

2026-27 Music Lesson Info

South High Music

**DUE: Tuesday,
September 15th**

General Information

- Individual lessons **during your music class at South**
- One of the best ways to improve musically and gain confidence in music
- Open and accessible to musicians of all levels and backgrounds
- Individualized instruction from highly-qualified professionals

Payment & Scholarships

- \$40 per 25 minute lesson. Approximately 20 lessons in a year = approximately **\$800** for a year of lessons
- You will pay your private lesson instructor directly
- If payments are not timely (as arranged with your private instructor) a conference will be called to discuss your eligibility and future in the private lesson program
- There may be additional costs to purchase repertoire or technique books
- Our scholarship fund will support 9 full and 6 half scholarships this year. Please indicate your need in the [Google Form](#) Registration

Scheduling

- First week of lessons: Week of September 28th
- Last week of lessons: Week of March 29th
- The General Lesson Calendar is on the next page - it is subject to change per instructor
- Plan ahead! Write down all lesson days in your schedule and communicate with your private instructor about days you will be gone due to family, appointments, field trips, or other reasons
- Makeup lessons will be scheduled with your private instructor on an individual basis
- If you want to continue lessons after March, you can still schedule lessons with your instructor if it works for them

Policies and Expectations

- Students must enroll for the entire school year (September-March)
- **Cancelled/missed lessons:** You must provide at least **24-hours notice** for an absence to be considered excused
 - If you simply do not show up, it counts as an unexcused absence and you will be charged for the lesson
 - **Exception:** you wake up sick the day of your lesson and are not able to participate in your lesson. Contact your instructor ASAP
- Makeup lessons for excused absences could be available depending on instructor availability
- Students must be on time for every lesson, with all materials
- Families must remain timely with payments
- Students will practice between lessons and be prepared to share the week's work with your instructor

Questions or Concerns?

Mr. Dufault (he/him):	Band/Orchestra/Jazz	Jaron.Dufault@mpls.k12.mn.us
Mr. Edington (he/him):	Guitar/Modern Music	Jonathan.Edington@mpls.k12.mn.us
Ms. Meyers (she/her):	Choir	Laurie.Meyers@mpls.k12.mn.us

[Click this link](#) or scan to register:



Having issues registering? Email or call your South Music Teacher, and we will help you!

2026-27 South Music General Lesson Calendar (subject to change per instructor)

Subscribe to the [SHS Music Lesson Google Calendar](#)

Month	Lesson		Week	Notes
SEPTEMBER	1		Sept 28	first week of lessons
OCTOBER	2		Oct 5	
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Oct 12	no school Wed Conferences; Thurs/Fri for MEA
	3		Oct 19	
	4		Oct 26	
NOVEMBER		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Nov 2	CONCERT WEEK (no school Tues for Election Day)
	5		Nov 9	no school Fri for End of Quarter Record Keeping
	6		Nov 16	
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Nov 23	no school Wed, Thurs, & Fri for Thanksgiving
	7		Nov 30	
DECEMBER	8		Dec 7	
	9		Dec 14	
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Dec 21	no school for Winter Break
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Dec 28	no school for Winter Break
JANUARY	10		Jan 4	
	11		Jan 11	
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Jan 18	CONCERT WEEK
		NO REGULARLY-SCHEDULUED LESSONS	Jan 25	CONCERT WEEK
FEBRUARY	12		Feb 1	
	13		Feb 8	no school Fri for Conferences
	14		Feb 15	no school Mon for Presidents' Day
	15		Feb 22	
MARCH	16		Mar 1	
	17		Mar 8	no school Wed for Eid al-Fitr (end of Ramadan)
	18		Mar 15	
	19		Mar 22	
	20	LAST WEEK OF LESSONS	Mar 29	no school Fri for End of Quarter Record Keeping

About Our Private Vocal Instructor



Voice - [Justin Spenner](#)

Multi-genre Baritone Justin Spenner (they/them) is a "scene stealer" and "wild and anxious ride" (Star Tribune) known for their captivating work that spans opera, art song, chamber, avant-garde/experimental, folk, and metal. Justin is generally liked both locally and regionally thanks to companies such as Mixed Precipitation, 113 Composers, Bach Society of MN, Nautilus Music-Theatre, An Opera Theatre, Opera on the Lake, and BorderCrossing. An accomplished improviser, Justin regularly makes up music in dark, hip venues like Resource, Berlin, and random alleyways.

Their self-produced work includes 10+ years of multi-practice tinkering with Schubert's Die Winterreise, the long-form metal band (ab)scheid, the art song duo poem|music and multi-genre concerts under the B-Sides label. They have two charming cats named Percy and Motley.

"I have 15 years of experience teaching singers of all ages and experiences and helping them to pursue their wildly diverse goals. It's my longest-running habit. During your study with me, you will learn about your unique instrument, how to learn songs, and how to make your own music with those songs. In other words, you'll learn to practice, be curious, explore your own ideas, and how to use all of that to be the artist we both know you can be. I'll help you prepare for what you want to accomplish. For some, that's a venting sesh. For others, that's Broadway. Whatever your goal, I think it's pretty darn interesting and that it'd be neat if you got there. So, if you like singing, learning, and/or if "nerd" is a compliment to you... I will see you in voice lessons!

Oh, and for the parents: previous students have consistently participated in All-State ensembles/competitions, performed roles/ensemble in school/community/professional theaters, gone on to academic study, returned home to continue pursuing the voice, and even pursued artistic careers. They've also learned a whole bunch of music that makes them happy, making home that much happier. They've grown their self-confidence, discipline, and creative expression, which is, in general, a good thing, too."

About Our Private Instrumental Instructors



Flute, Clarinet, Saxophones - [Brian Handeland](#)

Brian Handeland (he/him) is a proud South High School alum and is looking forward to returning to his alma mater to teach woodwind lessons! As a performer, Brian is versatile and experienced in a wide variety of musical styles and genres, and he can be found performing with several different bands including the JazzMN Orchestra, Riverside Entertainment, Funky Spuds Brass Band, Drums of Navarone, Jack Brass Band, and his own jazz quartet BH4, as well as in the orchestra pits at several professional Twin Cities theaters. He has also toured with the Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience, pianist Lorie Line and her Pop Chamber Orchestra, and on several musical theater shows with NETWorks Presentations.

As an educator, Brian enjoys working with students who display a variety of different personalities, learning styles, and ability levels. His current and former students have participated in a wide array of different honor bands including the MN All-State Jazz and Concert Bands, MN Youth Jazz Bands, and the MBDA Honor Bands. In addition to teaching at South High, he also teaches woodwind lessons at Blue Tree Music Education in South Mpls, jazz combos and improvisation at East Ridge High School in Woodbury, and is a saxophone section coach at a few different high schools around the Twin Cities. Brian studied classical/jazz saxophone and woodwinds at UW-Eau Claire and the University of North Texas, where he was a member of several ensembles including the DownBeat-award winning UNT Latin Jazz Ensemble and the Grammy-nominated UNT 1:00 Lab Band.



Trumpet - [Elaine Burt](#)

Elaine Burt (she/her) is a recent arrival to the Minneapolis/St Paul music community after 23 years in New York City where she performed on Broadway shows, national television programs, studio recording sessions, and with premier jazz orchestras. Elaine holds both a bachelor's and master's degree in Jazz Studies from the University of North Texas and most recently has taught at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Jazz Academy in New York City. Elaine's teaching style is relaxed, creative, and most importantly, FUN!

Trombone, Baritone, Tuba - [Sten Johnson](#)

Sten Johnson (he/him), trumpet and low brass, has been teaching beginning and advanced students since 2006. Tailoring his teaching to each student's goals with a variety of methods and repertoire, Sten believes learning an instrument is best when we enjoy the sounds we make and works to help each student unlock their potential for self-expression through music.

As a performer, Sten has toured North America and Europe with groups such as Youngblood Brass Band, McNasty Brass Band, Shaun Johnson Big Band Experience, and has performed with Latin music legends Maelo Ruiz and Manolito Simonet. He maintains a busy schedule performing in the Twin Cities as a freelancer as well as with his own groups and continues to write and arrange and write music in multiple genres.

Sten received a Bachelor of Music degree from McNally Smith College of Music, and currently is an avid gardener and braising enthusiast.





Drums - [Erik Schee](#)

Erik Schee (he/him) has been teaching drum set and percussion lessons in the Twin Cities area since 2010. Erik's teaching style is one that stresses the importance of versatility and professionalism. He strives to prepare his students for the wide array of challenges that a percussionist in today's musical landscape may face. As a professional musician, Erik plays drum set with a wide range of Minneapolis-based bands including multiple genres; jazz, folk, pop, funk, R&B and soul. His own jazz group, Mill City Jazz, plays regularly in the Twin Cities, and you can see him playing as far away as Thunder Bay, Ontario with local brass band McNasty Brass Band. He has the privilege of working with Minnesota music legend Mick Sterling as the percussionist in his Andy

Williams and Bing Crosby holiday show, an 'Andy/Bing Christmas'. He also has the honor of playing drums for the former Super Bowl winning NFL player Ben Utecht in his Andy Williams tribute show, 'Moon River'. Erik received his bachelor's degree in Music Performance at the University of Minnesota, Twin Cities and studied with Fernando Meza, Phil Hey and Peter Kogan.

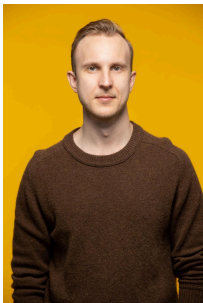
Cello - [Hilary James](#)

Hilary James (she/her) is a freelance musician and teacher in the Twin Cities Metro area. She received a Bachelor of Music degree from St. Olaf College in Cello Performance. Hilary loves playing, improvising, composing, recording and arranging a wide range of music from classical to experimental sound art to indie rock. When she's not teaching cello, Hilary tours with various indie rock and folk bands around the country and internationally.



Violin/Viola - [Laura Harada](#)

Laura Harada (she/her) is a Minneapolis-based violinist and educator who enjoys a richly diverse musical life. She has spent the last 30 years studying and playing music from around the world with a special focus on the Middle East and has explored music spanning eastern microtonal music, free jazz, folk music from Brazil to Armenia, Argentine tango, chamber pop, new music, and other improvisation-based music. She has performed with and/or created original music for theater and dance companies (Jawaahir Dance Company, Black Label Movement, In the Heart of the Beast), played in chamber rock bands, marched in parades with a Brazilian drum ensemble, toured the US with Senegalese star Youssou N'dour, improvised for the Merce Cunningham Dance Group, performed with an Arab orchestra in Saudi Arabia, and worked with local composers in realizing their new works.



Modern Band (Guitar) - [Scott Schmitz](#)

Scott Schmitz (he/him), says "Teaching and playing music is my passion! I received a Bachelor's of Music from the University of Minnesota and since then I've had 10 years of experience teaching music to learners of all ages and abilities. My philosophy is that excitement and motivation are the key to progressing as a musician. My lessons center around exploring each student's individual interests and goals, then giving them the tools they need to play the music they love. I do my best to create a lesson space that is safe and welcoming for all."