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NEWS AT CCM

CCM Welcomes Weronika Balewski to the CCM Faculty

We're introducing three new group classes for young kids this fall, Music Makers, Musical Gateway, and Rhythmic Solfège, and we're so fortunate to have the expertise of Weronika Balewski to teach them!

Flutist and early childhood educator Weronika Balewski is excited to introduce our youngest students to the world of music through engaging, innovative techniques and fun activities. Her expertise with Rhythmic Solfège—learning music through movement with the addition of focused musical study on keyboard percussion, will guide kids to developing their musicianship.

From ages 3 through 11, kids will have the opportunity to experience and learn music through movement. They'll have so much fun they won't even realize how much their music skills are



developing. Weronika follows the curriculum and teaching concepts from [Integral Steps](#), an organization specializing in education that integrates the mind, body, and emotions through interdisciplinary learning.

As a certified teacher of [Dalcroze Eurhythmics](#), Weronika uses a social, joyful, movement-based approach to teaching music. Her students use movement to shape and internalize musical concepts, and she'll introduce exercises that drive the students to good listening and ear training development. Did you know that ear training is teaching your brain how to listen to and understand

music?

Weronika is the flutist and Co-Founder of [Marvento Duo](#) and performs on modern and Baroque flute in various chamber, orchestra, and educational projects. She is the winner of the Brookline Symphony Concerto Competition. She regularly collaborates with Multiverse Concert Series on community events combining musical performances, scientific lectures, and activities for children and families.

[Get to know Weronika and read her complete and impressive bio.](#)

CCM launches the Chamber Ensemble Program

At CCM, we develop the whole musician and help them discover their potential. One way to do this is to play with others in a [Chamber Ensemble](#), allowing students to grow as

individuals and musicians. It builds confidence and gives a creative outlet to those who want to make music with others.

Playing in a chamber ensemble gives students some of the most challenging, rewarding, and memorable musical experiences they will ever have. Chamber music study develops leadership and interpersonal skills, critical thinking and challenges students to incorporate soloistic playing in an ensemble setting.

For all students, chamber music opens up new possibilities for advancement, enjoyment, and the opportunity to play with friends.

Learn more about the Concord Conservatory of Music [Chamber Ensemble Program](#).

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.



CHOOSE THE RIGHT MUSICAL INSTRUMENT FOR YOUR CHILD: IT'S A TEAM EFFORT!

By Joan Mankoff

School's out! That exclamation brings extra excitement for a fun and relaxing summer. But, of course, that means a "real" back to school is just around the corner! So now is the time to consider your child's activities and equipment for the fall docket. Learning a new musical instrument is a great way to kick off the new school year.

Let's revisit why music is so beneficial to children and their overall development.

Playing a musical instrument promotes good listening and focus, which can help strengthen study skills. It boosts self-esteem and encourages self-expression. Learning music teaches essential life skills such as commitment, dedication, perseverance, and resilience.

Dr. Nina Kraus, a professor of communication sciences, neurobiology, and physiology, and the director of the Auditory Neuroscience Laboratory at Northwestern University, states, "The same biological ingredients that are important for reading are those that are strengthened through playing a musical instrument." She goes on to say, "The ability to categorize sounds, to pull out important sounds from background noise, to respond consistently to the sounds in one's environment.... these are all important ingredients for learning, for auditory learning, for reading, (and) for listening in the classrooms."

Learning the right musical instrument is the gateway to a lifetime of musical fun and enrichment.

But how to choose?

Making the decision is a team effort involving you as the parent, your child, and the instructors. There are several factors involved in finding an instrument match, but first and foremost, it's important to let your child be the guide.

Yes, the decision will be steered by age, physical development, maturity, and personality, but your child needs to feel excited and empowered by the decision. If they are adamant about NOT playing a particular instrument, then any amount of coaxing or bribing is unlikely to change that lack of excitement, resulting in little chance of success.

Let's start with age.

Remember, because children develop differently with respect to age, the right instrument for one child may not be a good fit for another because of physical build or maturity. This is a case where one size does not fit all. Frustrations occur when instruments built for larger hands or stronger lungs are played by children not physically ready for them.

Singing and music and movement classes are ideal for the very early music starters, helping to develop listening, pitch, and rhythmic and coordination skills. This is an excellent intro to learning an instrument. In addition, CCM offers [Music Makers](#) music and movement class for these first learners, who are typically four years old and younger.



The primary purpose for early learners between four and seven years old is to have fun and learn basic musicianship skills since they are limited by size and stamina. Keyboard and string instruments are a good fit for this young age group and can build a strong music foundation.

Smaller-scale instruments such as eighth and sixteenth-size violins and cello are available to help address the issues of size, finger stretch, and weight. A quarter-size guitar is also available.



CCM typically starts students around four years of age on violin, cello, and piano, and guitar at around six.

Don't rule out drums for kids around seven and up. It can also be a good fit if the student is able to reach the pedals and cymbals.

Students nine to ten years of age can typically start handling [brass instruments](#) well, depending on lung capacity and strength. Most children manage woodwind instruments at approximately age ten, dependent on physique, maturity, and dexterity. Students with well-formed dental structures, including permanent front teeth, will do better with brass and [woodwind instruments](#).

Although progress has been made, gender bias still exists in children and instrument selection, such as the stereotype of girls playing flute and boys bashing the drums. Historically, many instruments have been tagged as masculine or feminine. However, these typecasts are fading away. Instead, parents and educators need to encourage children to choose the instrument they are passionate about no matter what others think.

Factor in their personality.

Personality counts. If your child is outgoing and likes to be on the center stage, certain instruments lend themselves better to that such as the flute or trumpet, since these musicians tend to stand in front of a band at some point during a performance.

(source: <https://www.cnn.com/2013/09/09/living/parents-kids-body-type-music-instrument/index.html>)



Also, do not pick an instrument for your child because you played it as a kid. Again, let your child choose the instrument most comfortable at this time. Remain positive and encouraging during their musical progress, no matter the pace. Your child's personality and maturity will evolve, and so may the passion for a specific instrument.

“Our nurturing, creative environment puts your child first,” says Kate Yoder, Executive Director, and Founder. “We encourage you and your child to come to our open house, explore all our musical offerings, and to let your child play a key role in choosing an instrument. The CCM team is committed to helping our students develop a lifelong love for music.”

Your child's decision in selecting a musical instrument is a genuine team effort. Remember, we as educators and you as the parent want to empower your child to make the right decision as they embark on a long and fulfilling musical journey.

Many factors come into play, but ultimately, musical passion will come from within your child. [So why not let CCM help navigate this musical exploration?](#)

Taking part in an [instrument petting zoo](#) helps—having them fiddle around on the violin, make a sound on the flute, or strum on a guitar opens their eyes to possibilities. It's a fun afternoon that helps you and your child experience their music options.

Mark your calendar now!

Attend the [CCM Discovery Day Open House](#) on September 11th from 1 – 3 pm, where you and your children can explore different instruments. In addition, young future musicians can take Group Keyboard and Music Makers music and movement demo classes (dates and times to be announced soon).



But why wait? [Let's talk instruments](#) and start you or your child on their musical path today.



THE REVIVAL OF THE UKULELE: WHY YOU NEED TO START PLAYING IT TODAY

It can be toted easily to the beach or campsite. It's probably within your budget. And, you can learn to play a host of genres with it and in a short amount of time. Plus, it's even the perfect size for those younger students with smaller hands and fingers. That explains the revival of the ukulele!

Fun fact on its name

Some say that the [ukulele got its name](#) because of its small size and lively and joyful sound, while others say it's because of the fast finger movement by skilled musicians who play the uke (*yes, that's its nickname known by many*).

Or, maybe it just happens to be named after a fellow who was lively, petite, and fond of the instrument. (source: Merriam Webster)

Either way, this small, guitar-like instrument was first introduced in the states, specifically Hawaii, by Portuguese immigrants in the

late 1800s. [Three Madeiran woodworkers, Manuel Nunes, Augusto Dias, and Jose do Espirito Santo](#), are believed to have invented the ukulele. All three of them dabbled in instrument making and brought their knowledge of similar Portuguese instruments, [machêtes](#), and the [rajãos](#), to the states. Whether alone or borrowing design elements from one another, one of these three men invented the ukulele.

Hawaiian Connection

Years later, [Hawaiian-born Israel Kamakawiwo'ole](#) brought the ukulele to the forefront, especially with his medley of [Over The Rainbow and What A Wonderful World](#). His music is still popular today and introduced to the younger generation through commercials and movies.

Beyond its fun and social character, the ukulele has grown up since Israel gave it a following in Hawaii and beyond. You can now see it used in [jazz](#), classical, rock, and other genres.

From John Lennon to George Harrison, to Taylor Swift, Steven Tyler, Cyndi Lauper, and Bruce Springsteen,

[many famous artists](#) have showcased the ukulele in their performances. One Canadian indie-pop band known for making use of the ukulele in their music now, *Walk Off the Earth*, performs [Eye of the Tiger](#). With an energetic beat, they put their own spin on this Rocky theme song. It's fun to see the ukulele used with many genres and with many professional artists.

“

I love the ukulele. I can take it everywhere. It's a way to have music with you all the time.

It's such a cute happy sound.

It's a social instrument. You can get 50 people every week jamming together.

-Daniel Ho, *ukulele musician*

(From MakingMusic archives: Throwback Thursday: Daniel Ho — Hawaiian Musician Keeps the Passion in His Productions)



The ukulele helps with learning music!



Professional musicians agree that learning the ukulele can help you learn the fundamentals of music. CCM faculty member Aaron Jay Myers says, "switching to guitar or mandolin may be a little easier if you've taken ukulele lessons." Another great reason to start your young child with the ukulele and give them a head start with another instrument.

Even Noel Paul Stookey, better known as [Paul from the popular American folk group Peter, Paul, and Mary](#), credits the ukulele for his music knowledge.

"It's no secret that I learned most of what I know about making music from the four strings of a ukulele. Actually, the uke was the basis of my learning jazz chords—you know, three notes minimum to make a chord, but then you have the choice of what color to add with the fourth string.

And he goes on to say: "There's no doubt that the ukulele is the go-to portable party axe, but more importantly in my mind, it provides an entry to the tuning and playing of almost any stringed instrument. The strings are soft on the fingers, the frets are close, and the neck is child-friendly—what's not to love?"

From *Ukulele Magazine - Summer edition*, May 3, 2021, by David A. Woods

Too old to learn?

No way! [With life's experiences](#) behind you, your primed and ready to learn the ukulele.

Not only can adults learn the ukulele, but they can also have fun learning music they love.

Aaron, who teaches uke group classes at CCM, explains, "I have a book of Renaissance lute music arranged for ukulele and a book of Irish tunes for ukulele that are fun to play."

Whether you like to play '80s pop, classic rock, folk, or contemporary songs, learning proper fingerpicking and strumming techniques for the ukulele will help keep you sharp and

provide hours of enjoyment. Just imagine—you can entertain your grandkids or jam together!

How you can learn to play the ukulele!

- Listen to a few ukulele songs to get you in the groove like Bruno Mars singing [Count on Me](#) and [Fearless](#) sung by Taylor Swift
- [Learn about which ukulele you should purchase.](#) From differences in tone and volume of the instrument to the various sizes (there's soprano, concert, tenor, and baritone), you'll have to do some research before choosing your instrument. [Here's a top 2021 list for ukes!](#)
- Join the [Ukulele Crash Course](#) this fall. Sign-up today for a fun, supportive, and engaging group class!



Or, maybe you're ready for the next level. Discover which group class will be right for you and register for [Ukulele 2 and More](#) or the [Ukulele Club](#).

See you this fall!

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