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## NEWS AT CCM

**CCM Lecture Series** - engages, educates, and entertains.

We've packed March with opportunities to expand your music knowledge. *Everyone is welcome to attend these complimentary online lectures.*

**[Visit our website for details.](#)**

**[SERIALISM FOR KIDS!](#)** / Saturday,  
March 20, 10:00 - 10:50 am

**[THE 25 GREATEST VIOLINISTS OF  
ALL TIME](#)** / Saturday, March 27, 10:00 -  
11:00 am



**[AFTER THE PLAGUE, VOCAL MUSIC OF THE HIGH RENAISSANCE](#)** / Saturday, April 10,  
10:00 - 11:00 am

**[JAZZ HISTORY IN A NUTSHELL](#)** / Wednesday, April 14, 5:30 - 6:30 pm

**[SACRED GREEN: THE 11TH CENTURY ENVIRONMENTAL MOVEMENT OF HILDEGARD OF  
BINGEN](#)** / Friday, April 23, 7:00 - 8:00 pm

**[Register in advance to receive the link to the lecture.](#)**

**Have you read our blog post, [Learn a Second Instrument – And So Much More!](#)**

**[THE CCM BLOG](#)** Browse our articles by categories that interest you, from Benefits of Music Education and Performance Prep to Voice Therapy.

**Are you a CCM friend yet?**

Join us

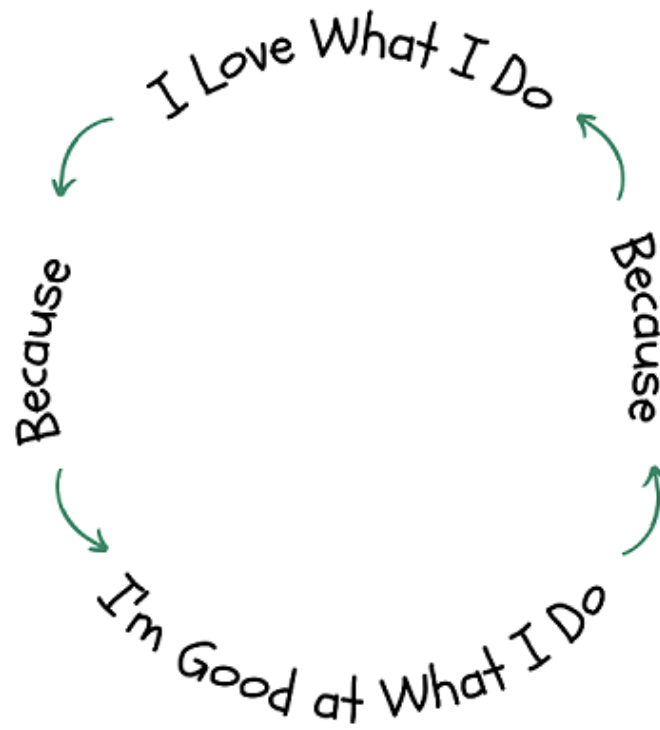
on [Instagram](#) and [Facebook](#) to be the  
first to learn CCM news and more!

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.





## ARE YOU LEARNING TO PLAY AN INSTRUMENT OR LEARNING TO LOVE MUSIC?

Why do some people stick with their music studies and others don't? Today, a lot of music education focuses almost exclusively on instrument and notation skills and expects that the inner understanding of music to develop automatically – or not at all. What else is there to learning music? Think of it as not learning music but developing your “musicality” or “instinct for music.” Three additional core skills are learnable and develop your understanding and enjoyment of music, which are often overlooked: having a good sense of rhythm, understanding melodies and harmonies, and being creative with your musical ideas. You can learn these skills; they are not a *gift* that you either have or you don't.

Educators refer to this as the core competencies of music education. The development of these core competencies is already interwoven into each student's lesson across the school. In the future, students and instructors will be better able to track their progress with fall goal setting and a new evaluation program that focuses on these skills.

A basic example is developing your internal rhythm. “I'm always amazed that some people can't feel four beats,” says CCM guitar instructor Phil Sargent. “Many of my students get it all of a sudden. They'll feel the song's pulse and being able to switch chords on time - then they can play along with the song. At that point, the student starts making a lot more progress

and having fun with their music.”

Sometimes a student can play in time when they are playing with a group, but not when they play alone. It is often thought that the student has an issue with note-reading or a technique problem when what’s really the matter is they have not developed their internal sense of rhythm.



The same holds true with tonal skills or audiation. If you can sing the correct pitches in your music, you can hear when you correctly play your music and not be reliant solely on the mechanics of playing your instrument. Phil Sargent sets time aside in his more advanced students’ lessons to do ear training and developing the skill to sing back notes that are played. “It’s so important to be able to internalize the melody outside the instrument.”

Creativity comes into the picture when students are asked to make decisions about music and go beyond playing what is written on the page. This might involve developing a rhythm pattern for a scale, composing a line of music, or improvising on a song. CCM piano instructor Lorna Henderson can see that creativity has bloomed in her students when they share their insights about a song. “I love when a student can relate their piece to something extra-musical. If a student says, ‘Oh, that sounds like rain,’ or ‘That final note could linger like the last Starburst candy in the pack,’ they’re making intuitive connections. A student who is emotionally involved will enjoy practicing more too.”

Why is learning these concepts so important? Because we’re looking at the long game. Anything worth doing takes work, but it’s easier to commit to the work if you have all the tools to succeed. We tend to stick with those things where we can see our progress and understand why we’re making progress. Learning and playing music is a process; we’ve said it before. It’s all about the journey, and we want you to love the journey you are on. You tackle the immediate lesson and then take that skill or knowledge with you to continue on your musical journey.

We all have the potential.





## **AUDIATION AND RHYTHM: ESSENTIAL SKILLS FOR PROMOTING A LIFELONG LOVE OF MUSIC**

Let's say you are learning how to play the flute. You learn how to blow across the top of the flute to make a sound. You learn the fingerings that produce different notes, and how to play them in different combinations as you read your music. But that just means you can reproduce what's in front of you.

Our goal is not to have musical robots, but instead teach, motivate, and encourage musicians of any age to become confident enough to allow their curiosity to help them be [creative musicians](#)—to hear the music in their head and nurture their inner musical sense. As CCM percussion faculty member Mike Connors explains, Music takes place internally, what we play on our instrument is an expression of that inner world. It works from the inside out, not the outside in.”

[Holistic learning](#), especially for our young students, helps develop their imagination with music. There's much more to learning music than simply learning to read notes and play scales. Opening imaginations through training our musical ears, how to listen to notes and sounds, internalize rhythms, and play by ear and improvise, help to bring musicianship to a higher level. And when you do that, you build well-rounded musicians who love to play and listen to music for a lifetime.

Let's explore two essential skills for a musician, audiation and rhythm.

### **Audiation and Why It's So Vital**

[Audiation](#), a term coined by renowned professor Edwin Gordon in the 1970's, is the process of “translat[ing] sounds in our mind and giv[ing] them meaning.” Or, “Audiation is to music what thought is to language.” Audiation can happen when you're listening to music, when

you're interpreting what you just heard and anticipating what you'll hear next – as you would in a spoken conversation. It can also happen when you are reading notation, or improvising on your instrument, or composing music in your head.

### **How do we learn to audiate?**

Sing! Our voice, our first instrument, helps train our ears and vocal chords.

Learning to sing properly allows students to identify pitch better, internalize rhythms of a song, and play more musically.

How does CCM voice faculty member Greta Feeney get her students to hear the music in their heads?



She says, “Repetition, repetition, repetition. I know that this seems boring, but if you are obsessed with a song, it’s easy to listen to it and practice it over and over.” She encourages her students to “fall in love” with music, and to bring her music that they truly like. “Ultimately it’s passion that is needed to withstand the kind of repetition that is necessary to train the brain to hear music that isn’t actually playing outside of the head.”

Mike Connors encourages his students to step away from their instrument and ask themselves, *can I sing what I am trying to play?* Mike says “Singing is the ultimate test on whether or not you are “hearing/internalizing” what you play. This could be a melody, a rhythm, the notes of a chord, the root motion of a chord progression, etc. We should be able to hear everything we play. No matter what your instrument, just sing!”

It’s extremely beneficial to learn the right techniques and exercises for singing. One way to learn to audiate—attend CCM’s workshop, [Vocal Techniques for Instrumentalists](#) led by Greta Feeney.



It's for musicians who play an instrument other than voice and who love to sing. If you want to learn what to do with your voice, how to work on good technique, and how to maintain a healthy voice, join us on Saturday morning on March 13<sup>th</sup>. You'll explore the relationship between breathing, phrasing, and the internalization of the pitch in this workshop designed to make your instrumental repertoire more technically secure and personally relevant.

### **What's the big deal about audiation?**

According to Professor Gordon, young musicians benefit greatly from [developing audiation](#), which helps them speak the language of music and hear it in their heads. Developing good pitch and understanding rhythm, melody and harmony inevitably follow. His goal was to get students to hear the music and its tonal and rhythmic patterns to understand and appreciate it more—to be less mechanical and more intrinsically creative.

Audiation helps musicians anticipate sounds and music. Greta tells us that audiation creates confidence and better timing. "When you recreate a familiar pattern in your mind during a performance, it is less anxiety-producing. If you can't hear the music in your head in detail, you might not be ready to perform it in front of an audience. Over the years I have come to realize that 'perfect pitch' is overrated, and even problematic, as people who have it can't tolerate inevitable variations in intonation. While those who have 'relative pitch' (who can hear a song pretty much correct in their heads, once it's learned) can achieve the same level of musicianship, the one advantage to perfect pitch being the ability to sight-read atonal music. But who really wants to do that anyway?" she says.

Greta's voice students get excited when they can pull correct pitches' out of thin air'. She says, "It's like magic. I think of it as the best way to understand your learning process as an individual, and it's crucial to have that self-awareness as you go about learning other things

in life. Music helps us understand the true nature of repetition, of the creation of memory. How empowering to know how we learn!”



### Got That Rhythm?

Can you imagine a professional musician without a good sense of rhythm? Absolutely not. Musicians need to nail down a song’s tempo, know what beats to emphasize, and understand the musical metres used.

Mike Connors will tell you rhythm is the most important part of music, and he’s not saying that just because he’s a drummer. He quotes the composer/pianist Thelonious Monk, who had great advice for young musicians. “You are responsible for the time no matter what your instrument.”

Mike encourages musicians to think of their instrument like a drum and explains, “Although you may be playing non-percussive sounds (for example sounds from a flute), the notes should be delivered on time and *in the pocket*. You should be contributing to the groove with everything you play. Be aware of when you attack a note when you end a note, and the space between the notes—that one is really important!”. Mike challenges you to play a solo using only one note—how musical and interesting can you make it if you use only rhythm and dynamics?

“  
A note can be as  
small as a pin or as  
big as the world, it  
depends on your  
imagination..  
- Thelonious Monk



Rhythm is what gets us swaying to the music and tapping our feet. It's a core component of every musical piece, and understanding how it works helps musicians learn and improve.

Our tool to help you develop your rhythm is the workshop [Instrument Exploration: Hand Drumming](#) workshop on Saturday, March 27<sup>th</sup>, led by Mike Connors. No matter your instrument or if you just appreciate music, clarify your connection with your sense of rhythm while learning traditional rhythms of the world. You'll learn hand drumming techniques and explore rhythms from Africa, South America, the Caribbean, and Eastern Europe.

Musicians who understand audiation and their voice and who can keep a beat inevitably improve their playing, especially when these skills are learned at a young age.



Mike says that the best way to become a creative, intuitive musician – and human being in general – is being fearless. So keep singing, dancing, drumming on the kitchen table, and listen to a ton of music to develop your inner audiation and

rhythmic musical skills.



## A FACULTY PERFORMANCE

**Cellist Fabrizio Mazzetta** performs with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra

**Celebrating Black Culture** / Saturday, March 20, 7:30 pm / \$20 tickets per household

**Support Music Education**