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Music Space

What do you need for creative music practicing sessions for your child?

Creating an ideal environment for your child to practice his/her instrument isn't just about comfort - it's also about creating a space for music creation in your and your child's life. With that in mind, this article offers some suggestions about what kind of a space and equipment you will need to make your child's music practice as enjoyable and productive as possible.

Above all else, it is critical that there be a spot in your home devoted to music. It doesn't have to be large - a corner of a room will do - but it should be reserved for your child's instrument, sheet music, music stand, and other things required for practice, creation, and experimentation. Ideally, this space will be in a quiet area without a television or other distractions.



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Shoulder rest or no?

A shoulder rest is an accessory that can be found on violins and violas. It may be made of wood, aluminium, carbon fiber or plastic. Usually, the shoulder rest attaches to the edge

of the back of the violin with padded rubber tubing or soft plastic. The goal of a shoulder rest is to allow a more comfortable attitude while playing by adding height to the shoulder

and preventing the instrument from slipping. *I require all my students to have a Kun shoulder rest to help them develop good posture in the left hand.*

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Special points of interest:

- Creative music spaces
- Shoulder rests
- The History of the violin
- Vivaldi

Origin of the violin

Stringed instruments first were recorded in Europe in the medieval ages. By "stringed" we refer to instruments played with a bow. This instrument was the "fiddle" of the minnesingers. But it didn't have much in common with a violin. It was in the 15th century when, slowly, the family of gambas and violins developed.

In the times of the renaissance, which had a large impact on all the arts, not least in the construction of instruments. The violin as it is known nowadays was built in the early 16th century. In this climate the viola and the cello

also emerged.

Everything that is explained about the violin and its structures can be referred to the whole family of stringed instruments. This group of instruments has been developed in order to satisfy new ideas of sounds that emerged in these times in Italy. Gradually, it took the place of the gambas and violas that preceded them.

It was with the Cremonese makers working in this environment that the violin and its family reached its

zenith, and although technical innovations have been applied through time, the ground plan and its basic form are still used today.

History of the violin cont....

"...Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence..."

In Italy, which escaped the war of thirty years, violin making reached an enormous upswing. Andrea Amati lived in Cremona between 1535 and 1611; he became the founder of the world's most famous school of violin-making. It is not a certain institute, which is meant but a special local characterisation of all different centres of violinmaking; the art of painting has known a similar effect. So, there are for instance the school of Brescia, of

many more. Afterwards, violin making expounded over the whole continent of Europe. But it was Cremona that was home to the most famous of all violin makers: The families Amati and Guarneri, Antonio Stradivari the families Ruggeri and Bergonzi. For more than 150 years, violins made by Stradivari and Guarneri have been the most desired concert instruments.

Composer Highlight: Vivaldi

Antonio Vivaldi was born in Venice on March 4th, 1678. Though ordained a priest in 1703, according to his own account, within a year of being ordained Vivaldi no longer wished to celebrate mass because of physical complaints ("tightness of the chest") which pointed to angina pectoris, asthmatic bronchitis, or a nervous disorder. It is also possible that Vivaldi was simulating illness - there is a story that he sometimes left the altar in order to quickly jot down

a musical idea in the sacristy.... In any event he had become a priest against his own will, perhaps because in his day training for the priesthood was often the only schooling.

Vivaldi cont.

The reputation of baroque Venice as a musical centre was one of the highest in Europe, due largely to its four conservatories of music. Beginning as charitable foundations they developed gradually as seats of musical learning, and by the early 1700s their excellence was unrivalled. This was confirmed by Charles de Brosses, French Magistrate and President of the Parlement de Dijon, who visited Italy in 1739, reporting in his *Lettres familières écrites d'Italie* and published posthumously in 1799, that "the Ospedali

have the best music here. There are four of them, all for illegitimate or orphaned girls whose parents cannot support them. These are brought up at the State's expense and trained exclusively in music. Indeed they sing like angels, play the violin, flute, organ, oboe, cello, bassoon... The performances are entirely their own and each concert is composed of about forty girls."

As far as his theatrical activities were concerned, the end of 1716 was a high point for Vivaldi. In November, he managed to

have the Ospedale della Pietà perform his first great oratorio, *Juditha Triumphans devicta Holofernis barbaric*. This work was an allegorical description of the victory of the Venetians (the Christians) over the Turks (the barbarians) in August 1716. At the end of 1717 Vivaldi moved to Mantua for two years in order to take up his post as Chamber Capellmeister at the court of Landgrave Philips van Hessen-Darmstadt. His task there was to provide operas, cantatas, and perhaps concert music, too.



humanity." *Ted Turner, Turner Broadcasting System.*

Quotes on why music?

"Studying music encourages self-discipline and diligence, traits that carry over into intellectual pursuits and that lead to effective study and work habits. An association of music and math has, in fact, long been noted. Creating and performing music promotes self-expression and provides self-gratification while giving pleasure to others. In medicine, increasing published reports demonstrate that music has a healing effect on patients.

For all these reasons, it deserves strong support in our educational system, along with the other arts, the sciences, and athletics." *Michael E. DeBakey, M.D., Leading Heart Surgeon, Baylor College of Music.*

* "Music has a great power for bringing people together. With so many forces in this world acting to drive wedges between people, it's important to preserve those things that help us experience our common

* "Music is one way for young people to connect with themselves, but it is also a bridge for connecting with others. Through music, we can introduce children to the richness and diversity of the human family and to the myriad rhythms of life." *Daniel A. Carp, Eastman Kodak Company Chairman and CEO.*

Why music cont...

"Casals says music fills him with the wonder of life and the 'incredible marvel' of being a human. Ives says it expands his mind and challenges him to be a true individual. Bernstein says it is enriching and ennobling. To me, that sounds like a good cause for making music

and the arts an integral part of every child's education. Studying music and the arts elevates children's education, expands students' horizons, and teaches them to appreciate the wonder of life." *U.S. Secretary of Education Richard W. Riley, July 1999.*

* "The nation's top business executives agree that arts education programs can help repair weaknesses in American education and better prepare workers for the 21st century." *"The Changing Workplace is Changing Our View of Education." Business Week, October 1996.*

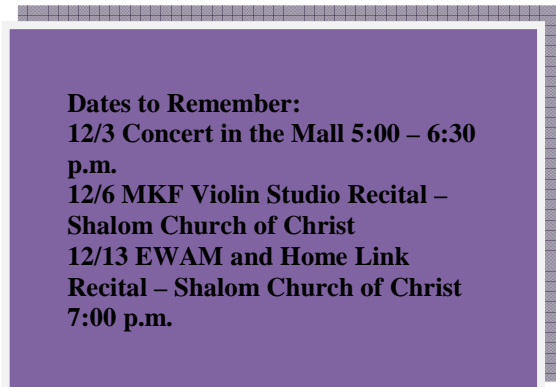
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Eastern Washington Academy of Music is here to help your child reach their full musical potential through private and group instruction. Contact us for more information:

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Dates to Remember:
12/3 Concert in the Mall 5:00 – 6:30 p.m.
12/6 MKF Violin Studio Recital – Shalom Church of Christ
12/13 EWAM and Home Link Recital – Shalom Church of Christ 7:00 p.m.



www.ewamusic.org

Mary K. French - Bio

Ms. French was awarded a Masters in Music in Violin Performance and certification from the University of Idaho. Previously she was given a place at Aspen Music Festival under the then famous Dorothy De Lay. She has been a featured soloist as a child in Columbus, Ohio and as a student, playing with the University of Wyoming Chamber Orchestra. Present engagements have included chamber music with the Eastern Washington Chamber Orchestra, featured solos with the Mid-Columbia Symphony, and

a recital for school children in Lincoln City, OR sponsored by "Let there be Arts". Teachers have included Ferenc Cseszko, Meredith Arksey, Brian Hanly, Beata Vollmer, and Maria Larionoff, Concertmaster of the Seattle Symphony. She has attended many workshops and master classes with the Emerson String Quartet, Claremont Trio, St. Lawrence Quartet, Cypress String Quartet, Peabody Trio, and Amadeus Trio.

Presently she maintains a violin/viola studio in the Tri-Cities and coaches

several chamber groups and orchestras. She plays in the various symphony orchestras in Eastern Washington such as the Mid-Columbia Symphony, Walla Walla Symphony, Oregon East Symphony, Yakima Symphony and Washington East Opera. She presently serves as Concertmaster of the Mid-Columbia Symphony. Also a founding board of trustee of the Eastern Washington Chamber Orchestra, she and husband Mickey are Co-directors of Eastern Washington Academy of Music.