

Welcome, Spanish Oaks Orchestra Students!

I am excited to be your orchestra teacher this year! I've played the violin in different groups and orchestras for 14 years and this is my 1st year teaching at Spanish Oaks. Music comes from the heart, as well as from your instrument and your fingers. I don't expect perfection, but I do expect attention and dedication. Please don't hesitate to come to me with questions or for extra help.

Classes will begin on TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1st. We will meet on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 8am in the little theater. Class starts promptly at 8 so please please be on time!

Our orchestra will hold Christmas and Spring concerts at our school. There will also be a districtwide "Monster Concert" held during the last part of April. Other opportunities for our group to play may arise as the year progresses.

There are several things you will need in order to become a good musician in my class:

1. EQUIPMENT AND FEES

The district requires a \$75 fee for participating in Orchestra. This fee needs to be paid in the school office as soon as possible. Any students on fee waiver do not need to pay this fee, but they still need to speak with the office.

There are a few things EVERY student will need. PLEASE HAVE THESE SUPPLIES BY THE SECOND WEEK OF CLASS!

- Instrument: Unless you have already emailed me (and received approval) to rent a school instrument, your student will need to provide their own instrument and bring them on the second day of class.
- 3 Ring Binder: This helps the students keep their music and papers organized.
- Music Book: We will be using the String Explorer Book 1 in class. Students may purchase this book online or at any local music store.
- Bow Rosin: This helps the bow make the proper sound on the strings. (Rosin usually comes with the instrument, but check to make sure.)
- Cleaning Cloth: Keeps instrument clean from fingerprints and rosin dust. A soft cloth/rag of any kind, such as a handkerchief or even an old sock, will work.
- For Violins & Violas—Shoulder Rest: This helps students have correct posture and makes playing easier. These can be purchased online or at a music store. Some students use a piece of foam padding. It's cheaper, but provides less support.
- For Cellos—Rock Stop: Keeps cellos from slipping around on smooth surfaces.
- (Optional) Music Stand: Our school does have enough music stands for class, but it is a good idea to have a stand so the student can use it during home practice time. Stands can be purchased at music stores and online.

2. GOOD HABITS

The most important rules in my class are that you be On Time, Prepared, and Polite. We will discuss these in greater detail in class.

I expect students to practice a minimum of 20 minutes a day for at least 20 days each month. At times, other assignments will be given. These might include watching videos or completing worksheets in class.

String Instruments must be well cared for if they are to last. Never leave an instrument out of a securely latched case when it is not being played. The instrument should be stored indoors in a dry place where it will not be damaged by extreme heat or cold. Students should not attempt to tune their instrument or replace a string themselves until they have been taught how to properly do this.

3. INSTRUMENT PURCHASING/RENTAL GUIDE

A student instrument does not need to be extremely expensive, but quality is very important. A poorly made instrument will only frustrate a beginning student. For example, many students like to purchase instruments from online retailers because they are cheap, colorful, and unique. Beware: these instruments often come with many quality issues and few students with this type of instrument make it through the school year without giving up. Generally, instruments rented and sold by local instrument specialty stores are suitable for your student. An instrument that has not been played for many years should be tested by someone knowledgeable about string instruments to determine if it is actually playable and ready for student use.

Factors to Consider when Renting or Purchasing an Instrument

SIZE: The instrument must fit the student. Most music stores will help you measure your student to determine what size instrument fits them. Investigate whether the business you choose to rent or buy from allows you to upgrade to larger sizes as your student grows, and how much of the money you paid for the smaller instrument can carry over to the cost of the larger instrument. If you have acquired an instrument privately, and wish to know whether it will fit your student, please read the guidelines below:

Violin and Viola: A good basic rule with a violin or viola is that when the student holds the instrument with the arm fully extended, they should be able to cup the majority of their fingers around the top of the scroll. The general proportions of arm length to instrument size are as follows:

Violin Measure from the middle of the left palm to the neck, with left arm and hand fully extended out perpendicular to body. If your student measures-
20-22 inches, they need a 1/2 size violin
22-23.5 inches, they need a 3/4 size violin
23.5 inches and up, they need a full size violin

Viola-Also Measure from the middle of the left palm to the neck, with left arm and hand fully extended out perpendicular to body. If your student measures-

21-23 inches they need a Jr. Viola (12" or 13")
23-25 inches they need an Intermediate (13" or 14")
25-26.5 inches they need a 15 inch Viola
26.5 inches and up they need a 16 inch Viola

For Cello- To determine if a cello fits well, the student should sit up straight in a chair, feet on the floor, with the cello endpin set to 12 inches and allow the cello to rest at a 45 degree angle to the body. A properly fitting cello's body should rest near the middle of the student's chest, and the "C" peg should be the height of the student's left ear. A more general guide is the height of the student as outlined below.

4 to 4 1/2 feet-they need a 1/2 size cello
4 1/2 to 5 feet-they need a 3/4 size cello
5 feet and above-they need a full size cello

LOCAL INSTRUMENT DEALERS: Below is a list of local businesses that specialize in instrument rental, accessories, and sales. There may be other businesses locally or in the Salt Lake Valley that can provide you with a quality instrument and accessories for your student.

Boothe Brothers Music
135 N Main St Spanish Fork, UT -(801) 798-7650

Summerhays Music
1006 S State St, Orem, UT - (801) 226-1760

Bert Murdock Music
981 N 1200 W, Orem, UT - (801) 225-7922

Mountain Rock Music
290 S Main St, Springville, UT - (801) 489-3000

Some people have had success finding affordable instruments in the local online classifieds or in local newspapers. Consider this option, too!

I can't wait to make some music with you! Please contact me if you have any questions and I'll be happy to help you out.

Koralee Walker
String Instructor
kora.walker@nebo.edu