

Welcome to String Orchestra class!

### What we're doing in class this week

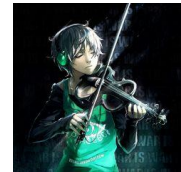
- Our objective this week is to master the basics: how to hold instruments, make sound, and change pitch. Put together, this makes the White Finger Pattern - next week, kids will have their first chance to play the White Finger Pattern and earn a White Belt in String Samurai.

### Class & concert schedules

- Next week, all my schools will be on their full class schedule. Please check <https://d11strings.wixsite.com/home/class-schedule> to see the schedule – and which days to bring instruments to school.
- Also on the website (<https://d11strings.wixsite.com/home/upcoming-events>) are the concert dates for each school. I updated the page today, so hit refresh (F5) to make sure you get the current page.

### Practice & Homework (1<sup>st</sup>-year students)

- The primary objective for the first weeks of home practice is to build finger strength – muscle and callus. Once developed, we'll be able to produce a full sound and play for long durations. Until we build this strength, students need to practice every day for at least 5 minutes. That is the minimum it takes – you may do more if your fingers can handle it. When your fingertips hurt, that's your body's way of telling you to take a break. If you practice for a little bit every day, it'll only take a week or two for your fingers to acclimate to orchestra.
- What should you practice during that 5 minutes? Why, the White Finger Pattern. As soon as possible, all students\*\* should watch the first 2 video units. Here's how:
  - Go to <https://d11strings.wixsite.com/home/video-lessons>
  - Scroll down to your instrument (Violin Samurai, Viola Samurai, etc.)
  - Watch the Unit 0 videos & complete the worksheet
    - Supplies
    - How NOT To Break Your Instrument
    - Case Setup
    - Turn in the first homework assignment. It was due this week, but if you just signed up or otherwise missed it, you still need to turn it in. You can download a copy directly from the website if you've lost it.
  - Watch the Unit 1 videos
    - Holding Your Instrument
    - Making a Sound (Pizzicato)
    - Changing Pitch / The White Finger Pattern
  - Be ready to play the entire White Finger Pattern next week in class!
- In a month or so, practice expectations will increase. At that time, I'll guide students in class on how to develop individualized practice routines.



*\*\*If you don't have internet at home, bring headphones or earbuds to the local library and use a computer there! Library membership is free. The nearest branch is the East Library - 5550 N. Union Blvd. Check <https://ppld.org/east-library> for hours. You won't be able to play your instrument along with the video, but that's okay ;-)*

### Practice & Homework (5<sup>th</sup> grade students)

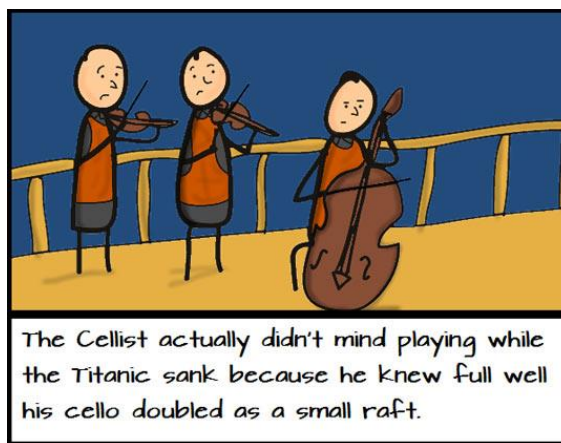
- The goal first quarter is to get all 5<sup>th</sup> graders through Red Belt – the fourth belt in the String Samurai program. Right now, we're reviewing skills from last year; we'll move on to new content in the next week or two.
- If this is your first year on your instrument, we're going to catch you up FAST. Be prepared to practice every day, for longer than 5 minutes. You're a year older, stronger, and wiser than the typical beginner, which helps a lot, but I'm still going to push you – I want you to catch up to the other 5<sup>th</sup> graders this quarter. That's not as hard as it sounds, but it requires commitment and focus.
- If you already got your Red Belt last year, I want you to start working on your next belt. A list of belts can be found at <https://d11strings.wixsite.com/home/string-samurai>.

### How can parents help?

- 1) Make sure your student has all the supplies for class, especially the method book! The supply list for each instrument is on my website under the "Resources" tab.
  - School instruments come with a shoulder pad or rock stop, so if you're waiting to hear about a school instrument, hold off on buying those for now.
- 2) Help your student get in the habit of practicing.
  - 5+ minutes each day (for now). This is actual play-time, not including packing and unpacking ;-)
  - Make sure kids have a quiet place to practice, free of distractions.

### School instruments

- So far, everyone who put down 'critical' when requesting a school instrument has received an instrument. I'm working my way through the 'if available' folk now.
- Once you've been assigned an instrument, you'll see a gold-coloured Instrument Use Permit coming home. Sign it and return it with \$20 to check out your instrument. Many of you have done this already.
- If you haven't gotten a form yet, I'll let you know soon if you have one or not - next week at the latest. Most instruments look favorable at this time, but we've run out of 1/4 and 1/8 size cellos. If you're interested in switching to bass, I have two 1/10 basses remaining; they're cello-sized and fit in a car or bus seat. Or you can rent a cello.



Please feel free to contact me as questions and concerns come up. I respond to email the fastest.

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