established Time and Procedure for Practice**

Routine is vital for both growth and application to growth. Make sure that a particular time of the day is set aside for practice (just like homework)

Allow the child to prepare and to be aware of the importance of the activity.

It is imperative that parents realize that the amount of practice is not as important as the consistency of it! We must teach our students to practice smart-not just to practice hard. Ten minutes per day for the beginner is better than 45 minutes every third day. Teachers need to advise their students on how to practice and parents should avail themselves of the opportunity to ask the teacher advice on this matter.

### **Consider the following:**

\*consistency is more important than the amount

\*planning the days practice is vital in ensuring there is satisfaction, through achievement and no waste of time and energy

\*an established time allows them to know that the practice is valuable

\*a simple diary of practice time allows them to become aware that the commitment of time leads to progress.

### **Some Idea of What it is They Should be Practicing**

From an early age the child should be preparing what it is they practice and not just starting at the top left-hand corner of the page they open the book at. The idea of established procedure noted above must include the process of planning what they should do in their practice.

There are many ways to approach your child's practice planning.

### Consider the following:

Be prepared to assist them to begin

Less is more. Don't expect them to achieve mountains of practice or defeat difficult techniques all in one session- especially the beginners

Be prepared to be in the room with them when they practice to aid with establishing the routine and facilitating the plan they have devised

Ask them what they want to achieve in their practice and how they might do it

Let them make errors and self correct

Let them make errors and leave the error to be corrected later.

The error may not connect directly with their plan

A plan for practice may include:

- warm up
- technical studies
- pieces for performance
- ensemble music
- fun!
- performance

### A Chance to Perform

All too often the young musician labours away in their room and is never heard

other than when they play in their school ensemble (or here in a Young Con

group). They practice alone and are never heard alone other than in a lesson.

Have them play for you. Younger students especially enjoy

performing. The

end result of all the hard work in the practice room is to share their musical skills through performance. Allow them to!

Consider the following:

allow them to perform a piece for you in their practice session

give them the opportunity to present for you. They can present a

small concert for you, grandparents etc

involve other friends who have music in their lives as either performers or listeners

encourage their positive self esteem and presence as they perform

◆ as they grow older don't let that process die away. No teenager likes to be trotted out to play for Nana BUT if they have always played then there is no compromise in doing it as a teenager

Constructive and positive responses from you

Sometimes we feel the need to correct every error when someone is practicing.

When the child doesn't stop we think they have missed that mistake. We must understand that sometimes it's not important to fix every mistake. The child may have planned to get through to the end or, the error wasn't something that was part of their problem area to address in that section of the music.

There may be many reasons why what we hear may not be the best but we must be sure to work on encouraging them and not always pointing to their errors.

The areas where we can hear problems should be addressed as areas of opportunity for the child not as matters to be dealt with negatively. For example, don't be afraid to say that the piece is getting better when you can tell it has a long way to go. It is better to say that than to tell them it has a long way to go. This, That is getting better. The sound is much improved. There are some parts that are still interesting (said with a smile) but that's sounding so much more musical is much more effective than, Well, the tone still can be better and you fumbled some notes at the beginning and the sound went flat every time you went high. They may both be descriptions of the same performance but one is going to have a much more vibrant and empowering effect than the other.

Consider these possibilities:

- ◆ find the positive in a performance before the areas of opportunity are considered
- ◆ present honest remarks but consider them in the light of the above points before presenting them
- ◆ don't be afraid of non-musical descriptions. You don't need to be a musician to be able to describe the dancing, joyful or lonely qualities of a piece of music
- ◆ ask your child how they feel about the performance they have just given
- ◆ ask your child about the music and encourage their engagement with it

Conclusion

Music making is a unique way of understanding self and the environment one is in.

Music making can give self-confidence and provide a wonderful medium of self-expression.

Musical expressiveness is a way to present and deal with feelings across the broad emotional landscape in a personal and completely honest way. As parents and teachers we should work toward facilitating those outcomes for our children. The practice room and routine are the foundations on which we can allow our children to build those musically expressive skills and concepts.

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### **A Word About E-bay purchases**

E-bay can be a great company to purchase items from. I have purchased many items from e-bay. There is a problem that arises in that people state they have an item of great quality when it is not. That is the case with

many musical instrument companies. There has been an influx of many inferior instruments being sold and e-bay gets many of these. Without writing for many pages the basic issue many band directors and repairman see is that they are not repairable if something comes off, missing or broken, basically making the horn disposable. I personally caution people from buying from e-bay unless one is an expert in the instrument companies. Even many of the best names in instruments have cheap (not inexpensive) horns that are not worth purchasing.

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### **A Word about Cheap Instruments**

If the price on an instruments seems to good to be true, then it is. There are no deals out there so to speak.

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### **Where do I get my instrument repaired?**

1. Show Mr. Olsen. Sometimes he is able to repair it for you. If it needs to go to the repair shop, Mr. Olsen will recommend where to send your instrument.

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### **SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE**

"SHARING THE GOOD NEWS WITH THE RIGHT PEOPLE"Tim

Lautzenheiser

Music advocacy, by definition, means we are 'vocal' about our various thoughts

and beliefs concerning the importance of music education for everyone. We

continue to gather positive data concerning the impact of music learning; the

ongoing research points to the countless benefits of investing in the study of

music, however the information itself is of little value unless it is delivered to the right people. Perhaps our greatest challenge is the

dissemination of the library of facts and figures supporting the advantages of

being a music-maker in today's world. Who needs to hear this good news?

## 1. PARENTS

We know over 80% of today's musicians developed their musical skills while

attending Public/private School. Clearly, the choice to add music to a child's

daily curriculum is greatly influenced by parents. If the parents are not privy to the latest information pointing to the positive effects of music

study, their decision is bound to be less enthusiastic compared to those

parents who know and understand the myriad of rewards generated via music

learning and music performance. In the beginning stages of music study, the

parents play a pivotal role in encouraging their child to explore the various

avenues of music making.

## 2. ADMINISTRATORS

School administrators want to do what is 'right' for their student clientele.

These are the people who determine the framework of the school day, both in

terms of schedule as well as class offerings. We assume administrators

understand the need for a comprehensive arts program, as well as

the obvious correlation between outstanding academic students and music students; however that is a very naive assumption. Invariably those students who are the academically high achievers are the same students involved in the school music program. Do the administrators take for granted it is a result of the smart students choosing music, or do they understand it is, in fact, the study of music that makes students smarter?

### 3. COUNSELORS

Counselors and advisors are charged with the responsibility of helping students complete high school and prepare for the college, assuming the student is seeking an extended education. The various mandated state requirements combined with the suggested preparatory requisites for admission to the college setting often limits the amount of time for additional classes, i.e., MUSIC. If counselors consider music to be an extra-curricular subject, they will often advise the student to not pursue their music study, but rather replace band, orchestra, and/or choir with a foreign language, advanced calculus, etc. Again, counselors are concerned about the educational welfare of the student; an understanding of the value of music learning affords the advisor a greater advantage that ultimately supports the end goal, student success.

### 4. BOARD OF EDUCATION

Herein lays one of the key areas we often overlook or avoid. By design, the American educational system encourages local involvement in establishing the school curriculum by creating a Board of Education. As elected

officials,  
Board members guide administrators and charge them with the duty of carrying out the various Board decisions; ultimately the Board of Education has the final say-so on any issue; therefore it is crucial that EVERY Board member receives ongoing communication concerning the value of music learning and music making. This often-forgotten small group of decision-makers can be the most influential supporters in assuring the certainty of MUSIC in our schools.

#### 5. COMMUNITY LEADERS

Whether it is members of the Chamber of Commerce, the officers of the Rotary Club, or the Mayor's Counsel, every community has a group of influential key-leaders; their thoughts and opinions carry political clout and are heeded by those who organize and administrate our school programs. They can sway public opinion through the media as well as their personal network of trusted colleagues. Community leaders are keenly aware a necessary component of every thriving society is a strong school system; outstanding schools have comprehensive music programs. We must work hand-in-hand with these people so arts education is a part of their visionary plan for the welfare of the community.

#### 6. STUDENTS

As we eagerly share the latest discoveries about music learning with the adult world, we miss one of our most potent audiences; the consumer, the music student. In the midst of teaching music, we must make the time to integrate the all-important music-advocacy materials as part of their daily lesson plans. Perhaps retention in music programs would increase if

the young artists knew the often-hidden rewards of music study. In addition to the intrinsic joy of creating music, there are many educational, emotional, and economical reasons to participate in a musical organization. Each of these six categories could easily be split into several sub-divisions:

Parents: Elementary, middle school, high school, college, non-music parents, parents with students who have graduated, and parents who are about to have students ready for music.

Administrators: Superintendents, Assistant Superintendents, Curriculum Coordinators, Principals, Assistant Principals, Department Heads, Supervisors, etc.

Counselors: Those who serve as counselors are often other educators in the school, local ministers, coaches, a favorite teacher, assigned advisors; literally anyone who has an influence on curriculum decisions.

Board of Education: Present members, candidates for future Board positions, past Board participants, and those who are close friends of Board members.

Community Leaders: Every business person in the town, members of the clergy, the local politicians, and even the morning coffee club made up of the shakers-and-movers in the town.

Students: Those presently in music, those getting ready to explore their musical careers, and those who appreciate music. From the nursery

to the  
nursing home, everyone is a potential music student.

Unfortunately, we often find ourselves ◊preaching to the choir.◊ It is not difficult to get musicians, music educators, and music parents to agree about the importance of music; these are the people who have already made a commitment and the music advocacy information simply confirms their favorable posture. It is now time to move out of the comfort zone and begin to communicate with those who are not involved in music. We have a great story to tell; making music is more than playing an instrument or singing in a choir, it creates a blueprint of success that transfers to every aspect of life.

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