

09/22/2023 Pamela Wilson

Course Name: Intermediate Pops String Orchestra SmartMusic

Course Description.

The class uses Smartmusic and Zoom. Various music genres are played along with a segment of technical instruction. Instruments invited to enroll include violin, viola, cello, double bass, recorder, concertina, accordion, and guitar/mandolin/banjo/ukulele (picking, no chords). See course outline for more info.

Course Content.

The course uses an on-line web-based site: SmartMusic.com which has an annual subscription fee (~60).

The musicians use on-line SmartMusic.com (~\$60 annual subscription) and Zoom. SmartMusic (MakeMusic) contains thousands of songs with accompaniments and method books. We will play a variety of advanced beginner-to-intermediate songs and music types. There is some limited music technical instruction. Join us with the following instruments: violin, viola, cello, double bass, recorder, concertina, accordion, and guitar/mandolin/banjo/ukulele (picking, no chords).

Prior to the beginning of the official OLLI semester, we host several orientation classes to share the class plan, demonstrate the SmartMusic (MakeMusic) technology software, provide detailed technical software instruction and tips, and answer questions. This permits the class to start playing music immediately upon the start of the OLLI semester.

The instructor and co-instructors lead the class through the list of songs to be played. The playlist of specific songs is provided to the student at least the week before each class to enable them to arrange their music and practice before the class.

A variety of Pops music types is played, typical of Pop orchestras. The songs include stage and screen soundtracks and musicals, light opera, pop, light rock, classical, novelty, light jazz, marches, holiday, patriotic and folk music.

The group of songs to be played during the OLLI semester (and future semesters) is put into a "classroom" on the SmartMusic (MakeMusic) website. The Pops String Orchestra classroom is populated with close to 150 songs. We play about 7-10 songs each class, depending on the length of the songs.

Before and after each song, there is an opportunity for the instructors to provide some limited technical and/or musical direction and for the students to ask questions and make comments. Typically, each song is played two times before moving to the next song in order to allow tempo adjustments and confidence in playing. There are periodic "special topic" technical instructions for a portion of the class time.

Everyone is muted while playing the song. We do not hear each other; we only hear the SmartMusic accompaniment. Everyone starts a song at that same time based on the instructor count off, but each student may play at their own tempo. We wait until everyone is finished before regrouping and beginning to play again. Fun!