



YOUNG MUSICIANS



Handbook for Students and Families



The Program

Young Musicians is a free music education program for all students in Southern Dallas. Students enrolled in the program will be given regular, high-quality music instruction, in an ensemble-based framework.

The goal of Young Musicians is for all of its participants to have an enriching, joyful, and life-fulfilling experience that leaves a lasting mark, enhancing each child's ability to succeed as a student, musician, and future citizen.

To this end, Young Musicians will provide:

- Free instruments and training on all orchestral instruments for students in grades 2-5
- Regular drum circle and choir classes
- Opportunities for social and emotional learning
- Performance opportunities
- Leadership opportunities
- Mentorship with caring adults and professionals every step of the way

The structure of the Young Musicians program is inspired by *El Sistema*, the Venezuelan music program developed in 1975 that is now a worldwide success story, and has produced some of today's most prominent musicians. Like *El Sistema*, the Young Musicians program aims to instill essential life skills through ensemble music instruction with caring teachers and mentors. By encouraging student mentorship and peer teaching, students will have the opportunity to develop leadership, communication, and other interpersonal skills.

These skills are informed by five **Core Values**:

- Teamwork
- Commitment
- Respect
- Communication
- Empathy



Location Information

The Young Musicians program currently operates After-School programs in five sites, or nucleos. These sites are located throughout Southern Dallas.

Program schedule: Tuesday through Thursday, 3:30-6pm

For Dallas ISD students only (may attend other Dallas ISD schools)

Halliday Elementary

10210 Teagarden Road, 75224

Site Lead: Ruben Gonzalez

Moreno Elementary

2115 S Hampton Road, 75224

Site Lead: Ebonee Davis

Kahn Elementary

610 N Franklin Street, 75211

Site Lead: Raphaelle Siemers

Silberstein Elementary

5940 Hollis Avenue, 75227

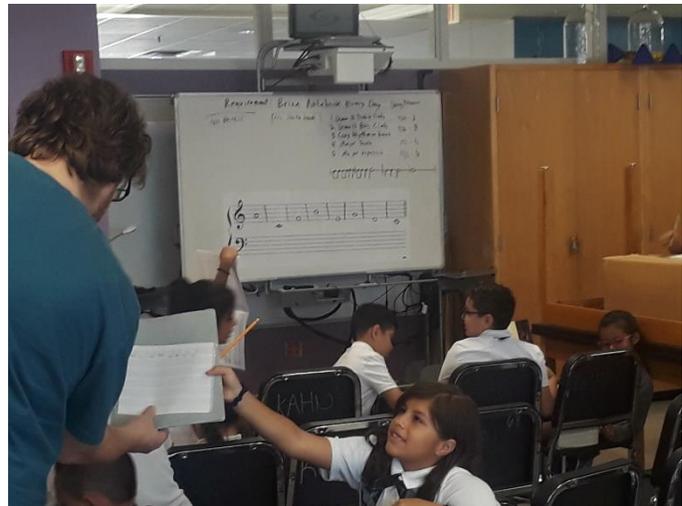
Site Lead: Sandra Rodriguez

For All Students

Trinity Basin Preparatory School

2524 W Ledbetter Drive, 75233

Site Lead: Kevin Merkel



Saturday Program

Program Schedule: Saturdays, 9:30am-12:15pm

Note: Students participating in the Saturday program must also be concurrently enrolled in one of the After-School programs

Trinity Basin Preparatory School

2524 W Ledbetter Drive, 75233

Site Lead: Julia Gray-Lion

Student and Parent Information

ATTENDANCE

The success of the Young Musicians program is based on an intensive amount of instruction, so regular attendance is extremely important, as well as participation in performances. Each child should arrive each day fully prepared to receive the full benefits of this program. This commitment will not only provide a setting for the child to be productive outside of school but will also help to improve his or her academic and social skills by developing discipline, fostering a sense of responsibility, and instilling a sense of personal pride in his or her accomplishments.

If a child has three (3) unexcused absences in one semester, his or her eligibility to remain in the program will be reviewed.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

To receive an excused absence, you must contact your designated Site Lead. Generally speaking, student illness, family emergency, and religious holidays are the only reasons an absence may be excused, but the Site Lead will make the final decision.

STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

The Core Values of **Teamwork, Commitment, Respect, Communication, and Empathy** apply to students as well as to Teaching Artists.

These values can be demonstrated in many ways, such as

- Respecting others by listening actively, remaining silent when they are speaking, and talking and playing at appropriate times.
- Respecting instruments, teaching artists, and classroom space
- Bringing a positive attitude and the eagerness to learn and grow
- Following directions and instructions given by Teaching Artists
- Supporting fellow classmates and being a good example for one's peers



STUDENT DROP-OFF & PICK-UP

In order for all students to get the most out of the program, please ensure that students are dropped off and picked up promptly. For safety reasons, all students must be checked in and checked out by a recognized parent or guardian. Please make sure that Coordinators or Teaching Artists have correct and current contact information.

COMMUNICATIONS

You will receive important communication regarding the program in one or more of the following ways:

- Handouts delivered by your child
- Email
- Phone calls or texts

These notifications will include program information, performances & special events, and any scheduling changes.

CELEBRATING MUSIC THROUGH PERFORMANCE

Students gain poise and confidence through frequent performance opportunities. By experiencing the joy of sharing music with others, students will also be intrinsically motivated to continue refining their musical skills. Because of this, an important element of the Young Musicians program is that students are always preparing for a performance of some kind. During the summer, these opportunities will generally be in the form of a concert at the end of the session, during which students will have a chance to showcase their hard work and dedication! Students will perform in front of families, peers, Teaching Artists, friends, and neighborhood residents.

In addition, Young Musicians will be exposed to concerts and performances by professional musicians from a diverse range of genres and traditions throughout the year.



INSTRUMENT LOAN POLICY

The DSO provides instruments to all Young Musicians students free of charge. Once they have demonstrated to a Teaching Artist that they know the proper care and handling of an instrument, students may earn the right to take their instrument home for the weekend. In order for this to happen, Parents or Guardians must first sign an agreement that outlines the responsibilities and conditions for having a Young Musician instrument in the home. This includes covering the cost of repair or replacement in the event that an instrument is damaged or lost due to negligence (the DSO assumes responsibility for general instrument maintenance). At the end of each week, Teaching Artists will determine which students have earned the right to take an instrument home that weekend. These determinations will be based on the student's success in demonstrating the program's core values that week.



Some Suggestions for Instrument Care:

- The instrument should only be played by the students studying them.
- Each time after playing, dust the instrument off with a soft, dry cloth. Flannel is a great example. Never clean your instrument with furniture polish.
- Do not let instruments fall or flip over on the ground. Cracks, dents and bending are VERY expensive to repair. Some damage to strings instruments can be particularly detrimental to the instrument to the point it can no longer be played.
- For string instruments, never touch the bow hair with your hands. Skin oil has a damaging effect on the hairs of the bow.
- Never be in a hurry with your instrument in your hands. If you trip or fall, you could seriously damage your instrument.

Practicing

Why Practice?

For athletes, daily practice is an important part of learning and growth. The same is true with musicians. It takes time and repetition to build all the different muscle groups - both large and small - needed to be a confident musician. But the rewards are great, and can be applied to many areas of life.

Even though young musicians tend to develop these muscles and this confidence relatively quickly, practicing a musical instrument regularly can still be tough for many kids. It is important to know that if a child is having a hard time, this is not a sign that they are hating what they are doing, but that everyone needs time to digest and assimilate new concepts and skills.

There are many ways to encourage the habit of daily practice. Consistency of time and place is key among them. Beyond that, speak with one of the Young Musicians Teaching Artists about it and explore different tactics with your own child to see what works. Some days will naturally be more challenging than others, but good and positive practice habits will inevitably lead to measurable progress.

Taking ownership

In the long run, each child should take ownership of their own learning. When a student understands the “why”, “how”, “where”, and “when” of practicing, they have been given the tools to do this. Self-motivation and the building of a reliable practice routine are natural outcomes.

How Long?

Consult with a Young Musicians Teaching Artist for recommendations regarding a specific child, but generally speaking, 10 to 15 minutes a day is ideal for beginners. This practice should be as focused as possible with clear objectives communicated by a Teaching Artist.

Where?

Practicing should take place in a relatively quiet place at home with a chair, and a music stand. There should be proper lighting and the child should have everything they need (instrument, music or music books, instruction notes, etc.). There should be minimal distractions, such as TV, radio, other children, pets, cellphones, and tablets.

How?

Like anything new, small, slow steps are essential. Slow and accurate is much more important than fast and wrong. Identify and isolate challenging sections, even if it's just a few notes long! And it never has to be boring. Be creative! Find different ways to attack and solve a problem. Many times, we get caught in the trap of repeating the same mistake, and getting little to no results. A change in approach will often lead to a desired outcome.

A few tips for successful practicing:

- Practice slow and multiple repetitions, until a passage is easy and the habit is learned. A metronome is very useful for this.
- Use a pencil and notepad to write down what problems occurred and the solutions you found to them.
- Isolate what just one part of the body is doing (the left hand, the right hand, and the breath are some good examples).
- Make up different rhythms for the passage and try playing them. Then go back to the original rhythm and see if it's any easier.
- Pretend your music is a song and write your own words to it.
- Always mark where you tend to make a mistake in your music, so that it's easy to find and focus on.
- Record yourself (either video or audio) and see if you are getting the results you are after.
- End with something fun to play.



BEHAVIOR/DISCIPLINE MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Young Musicians program follows a very clear and fair management plan that encourages student reflection, growth, and constant communication between the Teaching Artists, the student and the family.

Young Musician Student Expectations

- Be Safe
- Be Respectful
- Be Responsible
- Be Kind

Social Skills Young Musicians Will Implement

- Following Instructions
- Staying on Task
- Accepting Criticism or a Consequence
- Listening
- Appropriate Voice Tone



Student Consequences

Step 1 - Verbal Warning

Step 2 – Student loses opportunity to participate and moves to a designated area to complete the *Reflection Area Activity Sheet*. Student should resume participation after 5 minutes (or less if ready to participate appropriately) at the Teaching Artist’s discretion.

Step 3 – Student receives a *Behavior Reflection Form* and completes it in the classroom. Once the *Behavior Reflection Form* is complete, student resumes participation. The *Behavior Reflection Form* is sent home with the student, and a copy is provided to the Site Lead.

Step 4 – DSO Education Staff makes a site visit. Previous steps received will be reviewed, and a determination will be made regarding an appropriate consequence, if necessary. Parent communication will take place.

ASSESSMENT

There are several levels of assessment that will occur throughout the implementation of the Young Musicians program. Formal summative assessments that capture the overall impact of the program will measure student progress. These measurements will occur three times each year. A performance checklist will be kept for each student in the program and will be shared with the child and his or her parent or guardian. Other measurement tools will be standardized when possible and supported by existing music education research.

Another, less formal summative assessment will also occur through conversations, interviews, or surveys with program staff, students, parents, and community stakeholders. In addition to formal feedback, informally gathered feedback will be collected and used on an ongoing basis through conversations and discussions. Informed and thoughtful opinions about the program, its impact, and its success in the community will be an important part of the assessment and evaluation of the program.

OUR TEAM

The Young Musicians team includes professional Teaching Artists and the staff of the Dallas Symphony Education Department, in tandem with the on-site staff at each program site.

- **Young Musicians Teaching artists** are all highly qualified musicians and music educators, from a wide variety of backgrounds. Each teaching artist has a vested interest in developing responsible young musicians and building a fun and musically fulfilling experience for each student.
- **The Dallas Symphony Education Department** organizes and monitors all aspects of the program, across all sites. Each Site Lead Teaching Artist - your best point of contact, should questions arise - is responsible for regular communication and updates to the DSO Education Director.



The Young Musicians program was made possible through the generous support of many donors, local and national corporations, and grants from both private foundations and government agencies.

Handbook Rules and Regulations Acknowledgment Form

This form must be returned to a Young Musicians Teaching Artist, and will be placed on file for participation in the program.

PARENTS/FAMILY: Please read the following statement and sign below

STUDENT NAME: _____

PHOTO/MEDIA RELEASE

The above-named minor child has my permission to be photographed and/or recorded by The Dallas Symphony, and/or news/media in conjunction with the programs related to Young Musicians for any lawful purpose (print and/or electronic) without further notice to me. I also agree to hold harmless The Dallas Symphony Association and its representatives from any claims or cause of action directly or indirectly related to photographing, videotaping, or audio taping of my child for any lawful purpose and to waive all monetary or other claims that might arise as a result of any lawful use of these materials. I certify that I am the parent or legal guardian of the above mentioned individual and am authorized to give permission and consent.

TRANSPORTATION

Transportation may be provided to various special events by bus or Dallas Symphony vehicle. Your signature below gives your approval for The Dallas Symphony to provide transportation for your child when necessary.

HANDBOOK RECEIPT

I acknowledge receiving access to the Young Musicians Program Handbook and agree to accept responsibility for my child and his/her actions. I realize it takes cooperation from 100% of the students and parents for the Young Musicians Program to achieve success. I further understand that failure to follow the stated policies in this book or failure to follow instructions from the Young Musicians Teaching Artists or Dallas Symphony Education staff could result in disciplinary action, which, at its most serious consequence, could lead to my child's dismissal from the program. I accept my responsibility in supporting and assisting my child in living up to the responsibilities and obligations as outlined.

(Parent/Guardian Name – PRINTED)

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

(Date)