

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

CMS

BUILDING A CHAMBER MUSIC PROGRAM



A TEACHER'S GUIDE

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

Derek Balcom, Director of Education

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At the Chamber Music Society we believe studying, performing, composing, or listening to chamber music leads to some of the deepest musical and personal connections that can be made through art, of any form. Above all, we want to share this connection with as many people as possible—starting as early as possible in their lives. When young people make a deep connection to music, it is something that stays with them for good. This guide aims to help teachers provide this opening into the most intimate of musical forms.

CMS will continue this outreach beyond the initial publication of this guide. This is a living document, a work in progress, perpetually filled with new ideas and resources as we continue to seek ways to bring chamber music to more students. In the future, we hope to be a one-stop-shop for teachers and students who are studying chamber music. Using the vast resources of the Chamber Music Society, we will share not only the best practices of teaching chamber music from our network of pedagogues, but also our favorite recordings of chamber music (audio and video), public domain scores, difficulty ratings for chamber works—and anything else possible to help more students explore the wonders of chamber music.

The Chamber Music Society acknowledges with heartfelt thanks Susan Porter Tall, who as Teacher's Guide Consultant oversaw the development of this guide.

Leadership in the development of this project was provided by Norma Hurlburt, who retired from her position as Executive Director of the Chamber Music Society in 2013 after 13 years at the helm. Without Norma's grace and guidance this publication would not have been possible.

CMS also thanks the members of our Young Musicians Advisory Council, which consists of teachers from many of the top chamber music programs in the region. The Council members have enriched the field of ideas which are now included in this guidebook for chamber music teachers.

Susan Porter Tall, Teacher's Guide Consultant

Susan Porter Tall initiated the Tenafly High School chamber music program at the ground level, and over her 30 years at the school, developed the program into a perennial winner of the CMS Young Musicians Concert. An orchestral and choral conductor, Susan was named Master Music Teacher of New Jersey in 1996 by the New Jersey Music Educator's Association. Susan studied at Carnegie Mellon University, New York University, and Montclair State University receiving her BA in music education in 1965. In 1973, Susan received her MA degree in Musicology from New York University and she then went on to complete her studies for the DMA at the University of Illinois in 1979.



Young Musicians Advisory Council

Pamela Levy, Michael Schwartz, Great Neck South High School, Great Neck, NY; Jeffrey Spector, Greenwich Public Schools, Greenwich, CT; Michael Stratechuk, Hunter College High School, New York, NY; Bernice Fleisher, Joe Meyers, Lucinda Santiago, La Guardia Arts, New York, NY; Jim Millar, Tenafly High School, Tenafly, NJ; Adrianna Donovan, W.T. Clarke High School, Westbury, NY



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HOW THIS GUIDE CAME ABOUT

The mission of The Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center (CMS) is to stimulate and support the appreciation, performance and composition of chamber music. A key program to support this effort is the Chamber Music Society's annual "Young Musicians Concert" for advanced high school instrumentalists. The 2013 event marked the 30th concert in the program. For 30 years high school chamber music ensembles have been invited to submit applications and recordings through their school music departments to be considered for participation in a professionally produced concert held at Alice Tully Hall or other Lincoln Center venues. For years, the groups who participated came mostly from New York or Long Island with some additional participants from New Jersey or Connecticut. Year after year many of the same groups submitted tapes and were selected to perform in concert. The repetition of groups from places such as La Guardia Arts and Hunter College High School from New York City, W.T. Clarke High School and Great Neck South High School on Long Island, Ridgewood High School and Tenafly High School from New Jersey indicated that these schools had strong, vibrant chamber music education at their institutions which was wonderful and an inspiration.

At the same time, it was apparent that there are many schools throughout the Tri-State area where this kind of music program does not exist, and that CMS is in a position to awaken interest in creating them. CMS is proud to support chamber music in schools that are producing regular winners in the competition, and is now taking steps to inspire interest on the part of additional school music teachers. It is hoped that this Guide can help show the value of building and developing chamber music education.

In pursuit of this, Derek Balcom, Director of Education at CMS, undertook the task of creating a guide that would help high school teachers through the process of initiating a chamber music program. To do this, he sought a highly experienced professional who would be familiar with the myriad challenges and pitfalls that await, and he found the ideal person in Susan Porter Tall. Susan was Director of Orchestral and Choral Music at Tenafly High School for 30 years (retiring in 2010) and was recognized as NJMEA Master Teacher of New Jersey in 1996. Even more to the point, she established a chamber music program at Tenafly High School that grew to be highly successful and win many awards, including the CMS Young Musicians Concert competition. Susan Porter Tall was engaged to evaluate what appeared to be a dearth of chamber music offerings across the Tri-State area, and then to spearhead the writing and production of this guide.

In the process, Susan and Derek decided to create a Young Musicians Advisory Council (YMAC), consisting of teachers from many of the Tri-State Region's top chamber music programs. The council members were asked to share their ideas and best practices gleaned from their many years' experience. They generously added to and enriched the field of ideas which are now included in this guidebook for chamber music teachers. The guide offers suggestions and trouble shooting methods to aid teachers in starting a chamber music program with whatever resources and support can be mustered, and to build and enhance it over time. The goal is to inspire the creation of new programs that offer exciting new opportunities to student musicians who will enrich both themselves and their communities with the performance of chamber music.



Members of the Young Musicians Advisory Council are:

Adrianna Donovan, W.T. Clarke High School,
Westbury, NY

Bernice Fleischer, La Guardia Arts, New York, NY

Pamela Levy, Great Neck South High School,
Great Neck, NY

Joe Meyers, La Guardia Arts, New York, NY

Jim Millar, Tenafly High School, Tenafly, NJ

Lucinda Santiago, La Guardia Arts, New York, NY

Michael Schwartz, Great Neck South
High School, Great Neck, NY

Jeffrey Spector, Greenwich Public Schools,
Greenwich, CT

Michael Stratechuk, Hunter College High School,
New York, NY

These teachers and administrators have been invaluable in contributing ideas for starting and continuing new programs and for resurrecting endangered programs. They have also shared their personal philosophies of why they have committed so much of themselves to promoting chamber music in their schools. Their enthusiasm, love of the art, thrill of sharing such intimate musical experiences with their students, excitement of bringing that experience out into the public forum, and selflessness in the face of difficulties is inspirational.

Now it is your turn, your turn to enrich your students, your community, and yourself. Welcome to the world of chamber music in your school!

WHY CHAMBER MUSIC?

Chamber Music Offers Deeper Involvement

The Chamber Music Society is an enthusiastic supporter of music education. One of the primary goals is to introduce students to the musical heritage and develop a love and understanding of it. In most school music programs, students are taught to listen to music beyond the popular local radio stations. The aim is to introduce students to new music, to get them inside the complexities and emotional forces of the harmony and rhythm, acquainting them with the formal structures, the beauty of the lyricism, or the intrigue of the unfamiliar line. Students are taught to listen intently and to reflect on and communicate with the language of music.

Performing chamber music is a powerful way to access this involvement on an intense and personal level. With only one player per part, it requires more direct participation by each player and offers the opportunity to develop and refine interpersonal skills, as the students learn music working together in a small group without a conductor. This allows the students to experience music on a deeper level that excites and challenges both the intellect and emotions. Early engagement with chamber music begins a lifetime of musical enrichment both through continued participation in the process, and enjoyment of the fertile legacy of chamber music composed and performed by others through the ages.

Kids Love to Talk

Chamber music is preeminently a musical conversation in which everyone has something important to say. And we know how kids love to talk! In chamber music we find humor, sadness, joy, reflection, terror, fear, strength,

"I would move heaven and earth to make chamber music happen. With these kids you develop relationships unlike those in any other music class."

Adrianna Donovan

W. T. Clarke High School, Westbury, NY

and elation—all the human emotions expressed in a tapestry of sound. In its immediacy, chamber music is highly accessible both to the performer and the listener. The melodic lines, the harmonies, the texture, and the color all become more evident, and have a greater impact when experienced in close proximity. In observing the interplay of a small group of musicians, their body language, facial expressions, bowing patterns, and technique, an entirely new kinetic dimension unfolds for the listener and the performer. Kids are not immune to this! Those who experience it want to share it with those who haven't.

Chamber Music Engages Your Community

Sharing chamber music is easy because chamber music is portable and flexible. Because students love to perform, you can use them as ambassadors for your music program. As a way of gaining recognition and support, you could have an ensemble play for the Board of Education, parent organizations, or even local city or town councils, enhancing their entire event. To increase visibility, groups can play once a week for students as they enter their school, give full evening performances, visit hospitals and nursing homes, shopping malls, and service organizations. There is no limit to the ambassadorial role a chamber



music group affords the music department, given its portability. The impact is far-reaching, as it brings quality music from your program directly to the community. Community organizations that have come to expect and enjoy the chamber music offerings throughout the year are more likely to stand up for your program in financial downturns.

Chamber Music Synthesizes Knowledge, Intelligence, Imagination, Expressiveness, and Aesthetic Awareness

Through chamber music performance, a student develops problem solving and analytical skills, increases capacity for judgment, and gains maturity as a direct result of responsibility.

Students gain an outlet for creativity, develop a social framework for collaborative projects, and increase their aesthetic appreciation.

Chamber Music is Rewarding for You

For all of these reasons, establishing a chamber music program and working with students in a chamber music setting can be the most satisfying part of your teaching experience.

Initiate a chamber music program in your school by any means possible. This guide can help you do just that.

GENERATING STUDENT INTEREST

Creating a new chamber music program is an exciting venture. You will appreciate how right it feels, how much it improves the overall music program and inspires other students, how a single core group effectively pulls other kids in, and how all those kids feel something very special about what they are doing and about each other.

Start by meeting with the students who have expressed interest and discuss with them positive aspects of playing chamber music. In sharing the reasons for chamber music be sure to make the meeting with interested students a two-way dialogue. Why are they interested in performing chamber music? What draws them toward it? A student once wrote in a college application essay “When I am rehearsing with my chamber group, it is indescribable how I feel. Even when I am stressed out during school, all of my other feelings are replaced by serenity, warmth, and the exciting atmosphere when all five instruments come together.” Another high school pianist wrote “Performing chamber music is just so much fun, because in addition to the treat of getting to share one’s hard work with the audience, chamber performers have the joy of interacting with each other onstage. There is nothing more heart-warming than looking up in the middle of an exciting performance to exchange smiles with my fellow chamber mates.”

“We do not support chamber music programs for financial gain—we simply love the art form. With such great repertoire, and the close engagement among the musicians, it’s the highest form of music making.”

Michael Schwartz

Great Neck South High School

In your conversation with interested students, be sure to highlight the connection between performing chamber music and achieving their other educational goals. For example the Common Core goal of “college and career readiness” is met through the intensive training that chamber music offers in listening, analyzing, responding to others, and group problem solving. After this discussion, your core group will appreciate the value of chamber music for themselves and be able to communicate it to attract further recruits. Have your core group learn one piece and allow them to play for the orchestra, band, or chorus because you never know what talented instrumentalists, pianists, or vocalists are in those groups who may become motivated to join your chamber music program.

One good place to begin recruitment is to find a competent pianist, one who can work with





another musician playing almost any other instrument, as well as vocalists. If you have a piano class already established as a part of your music program, your recruiting is half way there. Of course, there is a huge body of repertoire for many different combinations of instruments, so don't let the absence of a pianist stop you.

You can also begin your recruitment with one or two key students from your band or orchestra. The challenge of making music in small, independent groups of talented students, with one musician on a part, will be appealing to them, as will the prospect of new performance opportunities.

You can form chamber ensembles from almost any combination of instruments. There is no rule that chamber music must be for a piano trio or string quartet. As you will see on page 12, Selecting Repertoire, there is a diverse array of music for other instruments—winds, voice,

“Don't let the idea of a 'perfect' chamber music program be the enemy of creating a 'good' one. Start now with whatever you have and watch it grow.”

Jim Millar

Tenafly High School

percussion—which might fit the musicians you have available. Don't let the idea of a perfect chamber music program be the enemy of creating a good one. Thriving chamber music programs often develop from programs that once had very little to work with. You will also find enthusiasm grows when other students witness what the chamber musicians are doing. Other instrumentalists who may not be in the orchestra or band might be interested in developing a chamber group once they see their friends forming ensembles. Recruiting may proceed more smoothly than you might think.

FORMING ENSEMBLES

Once your recruitment process is underway, and you have started your ground level interest in chamber music, the next step is to begin forming ensembles.

There are two basic approaches to forming chamber ensembles. Either the teacher selects students, matching those whose talents and achievement levels are similar, or teachers allow the students themselves to seek out others to join them. With both methods, it is important for the groups to include students of similar levels of interest and musical ability. Placing a student in a group that he or she cannot keep up with is a mistake as it may dissuade the player from continuing his or her participation. Also, the other group members may lose interest if their ability isn't fairly uniform.

Teachers Form Ensembles

Players should be identified by their technical ability on their instrument. If you have students in lessons or in the orchestra, it is very likely that you have already grasped their varying technical capacities. If not, a brief audition is recommended before forming ensembles. It is also important to

"A core group pulls other kids in."

Adrianna Donovan

W.T. Clarke High School, NY

identify each student's interest in chamber music, general love of music, organizational skills, and self-starting attitude. Even if the technical ability is less developed, students showing high aptitude in these areas will likely be strong candidates for a chamber music program. Technical ability will develop through performing in chamber music ensembles, especially when a student is eager to learn. The nature of performing in a chamber ensemble makes it so students tend to "do their homework" on the piece, and want to come to ensemble rehearsals prepared. This preparation benefits the group and the student's musical development. Indeed, one of the key goals in forming ensembles is to place students in groups where they are inspired and challenged to practice.

Students Form Ensembles

As your program develops, it may function successfully as a student run chamber music club. Students can elect officers and recruit new members with senior students assigning younger participants or newer players to ensembles according to level and interest as previously discussed. They can also effectively choose their own repertoire, with the music teacher acting as coach and supervisor whenever rehearsals are scheduled at the school rather than at students' homes. This approach teaches students to become good at assessing with whom they play best. Because chamber music students already recruited will exert pressure on the teacher to





include their friends, it is sometimes difficult for the teacher to negotiate the “friend versus level of achievement” issue. But surprisingly, when experienced chamber music students must select their own ensembles, they choose based on the level of achievement, and select intuitively for the matched player.

How to Place Exceptional Players or Atypical Instruments

Ideally each ensemble consists of players with similar levels of ability and interest. But sometimes a group of students of matching abilities might not comprise a standard ensemble. It is in the best interest of your students to attempt to form a “regular” ensemble, such as a piano trio, piano quartet, string trio, string quartet, woodwind quintet, brass quintet, etc. Forming a standard ensemble will allow the students to have a wide

range of possible repertoire to perform, and will provide the highest quality of music to learn.

However, if you come across instruments that do not easily fit into a standard ensemble, or someone who stands alone in ability level, forming a sonata team may work out best. This will allow you to select a piece that is appropriately challenging for the lead player as well as the pianist.

As described in the next section on repertoire, transcriptions are also a good solution to this issue. Many times a chamber music teacher will transcribe a piece for a non-standard ensemble, or even enlist an interested student to take on the creative challenge. This solution is limited, of course, by the teacher’s availability and the talent of the student composer.

SELECTING REPERTOIRE

Choosing repertoire that is suitable for a particular group is one of the most challenging parts of building a successful chamber music program. Whether groups are formed by faculty or by the students themselves is less important than making sure they have music they can play successfully at a performance-ready level.

In a perfect world, a teacher will have four or five string players or a piano quartet (piano, violin, viola, cello) of advanced ability who can play a Mozart or Haydn string quartet or quintet or a piano quartet in short order. More likely, a teacher may have a pianist, a flute player and a violinist, the latter two of modest talent. What then? With unusual instrumental combinations it may be necessary for the teacher to transcribe or transpose what is available in printed form into something useful for the combination at hand. Often this can be a great learning experience for one or two of the students. Students like learning such useful skills and many enjoy using the computer programs such as Finale and Sibelius for such transpositions.

Often, one of the students will have a piece he played or heard somewhere else and will suggest it for the group. It's always worth letting them try reading it to see if it is within the group's reach. If it isn't, they will recognize their limitations soon enough and seek something more manageable. If you have a student in a pre-college program or other outside music instruction, that student will often own a number of potential pieces or have access to the music through the outside library.

When evaluating the relative difficulty of a piece, it is important to think of both the difficulty for the individual players, and the overall difficulty for the ensemble. Some pieces may not be particularly technical for

“Develop two levels of chamber music groups. Open the gates to more than the crème de la crème.”

Jeffrey Spector

Greenwich School District, CT

each individual player, but require a highly developed ensemble to make musical sense when combining the parts. Other pieces require outstanding technique for the players, but can be put together rather easily. Both aspects need to be taken into account when selecting repertoire for your student ensembles.

Repertoire Resources

Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble Repertoire
by Dirk Meyer

In *Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble Repertoire*, Dirk Meyer provides conductors, musicians, and librarians with all the information needed to plan their performances of modern chamber music. Meyer lists almost 4,000 works written during the 20th and 21st centuries, representing more than 1,100 composers. Entries are divided into three categories: Chamber Orchestra, String Orchestra, and Ensemble. Presented alphabetically by composer, each entry fully describes the composition, including its duration, year of composition, availability and publisher, and complete instrumentation.

Suggested additional sources:

The Literature of Chamber Music, Arthur Cohn
Guide to Chamber Music, Berger

Chamber Music: an international guide to their works and their instrumentation, Rangel-Ribiero & Merkel



ONLINE SOURCES:

CMS Young Musicians Archive

www.chambermusicsociety.org/YMC

A downloadable PDF from the CMS website lists every piece that has been performed within the Young Musicians program. You may find that these selections serve as a good starting point, knowing that they have been performed with success by high school chamber musicians.

IMSLP Petrucci Library

(International Music Score Library Project)

www.imslp.org

Free Public Domain Sheet Music, Listed by genres or composers, full instrumentation and parts available.

emusicquest

www.emusicquest.com

Cross-indexes the Music-In-Print series. Searches listings of sacred choral, classical vocal, orchestral, string, woodwind, guitar, piano, band, handbell, harp, percussion and brass music in print. New entries and categories are added regularly.

Index to Printed Music: Collections & Series

www.ebscohost.com/public/index-to-printed-music-ipm

The Index to Printed Music: Collections and Series is a tool for finding individual pieces of music printed in standard scholarly editions, as it indexes each individual piece in a collection. Music for specific performing forces is easily retrievable, thus offering detailed repertory for performers, conductors, and directors of ensembles.

Performing Arts Library

(NY Public Library online data base)

www.nypl.org/weblinks/2473

Lists of digitalized sheet music along with invaluable resources for other music research

Music Index Online

www.ebscohost.com/public/music-index

The Music Index Online edition features over 1.4 million records. The searchable database is updated quarterly with about 100,000 new records added annually.

NYSSMA

(NY State School Music Association)

www.nyssma.org

A catalog which includes chamber music listed by graded levels of ability.

COACHING

Chamber music study is a direct channel to musical independence where student musicians interpret the music themselves without a conductor between them and the musical score. It requires the students to share their ideas, musical intuition, and to participate in cooperative learning. For all the reasons already discussed, having chamber music as an outlet for creative energies is an enrichment of the highest order.

Developing musical independence requires patience—and coaching by the music teacher. If possible, the coach meets with the group once or twice a week for several weeks, with the ensemble meeting additional times during weekend breaks or evenings to rehearse what has been coached. These early meetings are indispensable. In the initial coaching sessions, you will spend much time working on the “nuts and bolts” of putting the piece together, not dissimilar from a regular orchestra rehearsal. The focus will be on correct notes, rhythms, dynamics, etc.—all of the typical issues facing student ensembles of any size.

“As a teacher or a coach our responsibility to students is to encourage life-long learning habits that can translate into the ability to research and self-teach as an adult.”

Susan Tall

Tenafly High School (Ret.), NJ

Coaching must also include teaching the students to work together as an ensemble. Many students will be accustomed to accepting direction from the teacher/conductor, and may not be sure how to run a rehearsal when they are on their own. In the initial coaching sessions, it is important to model ensemble behavior. Students need to be taught that an ensemble works as a democracy, but that each player must take responsibility for keeping the ensemble together and for offering suggestions for improvement and criticism along the way.





For most teenaged musicians, criticism comes naturally. An important part of your coaching is to lead the students to an understanding of how to phrase the criticism so that it is constructive, and does not result in damaged egos. Simply having a conversation with each ensemble about how they think they should handle criticism best can lead to students developing their own ideas of how to work successfully within their ensemble.

You must also coach each ensemble to develop musical communication. Young musicians who may not have performed in a small ensemble must learn how to cue starts, stops, and pauses in the music. You will constantly need to work with the ensembles to develop non-verbal communication, which begins with eye contact. Students need to learn how to listen to one another, which requires that they get their eyes and ears out of their own part.

The coach should scan for difficulties developing in ensembles. Soliciting informal feedback between coaching sessions will go a long way to root out any issues. If there is a conflict in the decision-making of a group, the coach should act as a neutral arbiter. First lead a healthy discussion with the ensemble members to hear the issues. Sometimes this discussion alone will resolve the problem. If the point of contention is an artistic one (tempo, articulation, dynamics, etc.), suggest that students study the score and listen to professional recordings for guidance.

The ultimate goal of coaching is to teach the students how to listen better and make their own corrections, so they can thrive outside the walls of your classroom. A well-developed ensemble is one that has achieved a significant level of independence, both musically and in their mode of functioning together. They are no longer a group of students with a teacher/conductor in absentia, but are capable of inspiring, correcting, and improving themselves together.

SCHEDULING AND SPACE

The ideal model is to have a chamber music class held at the same time as the orchestra class. Having both classes as a part of the overall music curriculum can allow for cross-fertilization with students entering and exiting the orchestra on alternate days, sometimes playing chamber music, sometimes orchestral. A separate chamber music coach/teacher would be assigned to the chamber music class with semester grades reflecting work in both classes.

However, this idea is often not an option, particularly in the beginning. Once you decide that chamber music will be included as a part of your music program, you will need to dig deeply into your personal well of creativity, patience, and determination, and in the beginning may need to accept less than perfect solutions. Impossible solutions can turn out to be possible. If it appears that you have no space and you have no time, here are some options:

1. If school starts at 8:00, meet at 7:00. The early morning rehearsal (or after school if it can be managed), with one day a week set aside for coaching, is the most common solution.

2. Meet with two members of a group of four after school on a Monday and the other two after school on a Tuesday. Rehearse them separately until a time can be found to combine. Rehearsing the same piece with different group members according to their availability actually can work quite well in the beginning stages because the coach can help each member improve their rhythmic understanding and intonation without straining the patience of the other members.

3. Schedule rehearsal times during orchestra classtime (without a separate class or a separate instructor), allowing a small group or groups to assemble in a practice room separated from the orchestra room by soundproof glass panels. In these practice rooms, the students





could work on their repertoire while the orchestra rehearses sections of their pieces, yet be under the watchful eye of the teacher. Coaching in this case would have to be done extracurricular to the school day with class time for rehearsing what had been covered.

4. In some schools there is an activities period during which the students involved in the chamber music program can come to rehearse and be coached. One group each day allows five groups per week to have individual coaching with the expectation that the group will meet at least one additional time outside for preparation.

5. Another possibility is holding most rehearsals outside of the school day with the chamber

music program run as a club. Club officers organize the different groups according to achievement levels, and they also schedule the rehearsal times, which may be before school, during school, after school, evenings, or weekends. The schedule is cleared with the coach to be sure that any in-school rehearsals have faculty supervision.

6. Meet a group during lunch. While a last resort, lunchtime rehearsals are an option for some teachers and students. The chamber group can bring sandwiches and munch away while one of the group members is being coached, or they can eat something between classes.

These are ways to get the program off the ground – temporary fixes to set it in motion. Once it catches fire, there will be additional (and better) solutions. Once the students are able to begin performing in the school and community, you will be able to ask your administration for a more sustainable model for rehearsals, with more time and resources.

You might well ask: Why would students be willing to come before school, during lunch time, after school, evenings? There are many reasons. Once they experience the satisfaction of making music with friends, most are eager for rehearsals and coaching. If they happen to be slow to appreciate the joy of playing together, they can be encouraged with extra credit for their class grades; community service for their many performances at nursing homes, hospitals, service clubs, etc. ; the opportunity to add “Chamber Musician” on their college

“I call chamber music my antidote . . . a sure cure for all negative feelings inside me.”

Green Ahn

Tenafly High School student

record and in their college essays; and the goal of reaching for the sky, such as playing at Alice Tully Hall through the Chamber Music Society’s Young Musicians Program for advanced high school instrumentalists.

You might also ask: Why would teachers be willing to give so much of their time to add chamber music education to their music programs? The important thing to recognize





is that the extraordinary outcomes will more than repay the extraordinary efforts. In a relatively short time you will notice the superb growth in the musicianship of the participants. These students will greatly impact your larger ensembles because of their experiences learning both to play in a tight ensemble and to listen critically. You will develop relationships with these students that are among the best in your career. Most importantly, the students you work with will never forget that you brought the lifelong gift of playing chamber music into their lives.



We talked about generating student interest on page 8. It's equally crucial to win parent and administration support. Just as you will have done for the students, you need to make the parents and administration aware of the connection between the chamber music activity and the current focus on common core requirements. The "What Chamber Music Offers" list on the facing page provides a good set of talking points. Even better than talking to them, a concert is worth a thousand words. You can show them the connections through community performances that feature your groups.

Recruiting the Parents

Getting the parents behind your efforts can be the single most important thing you can do to enhance your chances of winning over the administration. Therefore, play for the parents. Arrange for your best prepared, most professionally-behaved groups to perform for a Parent-Teacher Association Meeting, for Back to School Night or at any other opportunity where parents are present.

Ask for opportunities to perform for community organizations to which parents have an affiliation. One successful performance will result in repeated invitations to play for holiday parties, breakfasts, brunches, meetings, and other events in the community. Try to schedule performances for the middle school students by your senior high school musicians or bring the middle school students to some high school performances, to generate excitement which the students will communicate to their parents. Every performance broadens awareness of the value of the training. Some performances may even generate honorariums which you can use to purchase new repertoire.

"All the current educational buzz words: synergy, higher order thinking skills, critical thinking skills, thinking outside the box, synthesizing knowledge, etc. and all the most human aspects of who we are, can be experienced through the art of chamber music study and performance."

Susan Tall

Tenafly High School (Ret.), NJ

Engage the parents by writing to them personally, sending a letter via email or mail to the homes of music parents explaining the excitement of developing a chamber music program and the benefits to their children. Be sure to mention how their children's training in chamber music studies will give the parents a large return on their investment in music lessons. Their children will experience high level music performance, intense intellectual engagement, positive social interaction, a development of leadership skills, emotional satisfaction, and possibly even financial reward for performing. In short, parents need to see that encouraging their child's participation in the chamber music program provides them with the necessary tools for a rich life of music making.

Publicity

Utilize newspaper articles, posters, mailings and social media to reach the parents, as well as their children who can encourage their parents to attend or, where appropriate, attend the concert with them. The students are clearly the best communicators with social media, and know the best platforms to use.

ENTS AND POTENTIAL STUDENTS

If you have a concert in the making and the students involved have worked up the piece to a pretty high level, a few seconds featuring a dramatic moment could be sent via Twitter for quick consumption or a longer section for YouTube. Some still photos showing great pictures of the group fully focused on their playing could be sent via Instagram to their friends.

So throw these ideas out to your students and let them have fun publicizing their musical activities.

What Chamber Music Offers Students

- Develops problem solving skills
- Initiates self-discovery
- Acts as an outlet for creativity
- Sharpens analytical skills
- Deepens capacity for judgment
- Builds aesthetic appreciation
- Develops maturity as a direct result of responsibility
- Channels feelings in a positive framework/environment
- Provides a social framework for collaborative projects
- Displays a future in and for classical music
- Synthesizes knowledge, intelligence, imagination, expressiveness, aesthetic awareness.



PERSUADING THE ADMINISTRATION

Many Boards of Education and therefore Department Chairs have their eye on the bottom line, which means that music teachers are often experiencing cutbacks in their music programs. The good news is that it will not always be this way. Teachers have experienced downturns and upturns where money was scarce or available. They have learned that as teachers in the arts, they must always make their case for support, since the arts are often the first programs to face budget cuts. You must believe in the importance of what you do and be ready to sell your program.

One of the great challenges of starting a program is to know your board, know your administration, and know your students. Understand their problems and priorities, and be ready to address them.

The Squeaky Wheel Gets the Oil

With the parents as your allies, armed with the “What Chamber Music Offers Students” list, approach those in the administration who set policy and make the budget decisions. Assign the right person the task of persuading each important member of the administration—one or more parents may be the right choice to approach one administrator, while you and other teachers may be the right choice to approach another. With good humor, determination, persistence and passion, make your case by email to different members of the BOE, the principal, vice principal or music chair. Do it by letter. Do it by phone calls. Do it by word of mouth and rumor. Show everyone how chamber music increases a student’s chances of acceptance into the best colleges and universities. Have a list of music students who went to prestigious Ivy League destinations or other excellent schools. Above all, get opinion leaders, and decision makers, to hear your students play at one of the many public performances that you and they will arrange. Then recruit the opinion leaders to call

and write the decision makers in the administration, praising the students and asking for administration support for the program.

By the new school term, the program should have gained enough traction, interest, and appreciation to be accepted as a standard part of the program. You may also have received enough income in honorariums to enable you to purchase new repertoire and in time, you may be able to apply for a stipend for your work with the students.

Dreaming Big Dreams

It is the enthusiasm and imagination of the teacher that inspires the students’ early interest in chamber music. Dream big dreams for your students and spark the drive they need to achieve the goals you imagine for them. With hard work and commitment all kinds of dreams can be realized:

Performing at a chamber music festival at a local college or university.

Having their ensemble chosen to attend a summer festival or camp devoted to chamber music

Earning the opportunity to perform in Boston on the public radio program “From the Top”

Winning the competition to perform at Alice Tully Hall at Lincoln Center as part of the Chamber Music Society’s Young Musicians Concert

As your students achieve higher and higher levels of making music together **your** dreams become **their** dreams and you have given them the best of gifts: a life-long ability to make music with friends and listen with new ears.

The Chamber Music Society brings its world-class musicians into direct contact with students through an array of programs designed to engage students with music and supplement classroom instruction.



CHAMBER MUSIC BEGINNINGS

A three-concert series of interactive performances that introduce basic musical concepts to elementary school students. Programs are presented at professional venues and include students from all five boroughs, New Jersey, and Westchester County. Each concert is supplemented by classroom instruction by teaching artists. CMB reaches over 3,000 students in the New York metropolitan area. Program fee is \$5 per student, open to all schools.



MUSIC UP CLOSE

Invites high school and middle school students to attend a working rehearsal as our artists get ready for one of our concerts, and ask questions about the life of a musician. Each rehearsal is preceded by a 30-minute introduction to the repertoire, and a discussion with the artists. 300 students participate annually in this FREE program.



STUDENT TICKET SUBSIDY

Free tickets to select CMS main stage concerts in Alice Tully Hall are available to high school and middle school students. Teachers are encouraged to request student tickets for concerts that will enhance and complement their school music programs.



STUDENT PRODUCERS

The Student Producers is a committee of high school students whose mission is to engage their peers in exciting, innovative concerts featuring professional musicians. Students are invited to relax with friends in specially reserved seating at Alice Tully Hall, and enjoy a series of special events surrounding each concert including receptions, and artist interviews. Nine students meet weekly at CMS, with guidance from the Education Department, and over 75 students participate in the events annually. Over 250 high school students attend each season. Admission to each event is \$5.



YOUNG MUSICIANS PROGRAM

Provides young musicians an opportunity for coaching sessions with our renowned musicians and master teachers in preparation for culminating performances at Alice Tully Hall (grade 9-12) and the Rose Studio (grades 6-8). Application and audition tape required. Up to 50 students are selected in the competition, and up to 1,000 students, teacher, administrators, friends and family attend the culminating concerts. FREE program.

For more information on CMS Education Program, please visit www.ChamberMusicSociety.org/learning/overview



CMS

THE CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF LINCOLN CENTER

www.chambermusicsociety.org

70 Lincoln Center Plaza, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10023-6582
(212) 875-5775