

Parent's Guide



Private Music Lessons

A Convenient way to enjoy the best that the New York City Music Scene has to offer.

Private music lessons are offered at UNIS to all students in grades J1 and above. Students can choose from piano, guitar, voice (for students in Middle School and older), violin, viola, cello, flute, oboe, saxophone, trumpet, French horn, euphonium, trombone, tuba and percussion.



Why take Lessons?

The art of self-expression

We are fortunate at UNIS to have world-class performing artists who teach private music lessons to our students. They teach highly specialized music techniques and performance skills with the convenience of obtaining this training right on the schools' campuses. We encourage UNIS families to take advantage of this wonderful opportunity to expand their children's education and talent.

By taking private music lessons, students can:

- ♪ Begin a life-long journey of self-expression

- ♪ Learn Musical literacy through practical applications
- ♪ Develop specific values such as creativity, emotional response, intellectual growth, and concepts of the self.
- ♪ Increase their confidence, self-esteem, and self-discipline.

Questions and Answers

How do Private Lessons relate to the UNIS music program?

In the case of piano and guitar, private lessons are self-contained. That is, the work done in the lesson time is not necessarily related to your child's other musical experiences at UNIS. The teacher and the student primarily set the goals. Interested students can also elect to participate in exams given by the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM), Royal American Conservatory (RACE), or the New York State School Music Association (NYSSMA). Please ask your child's teacher about these exams, which are held locally in the spring.

In the case of all other instruments, and voice in Middle and High School, the lesson teachers will reinforce the repertoire from the curricular ensemble program (band, chorus, string ensemble). Teachers will also focus on individual technique and repertoire in preparation for recitals. These students may also be asked to participate in one of the graded exams described above at various points during their music study.

What should I expect from the teacher?

Upon receipt of your registration form, a teacher will contact you to set up a lesson time for the year. Your child's teacher will set goals and help provide practice guidelines. Teachers will also communicate regularly to update you on your child's progress and any issues of concern.

What should the teacher expect from me & my child?

Private lessons are a collaborative partnership between the teacher, parent, and student. The teacher will expect your assistance in establishing a regular practice schedule at home. Private music lessons require a year-long weekly commitment, and students registered for private lessons are required to attend every lesson. There is also the expectation that your child will perform in the annual Spring Recital. One of the benefits of private study is acquiring a personal music library. Purchasing music collections can also encourage independent exploration and sight-reading for students. Therefore, you will be asked to purchase printed music from time to time.



Questions and Answers

What performing opportunities exist for my child?

Fridays at Four

The Fridays at Four performance class is an opportunity for students to perform for other classmates in a casual environment. The goal of these classes is to explore the experience of performing among a peer group and discuss and explore how performance skills can be enriched. Ask your child's teacher how to get involved.

Recitals

All private teachers organize at least one recital for their students. Some teachers may choose to produce both a winter and Spring Recital. Parents are enthusiastically invited to attend these cumulative performances. Ideally, every child will have had the experience of participation in at least one *Friday at Four* as preparation for the spring recital.

Can I choose which teacher my child studies with?

As many UNIS families lead very busy lives, so do our private teachers. Most of them balance performance careers with teaching positions at other institutions and at home. While you are free to make a specific request, the final pairing of a student with a teacher often has to do with schedules, as well as suitability for a particular student. All of our private teachers are hired through a rigorous series of interviews, teaching demonstrations and performance auditions. We have some of the best teachers and performers in New York City on our faculty. We feel proud in offering you and your children this rich program.

What are Grade Level/Ensemble Concerts?

UNIS ensemble concerts are presented throughout the year. Because the students are encouraged to work on their ensemble music in their private lessons, these concerts are a direct reflection of the work done in the lessons. All concerts are open to everyone. For a listing of these events, please look at the *Coming Events* on the UNIS website and also on display outside the music office.

How do I register for private lessons?

Registration is available online or on campus by visiting the Music Office. All new and returning music students are encouraged to submit their registration forms no later than Friday, September 12, 2014, to ensure that they are able to secure a lesson time. There is a one-time fee of \$45.00 assessed for every lesson registration each year. Upon submission of the required registration form, one of our teaching artists will contact you directly to schedule the lesson day and time. Please allow a few days for processing. Submission of the online registration form will serve as a contract between your family and the teacher commencing at the first completed lesson. We ask that you please review the lesson policy thoroughly before submitting your registration form.

How can I get an instrument? *Rent or Buy*

Piano:

If your child is studying piano, we *strongly recommend* having an acoustic piano in the home rather than an electronic keyboard. There is a huge difference in sound and an even greater difference in feel (action) between even a small console piano and any other kind of keyboard. Since purchasing a piano is a major investment, you may wish to consider renting a piano. The following is a partial list of companies that rent pianos in NYC:

- The Steinway Factory
(212) 332-0113
- Piano Rental NY
(212) 586-9055
- Beethoven Piano
(212) 765-7300

Guitar:

It is recommended that the student use a nylon string, classical guitar. Prices vary from approximate \$100-\$300 for a decent beginner's instrument. Please consult with the private teacher before purchasing. He/she can provide guidelines for buying to insure that you will be getting a good quality instrument. The teacher can also provide information about the best store from which to buy a guitar.

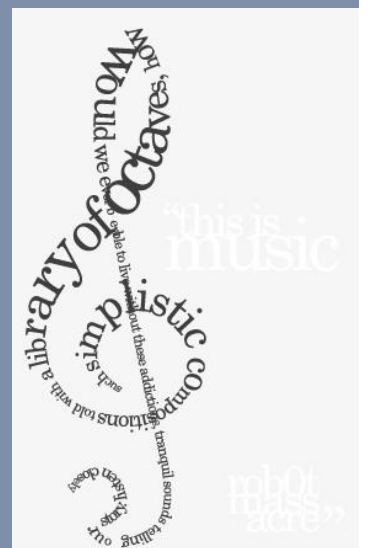


Strings:

Students may purchase their own instrument or rent one for the year. We recommend **Johnson Strings:** 800-369-9531. The company provides excellent quality instruments combined with a reliable repair service. Sizing and deliveries are organized through the school. However, you are required to sign a rental contract directly with the company.

Woodwinds/Brass:

Music and Arts supplies high quality woodwind and brass instruments and provides reliable repair service. Please remember that while UNIS helps facilitate delivery and repair of rental instruments, the contract with the company rests with the parents. You will need to follow all of the company's policies and payment schedule as they state.



PRACTICING...



Enrolling in music lessons is a commitment for all parties involved. Performance skills take time to develop. Therefore, discipline and patience are two key ingredients for you and your child. Practicing involves step-by-step development, repetition, concentration, and correction of mistakes. Give your child encouragement along the way and celebrate their small steps of progress. *Without regular practicing, the student will be frustrated and disappointed with the results.*

General Tips on Practicing...

1. **Practice Regularly:** It is better to practice four times a week for twenty minutes, rather than only once a week for an hour. Students will demonstrate increased efficiency, ease of learning, and greater retention. It is a good idea to keep a record of their practices to help maintain a routine.
2. **Practice in private:** Your child should be able to concentrate on music without distractions. Students need the freedom to make mistakes in practice. A child may feel self-conscious, and spend energy worrying about what the “audience” may think.
3. **Practice area:** Set aside an area in the house for regular practice. Make sure your child has a music stand, adequate lighting and a comfortable but firm chair.
4. **Practice habits:** How your practice is how you play. It is important to develop good habits early to set up a lifetime of pleasure and reward.
5. **Listen to as much quality music possible:** One of the best ways to help your child improve their playing and general musicianship is to expose them to great music, either through live performance or recordings. WQXR and WNYC radio are both good local sources of great classical, jazz, and world music, and they have excellent websites too. Most of the famous venues here in NYC offer low cost student options, student rush prices, and also family concerts.