

University of New Mexico String Lab School

Working in collaboration with the UNM String Pedagogy program to support the development of discipline, enthusiasm for learning, and an appreciation for music as an integral part of education and culture.



*Teaching music is not my main purpose.
I want to make good citizens.
If children hear fine music
from the day of their birth and
learn to play it, they develop
sensitivity, discipline and endurance.
They get a beautiful heart.
—Shinichi Suzuki*



Why UNM String Lab School?

In the UNM String Lab School, students are offered opportunities to learn and grow from professional Suzuki educators and college interns. Tuition for the String Lab School is an incredible value—similar programs in other cities cost three to four times as much. In addition, waivers and partial waivers are available to families in need. String Lab school students and families learn, have fun, and become part of the Albuquerque music community in a supportive environment. New parents take a year-long course designed especially for their needs in guiding home practice and managing schedules, and helping to create interest and enthusiasm in their children. *Just for Parents* is a regular series of events that continue parental support and inspiration.



*Crazy hat concert with the
UNM String Lab School*

Structure

The UNM String Lab School offers a unique learning experience—one that develops the musical abilities of each child. Children are taught by String Pedagogy college students (interns), who work under the supervision of professional music educators (coordinators). Children in violin, viola, cello and bass participate in weekly repertoire groups, weekly private lessons and reading classes. Enrichment classes such as fiddling, ensemble, music inventions, improvisation and Mad About Music are also available. The UNM String Lab School has two 13-session semesters.



String Lab School Performances



Semester sharing concerts in showcase the knowledge and skills students have gained. Additional fun recitals are scheduled throughout the year—costumes, crazy hats and themed concerts increase student participation in and enjoyment of concerts.

Saturday noon recitals are an opportunity for students to perform before a small audiences in a group or alone with a professional accompanist. These recitals are safe spaces for students to perform in a friendly, non-competitive environment. Regular performances help develop self-confidence, poise, concentration and cooperative skills. Many of these recitals are in Keller Hall in the UNM Fine Arts Center, giving students access to performance in a professional space.



Levels of Instruction

Children begin classes as early as age 3 with an instrumental prep class. Graduated classes in violin, viola, cello and bass begin with beginning classes to introduce students to instruments and the Suzuki method. Violin students learn basic techniques on a box before instruction on a violin begins. Concurrent with the beginning class, parents are enrolled in a parent education course to prepare for the parent-teacher-student triangle of Suzuki music instruction. Musical literacy begins with Music Mind Games in early Suzuki book 1 and continues with introductory reading in late book 1.



Why Suzuki?

The Suzuki Method embraces the philosophy “every child can learn.” The method is carefully designed for step-by-step mastery, with children progressing at their own pace. Listening, repetition and encouragement are cornerstones of the Suzuki method. After an introductory course, parents serve as home teachers, which gives parents practical guidance in their children’s musical education. Research suggests that learning to play an instrument at an early age affects brain structure associated with motor and auditory improvements, and an increased ability to adapt. The Suzuki method nurtures these traits and the strengthens the bond between parent and child.



Special Interest and Advanced Groups

Fiddling is available for students in Suzuki books 1 and above.

Music Inventions is a beginning improvisation class offered to students in Suzuki books 3 and above.



Chamber Music gives students the opportunity to rehearse and perform in small groups. Chamber music is offered for students in Suzuki books 2 and above.

Mad About Music is the advanced repertoire class and touring group of the UNM String Lab School, for students studying beyond book 4. Auditions are not required. Students attend rehearsals to learn the required skills and repertoire. Advancement to performance and tour occurs as pieces become polished.



Elements of Improvisation is for more advanced high school and college students who learn elements of free, folk and jazz improvisation. This class is taught by Muni Kulasinghe, violinist in *Le Chat Lunatique*, a local gypsy jazz band.

Quality of Instruction

The coordinators at the UNM String Lab School are professional music educators. Here is a quick look at the qualifications of our lead group:



Susan Kempter is a Senior Lecturer in Music, SAA Teacher Trainer, Program Director of UNM String Pedagogy and UNM String Lab School. Susan holds Bachelors and Masters degrees from UNM. She also attended DePaul University and the University of Utah. She has spoken at numerous conferences, trained many aspiring teachers, and given clinics throughout the United States, and in Canada and Mexico. She has received national and state awards, and written several books and articles. Her work in String Pedagogy at the University of New Mexico has produced a unique educational experience for UNM students and the local families they serve.

Laurie Lopez grew up in Albuquerque and was one of the first students to receive a Bachelor of Music in String Pedagogy at UNM. Laurie is currently the UNM Lab School Program Coordinator and is the director of Mad About Music. She also maintains a private violin studio and has played professionally throughout New Mexico with the NM Philharmonic, Santa Fe Symphony, San Juan Symphony, Musical Theatre Southwest and Landmark Musicals.



Lisa Collins is a cellist from Albuquerque, New Mexico. She teaches a wonderful studio of enthusiastic young cellists. She also teaches cello pedagogy and music theory at the University of New Mexico. She is the coordinator of cello in the UNM String Lab School, leading a thriving community of cellists and college interns. Lisa is a member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas and the American String Teachers Association, and completed her certification with Tanya Carey. She is also an active performer, a member of the New Mexico Philharmonic and the Santa Fe Symphony, and she performs often with various ensembles in and around Albuquerque.

Frank Murry has taught in several Suzuki strings programs, including the University of Houston’s Preparatory Studies Program, Suzuki Academy Spring/Klein, and Garden Villas Music Academy. He was on the faculty of Texas Southern University and Houston Community College. Frank is currently a bass coach for Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program and is excited to start a double bass program at the UNM Lab School. A member of New Mexico Philharmonic and Santa Fe Symphony, Frank also enjoys playing jazz as well as playing chamber music with Chatter and Serenata of Santa Fe.



Musical Success

Children who have come through the UNM String Lab School have participated in Albuquerque Youth Symphony Program; performed in the New Mexico All-State Music Festival; have won concerto competitions; have attended Suzuki institutes; have won opportunities to attend prestigious summer festivals such as Tanglewood, Sewanee and Kinhaven; and have gone on to perform with professional symphonies around the world. The advanced touring group, Mad About Music, has travelled to Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Washington D.C., Maryland, Florida, Texas, Mexico and Ireland. Many lab school students have returned as college students to formally study String Pedagogy at UNM.



June 2016—Mad About Music in St. Mary’s Church, Killarney, Ireland

For more information

Questions about the UNM String Lab School or Mad about Music can be directed to Laurie Lopez or Susan Kempter.



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