

MOUNTAIN TOP

||: music  center :||

**Mountain Top Music Center
Student and Family Handbook 2019 - 2020**

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About Mountain Top Music Center

Our Mission

Mountain Top Music Center is a community music school located in Conway, New Hampshire. Our mission is to enrich lives and build community by providing inspiring music education and by offering performance and listening opportunities throughout the area. We use music to build community through group study and performance, shared listening, and mutually respectful, inter-generational, multi-cultural musical communication. More than 350 people participate in our lessons, classes, workshops, and community ensembles each year. We offer progressive, coordinated music education to students of all ages. For children we provide developmentally appropriate instruction aimed at nurturing the means for music expression. We offer adults a way to begin or extend their musical skills and expertise.

Mountain Top Music Center presents a variety of concerts bringing the work of our students, community ensembles, and faculty to the community. We also present professional musicians and ensembles, often in collaboration with other non-profit organizations. In recent years attendance at MTMC concerts has increased noticeably. We understand that many concert audiences are composed of individuals who were once or still are music students. We link our community of students with our community of listeners, seeking to expand both.

Our Faculty

Mary Bastoni – Voice and Musical Theatre

Bruce Berquist – Piano, Voice, Percussion, Musicology, Music Technology and Business

Chad Cummings – Piano, Guitar, Electric Bass, Bands

Julia Howell – Director of Education, Viola, Violin, Composition, Theory, Musicology, Technology, Orchestra

Jenny Huang-Dale – Cello, Violin, Viola, Youth Ensemble

Chris Nourse – Violin, Viola, Chamber Music

Sharon Novak – Children’s Music, Piano, Guitar, Ukulele

Justin Ramos – Piano, Guitar, Music Theory, Composition, Improvisation, Jazz Band, Technology

Eric Rollnick – Percussion

Elizabeth Roth – Voice, Harp

Mike Sakash – Saxophone, Clarinet

Judy Teehan – Flute, Recorder, Early Music

Laurie Turley – Flute, Clarinet, Trumpet

George Wiese – Executive Director, Piano, Trombone, Musicology

Our Staff

George Wiese – Executive Director, Piano, Trombone, Musicology

Dr. Julia Howell – Director of Education, Viola, Violin, Composition

Kate Vachon – Administrative Assistant, Registrar

Frank Benesh – Treasurer

Linda Vienneau – Bookkeeper

How to Stay Up to Date

Contact the office at (603) 447 - 4737 or office@mountaintopmusic.org.

Check our website at www.mountaintopmusic.org for class offerings, registration, calendar updates, cancellation announcements, concert listings and events, and more important information.

Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to keep up to date with current and upcoming events.

The Center sends out a monthly email newsletter with information and events. Subscribe directly on our website to receive the newsletter.

Benefits of Studying at Mountain Top Music Center

What you receive with your lessons:

- Our expert, experienced faculty are skilled music professionals who enrich the musical and artistic landscape of the region
- The school fosters a welcoming and broad community where you will be amongst supportive fellow learners and music-lovers
- Choice from a wide range of instruments, genres, and styles– we believe in the equal value of many ways of making music and mixing up genres and approaches is celebrated at Mountain Top
- Your instructor works with you to create a customizable pathway for your personal musical goals
- A busy and diverse concert series bringing top-notch music of all kinds to our region throughout the year, with free tickets available to youth students
- There are numerous performance opportunities for students throughout the year arranged for you at no extra cost
- Affordable instrument rentals as well as assistance and advice on purchasing or maintaining your own instrument
- Tuition assistance and family discounts to help keep cost of study within reach
- A range of ensemble opportunities to broaden your musicianship and enjoy playing with peers and friends
- Ensembles are free for youth students
- Honors program providing extra educational opportunities for dedicated youth students (see Top of the Mountain program)
- Access to practice and rehearsal spaces and reference library

Student Responsibilities

The study of music can be a joyous and rewarding experience, developing one's self-expression, artistry, and discipline. In order to progress well you will need to do the following:

- 1. Attend lessons regularly and be on time.** Being on time involves arriving early enough to set up your instrument, tune, and prepare music right away at the start of your lesson time if not before. Lessons are often scheduled back to back, so an efficient change-over helps you, your instructor, and other students to make the most of lesson time. Understand that while your teacher endeavors to keep lessons to the scheduled times, changeover and other factors may result in a few minutes' flexibility in the schedule.
- 2. Practice every day in a quiet place.** Remember that the quality of practice time is as important as quantity. Consistency of practice is more important than length of sessions—ten minutes a day is better than waiting until the day before your lesson to cram in a two hour session that causes stress and injury!
- 3. Keep your music and instrument in good order and bring your music to lessons.** Bring all music as instructed by your teacher, as well as a pencil and any requisite accessories such as a tuner or metronome.
- 4. Physical health** is just as important for musicians as it is for athletes.
- 5. Attend live music performances at every opportunity.** Current Mountain Top youth students may attend any Mountain Top concert free of charge.
- 6. Follow instructor and staff guidance and maintain mutually respectful relationships within the Mountain Top environment and community.** Maintain communications with the office to keep up to date with scheduling, events, etc.
- 7. Participate in performance opportunities as guided by your instructor.**
- 8. Enjoy yourself** and remember to take pride in being a student of music.

Family Responsibilities

For youth students, family members' support and engagement are vital to success. Help support progress by:

1. **Keep up to date with practice instructions** given by teachers.
2. **Provide a good practice environment at home:** adequate space, time, a sufficiently quiet atmosphere, reminders to practice, and potentially supervision and help during practice sessions. Consistency of practice is far more important than length of session– five minutes each day is preferable to one hour once a week.
3. **Help students to organize and maintain their instruments and materials.** This includes reminding or helping students to bring their instruments and all necessary materials to their lessons.
4. **Maintain communications with the office** to notify staff and faculty of any changes, absences, and issues that may arise as promptly as possible so that we may best assist you, and to keep up to date with events and announcements from the school.

Family members are always welcome to attend students' lessons at any time in order to observe their progress, receive instructions from teachers, and learn how to help students outside of class time.

Teacher Responsibilities

1. Work with students to create lesson plans and goals appropriate to student's age, skill level, and personal musical interests and goals.
2. Provide frequent feedback to students so they know how they are progressing.
3. Instruct students on appropriate practice strategies, habits, and relevant musical activities outside of lesson/class time.
4. Provide guidance on procurement of instruments, sheet music, and other tools as needed.
5. For youth students, communicate and work with parents to support students' practice habits and musical development.
6. Support students' performance activities.
7. Maintain relationships of mutual respect with students and families.
8. Begin and end lessons and classes at scheduled time as closely as possible, recognizing that some flexibility is necessary as lessons are often scheduled back to back, and additionally situations may arise where extra time is needed during lesson or class changeover.

Instruments and Materials

Instrument Rental

Mountain Top Music Center has a limited number of instruments available for rental on a monthly basis by students enrolled in our educational programs. A rental fee of \$15 per month will be charged for each instrument on rental as of the first of each month. Parents are responsible for damage or loss. Some group classes may include instrument provision.

Sheet Music and Other Materials

Your instructor and school staff will provide guidance regarding provision or purchase of sheet music, instruments, and other relevant accessories as necessary during the course of your study. School staff can assist with placing orders, sourcing repairs, and other related needs.

Tuition Assistance

At Mountain Top Music Center, we endeavor to make the study of music financially accessible to all. In addition to the 5% discount on multiple registrations detailed under payment policies, tuition assistance is available on a needs basis to help mitigate the expense of music study.

Policies

The **tuition assistance application** must be completed and returned before lessons begin in order to receive reduced tuition.

Mountain Top Music Center's tuition assistance program works on a **sliding scale**. We award different amounts of tuition assistance depending on household income and the availability of Mountain Top Music Center's scholarship funds.

Mountain Top sometimes awards tuition assistance to families who do not meet income limits when **special circumstances** are involved, at the discretion of the director.

Tuition assistance is **awarded in the fall for the full calendar year**, though applications will be reviewed and accepted on a rolling basis after the commencement of the fall term subject to availability of funds.

Tuition assistance may be applied to **one course of study**, for example, towards piano lessons or violin lessons, but not both at once. This ensures the scholarship fund remains equitable and sustainable.

Tuition assistance must be **renewed** each year.

In order to enable as many students as possible to benefit from reduced tuition costs, we do not currently offer full tuition remission.

Applications are both reviewed and held **confidentially**. Mountain Top Music Center **does not discriminate** on the basis of gender, race, religion, sexual orientation, national or ethnic origin,

marital status, or age in employment or administration of its educational policies, scholarship and financial aid programs, or other school administered programs or activities.

Receiving financial assistance requires the following **mandatory commitments on the recipient's part:**

1. Regular attendance at lessons/classes/ensembles.
2. Regular practice at home.
3. Participation in performances.
4. Effort and achievement.

Students who are evaluated by faculty and administration as not engaging sufficiently with their course of study may be denied future tuition assistance.

Payment and Registration Procedures and Policies

How to Register

Registrations and payments may be made online at www.mountaintopmusic.org/music-school or by calling or visiting the office. An initial payment is necessary to confirm registration. Registrations are accepted on an ongoing basis throughout the year. Registrations after the current term has begun will be pro-rated.

After you register, you will be contacted to confirm scheduling. Outstanding balances must be paid before registration can be confirmed.

Payment Schedule

Lessons and classes are billed monthly, and will be pro-rated for the number of sessions within the month. Credits will only be issued if a session cancelled by Mountain Top cannot be made up. Other payment plans or schedules may be arranged where possible. You will be invoiced by email.

Payment Methods

Payments may be made by credit card, check, or cash. You may file a credit card with the office that will be charged automatically each month.

Family Discounts

A 5% discount is available for more than one registration for one or more individual students per family. This discount may be combined with tuition assistance.

Trial Lessons

For new private lesson registrations, the first lesson is considered a trial lesson, and you only pay upon continuation of lessons.

Class Passes

Some group classes have the option to purchase a class pass rather than registering for the full term session. The class pass is valid for any 4 class dates from one course, and must be used

during the same term in which the pass is purchased. You may purchase a new 4-class pass once the 4 classes have been used.

Ensembles and Youth Students

All ensembles are free to students under 18 who are currently enrolled in private lessons. Students should still formally register for the relevant ensemble so that the office is able to track registration and communicate effectively with ensemble members.

Free Classes

Certain classes are offered for free, but you will still be requested to register for communication purposes.

Absences and Makeups

Student Absences

Students pay for all lessons in the term regardless of attendance (registrations after the beginning of the term will be pro-rated). Students should notify the office of any absence as soon as possible, out of courtesy to the instructor. This does not exempt the student from payment.

Teacher Absences

If a teacher must be absent, the student will be notified as promptly as possible. All teacher absences and weather cancellations will be made up or credited.

Makeup Lessons

Private lesson students registered for an entire term may make up one notified student absence in the 13-week fall semester and two notified student absences in the 18-week spring semester, at the teacher's discretion. There are no makeups in the 8-week summer term.

Group Class Makeups

There are no makeups for student absences from group lessons. If a group lesson is cancelled by Mountain Top, it will be made up.

Cancellations

Weather Cancellation

Mountain Top Music Center will occasionally cancel class due to inclement weather. Weather-related Mountain Top closings will be posted to our website, on our Facebook page, and announced on WMWV 93.5 FM and wmwv.com. If inclement weather starts later in the day, call the office at 447-4737 to check for a recorded message. All activities cancelled due to weather will be made up during make-up week at the end of the semester or by other arrangements.

Class Cancellation

Mountain Top Music Center reserves the right to cancel any group class that does not meet the required minimum of students. The office will contact you to arrange any refunds and re-registrations.

Safeguarding

Mountain Top Music Center takes the safety and wellbeing of our community seriously. All staff and faculty are subject to background checks and teaching activity, as well as any activity within our facilities or at our events, is regularly monitored. Should any issue arise, please immediately contact Dr. Julia Howell at education@mountaintopmusic.org, by phone, or in person to discuss in confidence.

A first aid kit is maintained at the school and is available in the upper floor accessible restroom.

Diversity and Inclusion

Mountain Top Music Center is committed to creating an inclusive and welcoming environment for everyone. No member of our community, whether faculty, staff, student, volunteer, or participant, will be discriminated against on the basis of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, age, or physical or mental disability. Discrimination and harassment of any kind will not be tolerated. Should any issue arise, please immediately contact Dr. Julia Howell at education@mountaintopmusic.org, by phone, or in person to discuss in confidence.

Accessibility

Mountain Top Music Center endeavors to make facilities, activities, and events accessible wherever possible. The music school has two reserved disabled parking spaces, curb- and step-free entry, a wheelchair-accessible lift, and ADA-compliant restroom with step-free access from the music school. For offsite activities or performances, the Center attempts to contract with accessible venues whenever available and/or make extra provisions for access. If you have any concerns or accommodations that need to be met, please contact our office and we will be happy to work with you.

Data Protection and Privacy

We collect certain contact and demographic details during registration, evaluation, and instrument rental processes in order to best serve you and communicate efficiently. This

information is stored securely on a localized network accessible only to staff, and will only be used by staff for standard school operations and communications. All payments are processed securely through an encrypted payment gateway. Your information will never be shared with third parties without express permission. Anonymized demographic information may be used for the purposes of reporting, governance, fundraising, and/or analysis in order to track and improve Mountain Top Music Center's operations. If you have any concerns about data protection and privacy, please contact the office.

Photography and Recording

Any photography or recordings made by Mountain Top Music Center of student activities or performances may be used in marketing materials in print and on the web. In the case of minor students, photo releases will be requested. If you have any concerns about photography or recording, please contact the office.

Facilities

The following amenities are available to students, families, and the MTMC community:

- Lobby area with seating, water fountain and water bottle refill station, telephone
- Practice room available on first-come, first-served basis
- Restrooms
- WiFi access
- Library of music reference books, sheet music, and recordings
- Parking

Interested in using our facilities for practice, rehearsal, or similar purposes? Please contact the office to make arrangements.

School Calendar Fall 2019 - Spring 2020

Sep 2nd	Annual Scholarship Fund Benefit at Wildcat Tavern, 5 pm
Sep 6th	Community Open House at 34 Main St., 2 – 4pm
Sep 8th	Students and Families Open House at 34 Main St., 5 – 8pm
Sep 9th	Fall Term Begins
Sep 15th	Annual Gala at Stone Mountain Arts Center
Sep 21st	MLW Scholarship Benefit at Shannon Door
Oct 14th	Indigenous Peoples' Day
Nov 26th – 29th	Thanksgiving Break
Dec 9th – 13th	Recitals Week, Fall Term Ends
Dec 16th – 20th	Makeup Week
Dec 21st – Jan 5th	Winter Break
Jan 6th	Spring Term Begins
Jan 20th	MLK Jr Day
Feb 17th – 21st	February Break
Apr 27th – May 1st	Spring Break
May 11th – 15th	Recitals Week
May 18th – 22nd	Evaluation Week, Spring Term Ends
May 25th	Memorial Day
May 26th – May 29th	Makeup Week

Evaluations

About Evaluations

Each academic year, you and your teacher will complete a two-part evaluation process at the first and last lesson of the year. Evaluations are not meant to be competitive or like an exam, but rather to give you and your teacher reference points and milestones on your path as a musician, and recognition of your progress. The purpose of this activity is to help you and your instructor reflect on (and celebrate!) your achievements and progress as a musician, as well as identify areas for improvement and goals for the future.

At your first lesson of the year, you and your teacher will work together to complete a goal-setting form to help guide your studies for the year and provide some flexible milestones for you to work towards. At the end of the year, you and your instructor will work together to fill out an evaluation covering the past year of your studies to reflect on your progress and achievements and prepare for summer or next year's lessons, and decide the level currently achieved. See level descriptions for more information on levels.

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End of Year Evaluation

Level Descriptions

Note: The level descriptions are intended as a guide, and are subject to the judgment and interpretation of instructor. They are generalized and not fully inclusive of each possible criteria for each instrument, while some criteria may not be relevant depending on course of study. Individual students may align with some points and not others depending on personal progression.

I Early Beginner

- Beginning music study from scratch.
- Learning parts of the instrument.
- Beginning to learn basic techniques and correct posture.
- Learning to listen, count, and imitate instructor.
- Learning pre-notation (note names or finger numbers).
- Learning basic motor skills and coordination for instrument.
- For vocalists, beginning to learn good breathing techniques.

II Developing Beginner

- Improving basic techniques with correct posture.
- Improving listening, counting, and imitating instructor.
- Can play melodic lines with mostly stepwise motion and/or mostly diatonic patterns.
- For chord-based instruments, learning to play basic chords (open position, triads, or similar).
- Learning to read music on the staff.
- Proficient at pre-notation (note names or finger numbers).
- Learning about time signatures and accurate counting.
- Understanding of note durations up to eighth notes.
- Progressing motor skills, coordination, and control, including correct breathing.
- Can match pitch with about 50% accuracy or better.

III Proficient Beginner

- Can read music on the staff and up to one or two ledger lines above/below the staff accurately, or tablature appropriate to level.
- Understands and can count common time signatures.
- Understands note durations up to eighth notes.
- Learning major scales up to one sharp or one flat, or similar level of technical exercise/rudiments.
- Understands dynamic markings.
- Can play more complex melodic lines including leaps and/or basic chord progressions with smooth changes.
- Good motor skills, coordination, and control.
- Solid ear training and imitative skills, matching pitch with about 75% accuracy or better.
- Can use correct posture/position without prompting most of the time.
- Regular practice habits.

IV Early Intermediate

- Competent reading of notation including ledger line notes, relevant clefs, tablature, and/or accurate learning by ear as appropriate.
- Solid sense of pitch and audiation, including matching pitch with about 85% accuracy or better.
- Beginning to learn techniques for creating dynamics and other expression.
- Beginning to learn to play with other musicians.
- Can play scales and pieces in key signatures containing up to two flats or sharps.
- Beginning to understand intervals and basic chords and/or beginning to learn grooves.
- Learning simple improvisation, composition, or playing from memory as relevant to study.
- Good coordination and motor skills with correct posture, learning independence of hands or other physical element as appropriate to instrument.
- Learning self-directed practice habits, including noticing mistakes.

V Developing Intermediate

- Competent reading of notation including ledger line notes, relevant clefs, and/or accurate learning by ear as appropriate.
- Solid sense of pitch and audiation, including matching pitch with nearly 100% accuracy most of the time.
- Can play with phrasing, dynamics, and other appropriate expression as indicated in notation or by ear.
- Learning intermediate repertoire as judged by instructor.
- Good timing, tempo, and accurate rhythm including more complex time signatures and note values up to sixteenth notes.
- Learning to play in time with others.
- Beginning to learn common musical structures.
- Learning major and minor scales and arpeggios in more than one octave, and/or equivalent level of technical exercises.
- Solid independence of hands and learning multiple hand positions as relevant.
- Learning about intervals and chords and can play through simple chord progressions and/or more advanced grooves.
- Learning to improvise or compose with simple materials as relevant to course of study.
- Regular self-directed practice habits, including noticing and self-correcting mistakes often.

VI Proficient Intermediate

- Understanding of more advanced rhythmic patterns including syncopation.
- Mostly accurate reading of notation or tablature and/or learning by ear.
- Proficient at changing chords and/or hand positions smoothly with little to no hesitation.
- Understands performance practices and etiquette appropriate to level and style of performance.
- Learning intermediate repertoire as judged by instructor.
- Good timing, tempo, and accurate rhythm including more complex time signatures such as (compound time signatures) and note values up to sixteenth notes.
- Can play in intermediate-level ensembles with peers.
- Learning major and minor and/or other relevant types of scales and arpeggios in more than one octave, and/or equivalent level of technical exercises.
- Can play in key signatures up to three sharps or flats.
- Solid independence of hands and learning multiple hand positions as relevant.
- For vocalists, good diction and learning to change vowel sounds.
- Learning about intervals and chords and can play through simple chord progressions and/or more advanced grooves.

- Learning to improvise or compose with simple materials as relevant to course of study.
- Regular self-directed practice habits including noticing and self-correcting mistakes a majority of the time.

VII Early Advanced

- Accurate reading and/or learning by ear the majority of the time.
- Accurate intonation the majority of the time.
- Good rhythmic accuracy including syncopated rhythms, note values up to sixteenth notes, and contrapuntal/contrary lines as relevant to instrument.
- Learning intermediate to early advanced repertoire as judged by instructor.
- Can play in intermediate-level ensembles with peers, including simple accompanying.
- Learning major and minor and/or other relevant types of scales and arpeggios in more than one octave, and/or equivalent level of technical exercises.
- Can play in key signatures up to three sharps or flats.
- Solid independence of hands and learning multiple hand positions as relevant.
- For string players, learning to shift to second and third positions.
- Can play smoothly through more advanced chord progressions and/or play along with a backing track accurately with good tempo and timing.
- Understanding of intervals and chords including four-note chords.
- Can improvise or compose with simple materials as relevant to course of study.
- Can perform from memory as appropriate.
- For vocalists, learning to sing in different languages and/or change tone appropriately to the song style with good diction.
- Regular self-directed practice habits including noticing and self-correcting mistakes a majority of the time.

VIII Developing Advanced

- Majority accurate reading and/or learning by ear.
- High level of intonation accuracy.
- High level of rhythmic accuracy including syncopated rhythms, note values up to 32nd notes, and more complex contrapuntal/contrary lines and accompanimental patterns as relevant to instrument.
- Learning intermediate to early advanced repertoire as judged by instructor.
- Can play in key signatures up to four sharps or flats.
- Can play in intermediate-level ensembles with peers, including simple accompanying.
- Learning major and minor and/or other relevant types of scales and arpeggios in multiple octaves, and/or equivalent level of technical exercises.
- Learning etudes at intermediate/higher intermediate/advanced level as judged by instructor.
- Solid independence of hands and learning multiple hand positions as relevant.
- For string players, learning to shift to second through fifth positions and vibrato.
- Can play smoothly through more advanced chord progressions and/or play along with a backing track accurately with good tempo and timing, including more complex rhythmic patterns and grooves such as Latin rhythms.
- Understanding of intervals and chords including four-note chords.
- Can improvise or compose with simple materials as relevant to course of study.
- Can perform from memory as appropriate.
- For vocalists, can sing in different languages and/or change tone appropriately to the song style, and demonstrates good diction.
- Regular self-directed practice habits including noticing and self-correcting mistakes.

IX Proficient Advanced

- Highly accurate reading and/or learning by ear including sight-reading.
- Highly accurate pitching and intonation.
- Can perform pieces from different eras, genres, and styles competently with appropriate techniques.
- Can play in the majority of keys.
- For vocalists, can sing in different languages with good diction and/or use character voices as appropriate, with an understanding of how to mark in breathing and phrasing for themselves.
- Excellent sense of tempo and rhythm most of the time, including playing with other musicians and/or a backing track.
- Can play contrapuntal lines, accompanimental patterns, and/or sing while playing as relevant.
- Learning advanced repertoire as judged by instructor.
- Learning intermediate to advanced etudes as judged by instructor.
- Proficient at scales/arpeggios/other technical exercises in 8 – 12 keys.
- Able to improvise and/or compose as appropriate.
- Understands and can describe common musical structures.
- Able to analyze their pieces with prompting/support from instructor.
- Excellent posture and technique, including correct breathing for singers.
- For string players, shifting to fifth position and higher and good vibrato technique.
- Good ensemble skills.

X High Proficiency Advanced

- Prepared for a college audition or highly competent performances.
- Can perform pieces from different eras, genres, and styles competently, including advanced repertoire.
- Understanding of common musical structures.
- Can analyze and speak about their repertoire articulately.
- High level or mastery of technique on their instrument.
- Can play well within different ensembles as appropriate.
- Able to improvise and/or compose as appropriate.
- Can present polished performances with good stage etiquette as appropriate for the venue and type of performance.
- Knowledge of extended/contemporary techniques for their instrument.

Top of the Mountain Program

Top of the Mountain is an honors program designed to recognize the achievement of dedicated students, challenge those who push themselves to greater musical heights, and create opportunities for collaborative, student-led learning and skill-building. Elements of the program include:

- o Completion of a student-led project with support from faculty and peers
- o Participation in master classes and skills sessions taught by guest artists
- o Participation in school and community ensembles and performances
- o Eligibility to “open” at a MTMC Home or Public Concert
- o Concert attendance to explore our rich local music community
- o Opportunities to collaborate and connect with fellow musicians

Students will be nominated for Top of the Mountain by their teacher and contacted by letter at the end of fall term. Top of the Mountain activities take place over the course of the spring term.