

The Benefits of Joining a Community Music Ensemble - for Children and Adults.

My best High School memories are those of band and orchestra. I was a member of the band, select band, marching band, orchestra and even a jazz orchestra called Studio Orchestra.

We were a close knit group of students who's dedication showed in our many performances. Marching Band highlights included a performance in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City and a parade on "Main Street" in Disney World. Studio Orchestra gave us the opportunity to learn the jazz standards and perform with well known professional jazz artists from NYC. What a great learning experience for a teenager!

I encourage my clarinet students to participate in their school band, jazz band or orchestra. Many of them are also members of youth ensembles in Boston and RI. (*Skill levels and audition requirements vary among these ensembles. For specifics, please see the links page on my web site www.elizabethleehey.com and also confer with me in person.*) These groups perform in local venues throughout the school year, and some of them do European performing tours during the summer.

My adult students also enjoy playing in their community bands and orchestras which give them an opportunity to continue playing an instrument they learned as children, or to develop a new skill as adults.

Ensemble playing gives players the opportunity to learn a vast array of repertoire while experiencing the sound of a full band, orchestra or chamber ensemble. Students use and expand upon the techniques learned in private lessons.

Musical concepts learned include:

- blending and balancing individual parts within an ensemble
- playing in tune and intonation tendencies of the instrument
- mastering complex rhythms between voices
- following a conductor
- performance etiquette

Smaller chamber ensembles teach additional skills such as:

- leading the group - giving the downbeat and cut-off, cueing other players
- setting tempos
- reading from a score

Being a member of a community music ensemble gives musicians a sense of accomplishment, camaraderie and self esteem. Players learn from each other and are motivated by those who are more advanced.