

# Focus on **your music** during summer vacations, holidays, or academic breaks

## *Summer or Anytime Checklist for Band and Orchestra Players and Parents*

- Help organize your time by setting up a regular daily practice schedule. Practice a little every day. Consistency creates confidence!
- Create a “scale journal.” Write down on manuscript paper all your major and minor scales and the I, IV and V<sup>7</sup> arpeggio series. Practice scales in all keys.
- Create four new scale variations every day and add them to your “journal.” Creative new variations should make playing scales more enjoyable. Some examples are unusual rhythms (pizza toppings, desserts, interesting proper names), more difficult slurs, scales in thirds, etc.
- Explore the performance of one, two or three octaves of major, minor, chromatic, pentatonic scales and whole tone scales.
- To improve reading skills, play new music “at sight,” even music written for other instruments. Don’t be afraid to play a challenging piece above your ability level or even read a song from a piano score.
- Play through some of your “oldies” and favorites from past lessons or Band/Orchestra classes.
- Visit the local music store and browse. Explore new publications of Classical, pop, folk, fiddle/jazz, show tunes or other styles.
- Sign-up for a music camp or music enrichment, theory, eurhythmics, etc. classes at the local college.
- Take a few private lessons. For enrichment, take piano, voice and/or music theory classes.
- Spend an entire day in the sheet music, recordings, and music book section at the local library.
- Purchase and learn the music audition requirements for your MEA band/orchestra ensemble or solo adjudication festivals.
- Form a chamber group with other players in your neighborhood and rehearse once a week.
- Purchase a duet book for mix or matched instruments (such as *Beautiful Music for 2 Stringed Instruments* by Applebaum—Book I (easy), Book II (medium), Book III advanced). Team up with another musician (band or string) and share non-transposing parts (flute or oboe with violin, trombone with cello, etc.).
- Encourage yourself to “pick out a song by ear” and try to write it down on music paper.
- Sit in or join a local community or youth ensemble like the **South Hills Junior Orchestra** which rehearses on Saturdays in the Upper St. Clair High School (Allegheny County/Western PA) Band Room. Rehearsals resume on **September 8, 2018**.
- Plan a vacation or academic break around an out-of-state music workshop or concert series.
- Update your iTunes, Google Music, Amazon Music or other online music streaming services by purchasing and listening new solo or chamber works by artists who perform on the same instrument as you.
- Subscribe to SmartMusic, install/learn new music software, or peruse free online programs. Samples: Have you tried <https://www.musictheory.net/> or <https://www.good-ear.com/?>
- Tune in to WQED FM, WDUQ or PBS and share a few minutes of classical music at least once a week. Attend concerts by professional musicians (like the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, Civic Light Opera, or River City Brass).
- Prepare and perform a fifteen-minute recital for the residents of a local nursing home, hospital or Senior Citizen center.
- Read books or magazine articles about famous musicians, performers, conductors or composers.
- Take a “field trip” to a *luthier* (person who makes or repairs string instruments) or the instrument dealer. Have your instrument examined, cleaned, adjusted and appraised. Purchase accessories and do any necessary repairs. Update your insurance!



How many of these can you accomplish over the months of June, July and August... or throughout the year? “Practice makes self-confidence,” and the more time you put into it, the more you take away from the experience. Please enjoy your summer or winter breaks, but learn to enjoy your instrument and **EXPLORE MORE MUSIC!**

Feel free to share the other SHJO enrichment resources and “Fox Firesides” at <http://www.shjo.org/foxs-fireside/>.

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