Private Music Lessons - SPA

The Private Music Lesson Program at SPA offers private music lessons in a variety of instruments and voice. Group lessons will be offered upon request. You will find the instructors' names and bios below.

SCHEDULE: Weekly lessons are scheduled during the student's lunch time (LS only), free period or open tutorial time (MS/US only), or before and after school. Since requests will outnumber available times, it may not be possible to accommodate all students' requests. Lessons must be given at school. Students are responsible for getting to the lessons on time. We appreciate your assistance in this matter.

COST: 15 lessons, 30 min. each: $660 per semester; 15 lessons, 45 min. each: $865 per semester. **In case of early withdrawal, no refund will be made once a schedule has been set and lessons have begun**. If possible, missed lessons will be made up, provided at least 24 hours notice has been given and the reason for missing is a valid one. Lack of preparation, busy schedule, or forgetfulness is not a valid reason. Instructors cannot be reached at school, and notice must be given by calling or leaving a message on their personal phone. All instructors will do their best to be flexible with any official SPA schedule changes that the student may encounter. There is no refund for missed or canceled lessons that the instructor is unable to reschedule. If a student who signed up for a whole year decides not to continue lessons in the second semester, the family needs to give the instructor and the business office written notification, signed by the parents by December 15. Parents are responsible for providing supervision for their students (LS/MS) if the lessons don't happen immediately after school. Should a student not satisfy the standards of the instructor, whether it be because of attendance, lack of progress, or attitude, the instructor, in coordination with the Music Program Coordinator, has the right to dismiss the student, but only after the parents have been previously notified and both sides have tried and failed to alleviate the problem. In this case, there is no refund.

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If you are interested in private music instruction for your child, please fill out the sign-up form prior to September 7th (1st semester/full year) or December 17 (2nd semester). The instructor will contact the student to arrange a lesson time. If you sign up after this date, there will be a late fee of $15 and possibly a lesser chance of openings in the teachers' schedules. Almut Engelhardt will coordinate all private and group lessons.

PRIVATE MUSIC LESSON TEACHERS

STRING INSTRUMENTS:

Violin/Viola

Charlotte Howell (LS, MS): Ms. Howell brings more than 30 years of experience teaching private and group lessons to children and adults on piano, violin, and viola. Her teaching is very individualized, as each student brings a different set of experience, understanding, skill, and desire to their lessons. Ms. Howell believes very strongly that every student can learn to play a musical instrument. Her goal is to help each student find connections with what they already know and to bring their ideas and interests to their musical study. The piano and violin methods she uses for beginners are sequences she put together based on established methods that introduce the physical and musical aspects of playing beginning with simple forms. It builds on each element as the student understands and masters it. Music reading and theory are taught as fundamentals. Pieces studied include folk, classical, popular, and jazz styles.More experienced students are introduced to standard classical repertoire. Ms. Howell's background includes conservatory training at the Mannes College of Music and the Aspen Music Festival School. She has a BA in music from Brandeis University and an associate degree in education from Hamline University. Performing experience as a pianist included collaborating with instrumentalists and vocalists, accompanying musical theater and choral groups. As a violist, she is a founding member of the Wayzata Symphony Orchestra and has performed as a violinist with the St. Paul Civic Orchestra.
cfish2x@hotmail.com mobile: 781-249-7072

Adrienne Miller (PK, LS, MS, US): Lessons with Ms. Miller are a combination of individual music enrichment, the highest quality methodology, standard method books, and Ms. Miller's individualized teaching (a blend of mighty learning, lightness, and humor), all of which have grown out of her years of training and experience teaching PK-University level students in violin, piano, viola, cello, bass, and music theory. Her teaching experience includes founding and directing youth orchestras in Garden Grove and Fountain Valley, as well as directing a P-K and 1st – 5th grade strings program at a Montessori collective in Orange and Los Angeles Counties. She holds bachelors' degrees (in music and Chinese) from the University of California, a master's degree in music from the University of California, and she is currently ABD in her doctoral studies. She also holds diplomas in early childhood education focusing on the Arts. Ms. Miller studied with Henry Gronnier at the Colbern School in Los Angeles, Dr. Hakop Makinyan (Student of Yuri Yankelevitch of the famed Moscow Conservatory), Edward Francis, and Andrea Byers (Student of Ivan Galamian); spending her summers at the Lake Chatauqua Music Festival in Upstate New York, Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara, Henry Mancini Jazz Institute in Los Angeles, Hilltop Orchestral Training Program led by members of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and music camp at the University of Minnesota twin cities as a child and teenager. She currently continues her piano studies in the twin cities with Timothy Lovelace. Ms. Miller welcomes students of all levels, learning styles and needs, and many of her current students have continued their studies with her for multiple years from a young age.
istudywithmsmiller@gmail.com istudywithmsmiller.com

Tony Moussa (LS, MS, US): A violin/viola teacher and performer in the Twin Cities area, Tony is on faculty at the St. Joseph School of Music, runs a Suzuki program through Ramalynn Montessori School in Bloomington and is adjunct music teacher at the St. Paul Academy and Summit School. Previously he was the co-director and founder of the American-Lebanese Suzuki Talent Education Program in Beirut, Lebanon where he partnered with the National Conservatory and Antonin University in creating new opportunities for children to learn music. Born in Beirut, Lebanon, Tony Moussa earned his Master of Music degree in violin performance with an emphasis in Suzuki Pedagogy from Southern Illinois University - Edwardsville, after completing a Bachelor in Music Degree cum laude in violin performance from the same institution. Prior to studying in the United States, Tony received his Bachelor Diploma from the Lebanese National Higher Conservatory of Music, and joined the violin faculty there upon his graduation. Tony was a member of the Lebanese Philharmonic Orchestra for over a decade and he has participated in concerts and workshops throughout the Middle East, Europe, and the United States. heivioto@gmail.com (763) 347-9480

Cello

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young age.
istudywithmsmiller@gmail.com istudywithmsmiller.com

GUITAR / UKULELE:

Jeff Thygeson (LS, MS, US) has performed extensively as a soloist, chamber musician, and lead guitarist in various bands throughout North America. Equally at home on electric, steel-string, and nylon-string guitars, he is an accomplished musician at many styles who enjoys playing everything from Bach to rock. He has won multiple performance competitions, been the recipient of several awards throughout his career, and is a former member of the Minneapolis Guitar Quartet. Jeff has a Master of Music degree from the University of Southern California and a Bachelor of Arts from the University of St. Thomas; and has been teaching students of all ages for over 20 years. In addition to SPA, he also teaches at Macalester College and the University of St. Thomas.
thygesonguitar@gmail.com | (952)-994-9373

BRASS INSTRUMENTS:

Trumpet, Trombone, French Horn

Bill Simenson (LS/MS/US): Bill Simenson has been teaching and freelancing in the Twin Cities since 1983. He has performed in a wide variety of styles and with such groups as the Wolverines Classic Jazz Orchestra, Latin Sounds Orchestra, at Mixed Blood and Guthrie Theaters, as well as with other groups and his own ensembles. Member of: International Trumpet Guild, American Composers Forum, American Federation of Musicians. Awards include: Bush Foundation Fellowship in Music Composition, Jerome Foundation Travel and Study Grant. (651) 778-1721 wrs@pro-ns.net

PERCUSSION:

Bill Paul (LS/MS/US): Bill has been an active musician in the Twin Cities for 14 years backing various bands including Joan Rivers, Debbie Duncan, and Bernie Edstrom Starlight Orchestra. Bill has taught at SPA for the past 6 years and also teaches privately through Evans music. He works at Groth Music in the percussion department. 612-706-1898 or cell: 612-267-9904
flamdown@hotmail.com

PIANO:

Elizabeth Barnard (LS, MS): Elizabeth Barnard first taught piano in 1969, and has taught through the St Paul schools for the past 12 years. As a young person she wanted to be an orchestra conductor so she might play all the instruments. She is devoted to her students, always curious about how they learn, how their minds work, and how to help them make sense of what they're learning. Elizabeth also works with young people building boats and doing woodworking. Hobbies include canoeing, gardening, dancing in the kitchen, and following the paths of her granddaughters. Mobile: 651-319-6429, grandmasong@usfamily.net

Charlotte Howell (LS, MS): Ms. Howell brings more than 30 years of experience teaching private and group lessons to children and adults on piano, violin, and viola. Her teaching is very individualized, as each student brings a different set of experience, understanding, skill, and desire to their lessons. Ms. Howell believes very strongly that every student can learn to play a musical instrument. Her goal is to help each student find connections with what they already know and to bring their ideas and interests to their musical study. The piano and violin methods she uses for beginners are sequences she put together based on established methods that introduce the physical and musical aspects of playing beginning with simple forms. It builds on each element as the student understands and masters it. Music reading and theory are taught as fundamentals. Pieces studied include folk, classical, popular, and jazz styles.More experienced students are introduced to standard classical repertoire. Ms. Howell's background includes conservatory training at the Mannes College of Music and the Aspen Music Festival School. She has a BA in music from Brandeis University and an associate degree in education from Hamline University. Performing experience as a pianist included collaborating with instrumentalists and vocalists, accompanying musical theater and choral groups. As a violist, she is a founding member of the Wayzata Symphony Orchestra and has performed as a violinist with the St. Paul Civic Orchestra.
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Ora Itkin (LS): Ora will be on sabbatical for the 2026/2027 school year. She will return in the spring of 2027.
A Russian-born pianist, Ora Itkin is a graduate of the Russian Academy of Music, Tel Aviv University, and the Rubin Academy of Music at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Following the legacy of her teachers in the legendary Heinrich Neuhaus school of piano playing, Ms. Itkin brings more than twenty-five years of experience to her musicianship and pedagogy. She holds positions at the University of St. Thomas and the MacPhail Center for Music, as well as her own private studio in St. Paul. (In person and online lessons). www.oraitkin.com
oraitkin@yahoo.com 651-558-6799

Liz Lupien (LS/MS/US): Liz holds a BA from Middlebury College (1977) and two Masters of Divinity from the University of Spiritual Healing and Sufism (2017 and 2023). She has taught piano privately for more than 5 decades. Recently retired as music director for the Sunday Interdenominational Service at the Veteran's Hospital in Minneapolis, Liz has performed widely at Twin Cities churches, assisted living facilities, and many other venues, including Minneapolis Institute of Art, Southern Theater and Landmark Center. Liz studied composition with Dominic

Argento, and Libby Larson as well as private piano with Alexander Braginsky, Tadeusz Majewski, Stephanie Wendt and Mary Louise Knutson. A long-time student of Unintentional Music creator, Lane Arye. Liz aims to foster a spirit of self-discovery in her students. Website: pianogarden.us (651) 214-0646 lizlupien@gmail.com

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