

# PERFORMANCE AT MUSIC WORKS ACADEMY

## *Classes, Musicales and Recital*

Performance events are a quarterly occurrence at MWA. As such, they provide students with short-term performance goals. There are three different venues for performance: classes, a musicale and a formal recital. There are three Performance Classes (October, March and May), an annual Holiday Musicales in December, and an annual Spring Recital in March. Goals and expectations are different for all three events. These performance events are included in the monthly tuition and replace the weekly lesson. All performance events are held at Music Works Academy.

### **Performance Classes**

The performance ‘master’ classes are for students only. On-line or in-studio registration is available during the 7 – 8 weeks preceding any given performance class; class rosters are posted on-line at [www.musicworksacademy.com](http://www.musicworksacademy.com) under EVENTS. The classes are limited to 12 – 14 students. We encourage parents who have students with busy schedules to register early so there will be room in their class of choice.

This medium provides an opportunity for students to play before a small group of peers. Our aim is to make this class a low-key, friendly atmosphere where the goal is to help alleviate performance anxiety, distribute quarterly awards with PianoPins and AwardPins, and have learn how to have *fun with performance*. Ask any of our adult students how frustrating it is to know that you can play a piece well, only to fall apart when asked to perform for family or friends. Students with extreme performance anxiety are encouraged to attend; watching and listening helps the anxious performer get accustomed to the atmosphere of a performance setting...this is certainly less threatening than playing for parents in a formal recital! There are links on the website to *Performance Pointers* and an article from Keyboard Companion “*Rethinking Recitals: Making Performing Fun*”.

### **Why Performance Classes?**

Students need to work toward defined goals. There needs to be excitement about what they have worked hard to accomplish. And they need to be able to share their enthusiasm; that makes the hard work have value. Intrinsic motivation can blossom from these small group performance opportunities.

1) The quarterly performance class is a “*Show and Tell*” opportunity, a time to be recognized for achievement. The school system provides no support of private music instruction!

2) The quarterly class provides a *break in the weekly lesson-routine*. The monotony for both student and teacher that occurs when there is no break in the weekly lesson routine or no goal to work toward hampers learning and enthusiasm.

3) Since the class size is limited, the performance class provides opportunity for *teacher and/or student demonstration*. This is a time for *coaching and commentary on performance etiquette and repertoire interpretation* where students can learn by watching and listening to their peers. If a student has not completed an entire piece, they can perform a section(s) of their piece.

4) The quarterly class is an opportune time for students to *hear each other* and to *get excited about a piece or performance they hear*. This is best illustrated by sharing one comment from a 4<sup>th</sup> grader after hearing a 5<sup>th</sup> grader play:

“I want to be able to play like that; how long will it take me?” There was needless concern that the younger student would be intimidated by a more advanced player near his own age!

5) The quarterly class is a time for *performance strategies and skills* to emerge: a) to learn how to make mistakes and remain ‘cool and collected’; b) to learn how to gracefully exit an ‘uncomfortable’ performance; and, c) to hear others not be ‘perfect’ and thus be better able to accept their own mistakes during a performance.

6) And last, but certainly not least, the quarterly class is a *deadline date* for students to be held accountable for follow-through of their weekly assignments.

**Accountability:** This class is our attempt to hold students accountable...and we need parental support. As music instructors, we do not have the ‘power’ that is inherent in the schools with a grading system. Just watch what happens to a student who enrolls at Arizona Academy of the Arts and receives a quarterly grade in guitar or piano! If a fellow student plays four pieces and your student has barely finished a section of their piece, the ‘peer’ influence is more dynamic than any verbal or non-verbal message from the parent or the teacher. Our well-meaning ‘encouragement’ can easily end up being interpreted as pressure, nagging, disappointment, etc. When a student is not completely prepared, that’s the *most important* time for them to attend a performance class.... whether they perform or not! Even our little ones can understand that “before Halloween” they are working to finish xxxx pieces(s) to share with their piano friends.

**Performance Notebooks:** We encourage each student to compile a Performance Notebook. A 3-ring binder contains a photocopy of the piece(s) they have played at classes, recitals and musicales. A copy of their annual Spring Recital serves as a divider for their years of music study. This notebook serves two purposes: 1) “Old” pieces will be played if they are easily accessible. Your students are taking lessons to learn how to “play”; practice is the routine that everyone wishes they could avoid. Having the ‘fruits of their labor’ waiting for attention keeps students *playing* while the ‘practice’ of new material unfolds. 2) Their notebook is tangible proof of musical growth and can serve as a valuable deterrent to upset and frustration. The “I want to quit” syndrome that every student experiences at some point can be massaged with their visible collection of accomplishment.

## **Holiday Musicale Open House**

This annual event held during December is a musicale without programs. Limited to twelve performers, parents and friends have the opportunity to hear their students perform. This setting is more informal than the Spring Recital. Students bring a holiday goodie and punch is provided. People come and go every hour during three or four days of 13 - 18 hours of musical treats. What better gift for your family during the holiday season!

## **Spring Recital**

The Spring Recital is held during March. There are 8 – 10 recitals, with each instructor hosting his/her own recital. Recital programs list the repertoire each student performs. Students are encouraged to ‘dress up’ for this recital. Parents and friends are invited. A Performance Class is held the same week before the recital and serves as a ‘rehearsal’. Our goal is to make this notorious dreaded ‘recital’ experience a memorable feeling of accomplishment.

Our students are working to develop a musical skill.

Performance is most usually a learned skill....to be able to share this skill is part of their musical training.

The self-esteem that comes with a well-done performance is more valuable than the piece(s) they have mastered!