



OPUS December 2020

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NEWS AT CCM

CCM going beyond private lessons with musicales

The Musicale connects students to their peers and is an excellent tool for advancing learning. It provides students with an extra opportunity to perform in a casual setting and receive valuable feedback from faculty members and peers.

CCM students can participate in the upcoming Piano Musicale presented by CCM instructor Kitty Cheung-Evans, December 12. She'll provide strategies for avoiding recurring mistakes and how not to get stuck on the same passage and will also present composers' unique composition styles.

Kitty says, "Together we can elevate the "work in progress" piece to performance-ready. It's an excellent opportunity for CCM students to play in a friendly environment to improve skills—where students laugh and discuss music!"



CCM's November Piano Masterclass

On Saturday, November 7, visiting artist [Roberto Poli](#) presented an online piano masterclass. CCM Piano Chair Keith Kirchoff was thrilled with the student turnout and participation. Masterclass instructor Poli provided constructive comments on both technical and stylistic aspects of each student's playing. He started each piece with a bit of history about the composer.

The stories about the eccentric French composer Erik Satie especially amazed all—after Satie passed away, friends found 30 years' worth of unopened letters hidden in a grand piano. He also placed two pianos on top of the other and used them as a bookcase. Thank you, Roberto Poli, for this fascinating afternoon.



Jack Bram, winner of the CCM Scavenger Hunt and free private lessons!

We have a winner! What better way to test your knowledge of our Concord merchants than with a scavenger hunt. Participants traveled all corners of Concord with clues in-hand to find instruments tucked away in local merchants' storefronts. Our winner, Jack Bram, with his mom, said that they appreciated this family-fun activity and that he's excited to start his guitar lessons.

The musical scavenger hunt kicked off the year-long celebration of the Concord Conservatory of Music's 15th Anniversary. "Since 2005, CCM has welcomed thousands of students and concertgoers through our doors. Music is such an important part of all of our lives," says Kate Yoder, Executive Director and Founder of CCM. "It's gratifying that CCM has become a community resource, bringing so many people together through music."

Look for more community activities to be announced for the winter months.

Are you a CCM friend yet?

Join us on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to be the first to learn CCM news and more! See what music videos we like, photos we post, practice tips and articles we suggest, and new music in the music world. Be sure to bookmark the [CCM Blog](#), so you never miss a new post.



HELP CCM GET THE CHALLENGE GRANT!

We've been challenged: Give 12 Gifts of Music in 12 Months

Act Fast to Double the Impact of Your Monthly Donation

That's 12 gifts in 12 months.

And, right now - an extra \$15,000 gift is on the line to make high-quality music education accessible to everyone in our community. If we can secure 50 new monthly donors by December 18, an anonymous donor will give CCM a \$15,000 gift. Today you can make your valuable support go even further by joining the CCM Music Promoters Club—a monthly giving program that supports music education.

Yes, I'd love to be a Music Promoter!

Remember, your ongoing monthly support will:

- Provide high-quality instruction and program access to all in our community
- Offer a full music curriculum, including masterclasses, performance workshops, private instruction, and ensembles
- Make music education accessible to all with a financial assistance grant
- Provide our students with valuable learning opportunities that carry-over far beyond their musical training

That's why I'm inviting you to join our [**Music Promoters Club**](#). Can we count on you to help us secure the \$15,000 gift and keep the music playing all year long?

On behalf of all of our students and instructors at CCM, thank you in advance for your generosity!



CALLING ALL ADULT LEARNERS!

It's Never Too Late to Learn an Instrument, Covid Safe and Good for Your Health

By Joan Mankoff

Are you struggling to figure out what to do safely during the upcoming winter days amidst a global pandemic? Do you feel the need to enrich your life, health, and emotional well-being during these challenging times? Learning music may be the answer. Studies show that music is overwhelmingly beneficial for adults. And, with today's technology, you can learn an instrument from the safety of your home or in a safe, socially distanced studio environment.

You're not too old!

You can do it. You may think you are too old to learn a musical instrument, or it's too late to pick up that instrument from your younger years. *It's just not so.*

"I had always wanted to play the drums as a child and learned the piano, guitar, and dulcimer. I had been told by my elementary school percussion teacher, "girls don't play drums." After that, I didn't play anything for about 35 years. A few years ago, I saw that CCM was offering a group hand-drumming class, and it was when I could squeeze into my work schedule and was offered just down the street from my house. So, I signed up and had a blast. The teacher, Mike Connors, knew how to make the class fun, and we were all playing rhythms at the very first lesson. Taking the class, I realized how

much I had missed playing music and decided to commit to learning to play on a full drum set with private lessons. Playing music has now become so much a part of my life that I can't imagine not taking lessons and maybe, eventually, I might be able to play in an ensemble and even do some composing and recording just for fun!"

--Carolyn B., adult percussion student at Concord Conservatory of Music.

A wealth of research shows that learning and playing an instrument has numerous health benefits, especially for folks over 50. With a musical instrument in hand, the brain is engaged at many levels, from reading notes to physical coordination and simultaneously listening to the music created.

Musicians also tend to have better eyesight, verbal fluency, and more precise hearing than non-musicians. According to a study by Johns Hopkins University, learning musical instruments contributes to preventing neurocognitive decline and disorders, including Alzheimer's and dementia. Another study by Harvard researched seniors learning a new musical instrument and found that their memory can improve by 50 to 70%.

Source: [Never stop learning why learning music may be the best thing to do during the COVID-19 pandemic](#)



Fight Covid-19 Induced Stress with Music

We propose an often overlooked cure for stress, [learning an instrument](#). Get ready to be creative, boost your outlook on life, and even become social during this unprecedented time.

Making music contributes significantly to stress reduction, lessening anxiety and depression, and a boost in the body's immunological responses – no doubt beneficial during Covid. The website Medical News Today highlights an article by Sarah Glynn, "[Music Benefits Both Mental and Physical Health](#)", that elaborates on the importance music plays in our immune system, "...music increases an antibody that plays an important role in the immunity of the mucous system, known as immunoglobulin A, as well as natural killer cell counts, the cells that attack germs and bacteria invading the body."

All of us are feeling a loss of community during the pandemic. Studies have shown that older adults who have an active social life tend to live longer than isolated peers. That poses a real challenge during Covid. Look no further than on-line group music classes where you can interact safely with the instructor and other students and increase your social circle. Take it one step further and treat your family and friends to on-line concerts to show off your new musical skills! Music can create a sense of belonging and community – regardless if it's by Zoom or face-to-face.

Are you wondering about which [instrument](#) you should tackle? A recent study commissioned by Spotify and conducted as part of *Where is My Mind?*, a podcast hosted by Niall Breslin focusing on music and mental health, delved into ukulele playing in a recent episode called "[The Lockdown Ukulele Rockdown.](#)"

Breslin provided adults struggling with their mental health during the pandemic ukuleles to learn to play. The results were remarkably positive. Over a third of the learners said it gave them "a sense of purpose of life," boosting their mental health through increased feelings of happiness and relaxation. Let's take the ukulele



one step further. The instrument, which has seen a recent resurgence, has proven to be an excellent entry instrument to learn as an adult. It has fewer strings than a guitar and is smaller and more manageable to hold.

[25 Reasons to Play the Ukulele](#)



For many of us, especially those retired, Covid has resulted in more time on our hands. Perhaps you are watching too much TV or surfing the Internet. Skip the doom scrolling and use that time to learn and practice an instrument. As quoted in a recent AARP article, [*Wave of Americans Learn to Play Musical Instruments*](#) by Robin L. Flanigan (July 30, 2020), Older Americans are picking up instruments they always yearned to play or are returning to those they may have tooted or screeched through as young children. Staying close to home and limit on socializing have provided time and space for this pursuit."

You have options. Besides boosting your brainpower and tuning your fine motor skills, it's helpful to figure out your goals for learning an instrument. It may be that you love music, or maybe you've dreamed of being a member of a jazz or rock band. Megan Romer lays out some questions to ask yourself in, "[How to Choose a Musical Instrument to Play](#)" (2018, Liveaboutdotcom)

Why not start now?

It's never too late to embark on your musical journey. Check out Concord Conservatory of Music [adult learning offerings](#) as featured on our website.

The conservatory's proven holistic approach is perfect for new and returning musicians. You'll find quite a variety – from the ukulele to the banjo in both group and private lesson settings and on-line or socially distanced in-person—guaranteed fun for all with the enormous benefit of sharpening your mind and body. We hope to hear you play soon!

DECEMBER PERFORMANCES TO EXPERIENCE



Upcoming Performances by Genre

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