

LIVE OAK CHARTER SCHOOL ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why can't my child use any old violin I purchase?

Violins come in a variety of sizes, and each student needs to be comfortable with that size. Sizing can only be done in person, usually at a music store where the violin will be rented for the school year. We have some loaners from Wells Fargo Center for the Arts for which we will measure the children ourselves. These loaners are very limited in quantity.

2. Why are the Beginning Woodwinds meeting at the same time as the Advanced Strings?

String classes and the study of a stringed instrument require a longer period of time to develop to the same level as the study of a woodwind. Placing the advanced strings with the beginning woodwinds simply means that each student, regardless of the instrument they study, will be on a comparable level, and be able to play together, and, the string students will have had an additional year of study to bring them to a comfortable level of proficiency.

3. Why do we have limited instrument choices?

The study of instrumental music, for any instrument, requires immense focus on the part of the student and the teacher. Offering too many choices would mean that teachers would be unable to focus a diverse group of instruments and hence be unable to provide the quality of instruction that every student wants and deserves.

4. Can my third grader join?

Ms. Petering has requested that the entire 3rd grade start violin simultaneously in a true Waldorf fashion, building community along the way. We would like to honor this request. We will make exceptions on a case-by-case basis according to years of private study the individual student has been engaged in.

5. What about second grade and below?

At Live Oak a generous donation to the school has placed pentatonic lyres and glockenspiels in the Kindergarten through 3rd grades, and the 3rd graders each have the chance to play a diatonic lyre and Bordune strumming lyres. Beginning in the first grade there are instrumental music programs for young children in this age group at other schools, primarily in the Suzuki philosophy, which starts the children playing without reading music. Emphasis on music reading, which is more appropriate for the older child, will be what we do in the older groups.

6. What is my child going to learn?

Students in each instrumental music class will learn the basics of musical technique for their chosen instrument, and will become proficient at reading music. The beginning violinists will spend a few months NOT reading music, just learning technique and playing of songs by rote (ala Suzuki). The woodwinds and "advanced" strings will read music. They will also have the opportunity to become a community of young musicians who will act as a team, performing together with mutual support.

7. Why didn't students in last year's program read music last year?

The instrumental music program in 2007-08 was started during the last two months of the school year. In such a short period of time, it would have been extremely difficult for students to learn to gain music reading skills along with their gain of technical skills for the

violin. Playing the violin first requires a physical connection which would be hampered by the addition of note study. It is our intention to have students find that good physical connection first with the instrument, and then introduce note study in support of that, something which last year's brief calendar could not possibly have supported.

8. Who is teaching the class?

The beginning string class will be taught as a team by *Sandra Yen and **Richard Riccardi. The beginning woodwind class will be taught by Sandra Yen and Richard Riccardi will be teaching the advanced strings.

9. What methods will be used?

Advanced strings and beginning string classes after January, 2009, will be using Essential Elements 2000 for strings. Woodwind classes will be using Essential Elements Band Method. All books are easily obtainable at local music stores.

10. Do we need music stands?

We will be using music stands in class, and strongly suggest that a music stand be purchased for practice use at home, in order to provide the best possible environment for developmental success for our students.

11. Can I borrow an instrument?

Instrument loans and/or scholarships are available on a case by case basis. Please contact us privately if you are in need.

12. Can my student taking private lessons join?

Yes they can, and if they are currently taking private lessons or have considerable private lesson experience, we would welcome them to join **with no fee** for the class.

13. How late can we sign up?

The deadline for class signups is the last day in October.

14. What are the long term goals for these instrumental music classes?

We are watching the advanced youth orchestras and bands in the area, and would like to be in support of them. Our first long range goal is to develop a school ensemble which would be presented to the school community in the form of concert performances. Beyond that, we would like to encourage our students to audition for more advanced musical groups in Petaluma and the surrounding communities, such as the orchestra at Cinnabar Theatre, and the Santa Rosa Youth Symphony.

***Sandy Yen** has her MM from Manhattan School of Music in voice with piano minor. She also is a professional flutist in orchestras and show bands.

****Richard Riccardi** has his MMA from Yale University in piano performance with a minor in violin and conducting. He has been the founder and director of the award winning music program (including strings and band) for White Hill Middle School in Fairfax for 13 years and just retired in 2008.