

Manlius Pebble Hill School

Lower School Suzuki Strings: 2020-2021

Program Overview

The Suzuki strings and orchestra programs at MPH strive to cultivate both a fundamental understanding and lifelong love of music. Studying an instrument positively impacts children's overall development, including areas of self-confidence, academic discipline, and creative thinking. Additionally, playing in an ensemble builds stronger communities and provides a place for building lasting friendships - and it's fun!

The youngest learners at MPH may elect to enroll in the Suzuki strings program. The program supplements the kindergarten through second grade performing arts curriculum, which includes general music and dance classes. In third grade, students may elect to take instrumental lessons and join in an ensemble (band or orchestra). The lessons and ensemble program supplements the performing arts curriculum, which includes general music, chorus, and dance classes. Beginners and experienced players are welcome in all grades. During at least the first semester of 2020, ensembles will perform virtually only.

Suzuki Method

The basis of the Suzuki Method is that *every child can learn*. The approach suggests that musical aptitude is not inborn but rather nurtured through practice and environment. In particular, the *mother-tongue approach* applies the teaching principles of language with music; first, we learn to "speak" (play by ear), and then we learn to "read" (play from the page) with an instrument. In doing so, note reading is separated from playing at the beginning stages and then later added in as playing becomes more natural. Beginner students learn in small groups with their peers to foster an age-appropriate optimal learning environment that is positive, fast-paced, and engaging. Lastly, parent or caregiver participation, and regular listening to the repertoire are some additional elements of the method.

Suzuki Study & Lessons During Covid-19

For the youngest learners, parents serve as the home teacher in Suzuki instruction. Typically, parents attend K-2 lessons. However, this will not be possible during this atypical year. Assignments, practice tutorials, and information about the Suzuki Method will be posted on the mphorchestra.org website. Parents may sign up for bi-weekly Zoom office hours with Mrs. Mirakian. All in-person lesson groups will have a maximum of four students. Mrs. Mirakian will be wearing both a face mask and face shield during lessons. Music will be projected on a large screen during lessons to avoid sharing materials. Mrs. Mirakian will not be handling student instruments during lessons to observe health protocols. Please do your best to tune your child's instrument at home before his or her lesson. Students will learn how to tune their own instruments during lessons. For a crash course in tuning, [please see this tutorial](#). Additionally, personalized support will be available in re-recorded tutorials, and during live parent sessions. A sanitized, MPH owned instrument will be available in the classroom for young students that cannot set up their instrument independently or if an instrument is not tunable during the lesson time.

Class Description by Grade

Pre-K: Suzuki Prep

All Pre-K students will take a Suzuki Prep class that meets for 30-minutes once a week. This is a preparatory class that introduces our youngest learners to the violin and cello. Students will develop instrumental readiness skills that will prepare them for the study of an instrument beginning in kindergarten. During the 2020-2021 school year, this class will meet via Zoom live in the Pre-K classroom.

K-5 Suzuki Lessons

For students choosing in-person instruction

Option 1

Students will have a 25-minute small group or private lesson socially distanced in the music room.

Option 2

Students attending school on campus may opt for pre-recorded video lessons that can be reviewed independently at home. Students will submit videos for feedback.

For students choosing distant learning while campus is open:

Weekly Lessons will alternate between pre-recorded video lessons and a bi-weekly 20-minute private or small group Zoom lesson.

For all students if campus closes:

If campus closes and we transition to distant learning for all, students will have a weekly pre-recorded lesson and may sign up for a bi-weekly 20-minute private or group lesson.

Instrument & Material Information

As a reminder, the MPH rental program is discontinued ([May 2020 communication](#)). All families are responsible for renting or buying their own instruments. In addition to an instrument, families should plan on getting the following accessories: rosin, a cleaning cloth, a shoulder rest (violin and viola), and a rock-stop (cello and bass).

All minor repairs, such as string changes, should be done independently or at an instrument repair shop. Some shops, such as Acro Art, provide tuning services. There are many good options available at all price points. However, proper sizing and instrument setup is especially important for learning without difficulty. A poor quality instrument at a price that seems too good to be true will likely be of the constant need of tuning, repairs, and adjustments. This will pose more challenges than ever with our in-lesson health protocols.

The following companies are recommended for instruments and supplies:

Acro Art, Liverpool, NY; arcoart.net

Hosmer Violins, Fayetteville, NY; hosmerviols.com

Shar Music, quality online sales and rentals; sharmusic.com

Sullivan Strings: Rentals and sales, will ship; Rochester, NY

Johnson Strings: Rentals and sales, will ship; Newton Upper Falls, MA