



**JOHN MONASH**  
**SCIENCE SCHOOL**

**JMSS Instrumental Music  
Handbook**

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## **Principal's statement**

Jean Genet once said: 'Perhaps all music, even the newest, is not so much something discovered as something that re-emerges from where it lay buried in the memory, inaudible as a melody cut in a disc of flesh. A composer lets me hear a song that has always been shut up silent within me'.

The power of music to move, to stir passions, to soothe, to delight, is well known to us all. Our music program gives our young musicians a chance to nurture and grow their talents, to build great relationships with other students and teachers, and produce the sort of outstanding music which comes from being in highly effective and synchronous teams. It gives them a chance to complement their academic work with skill development which clearly improves their thinking, concentration and perspective in so many positive ways.

Alongside this, the program gives us all a chance to revel in the talents of our students, and take time out from the pressures and rigours of academic study to just enjoy ourselves.

To those in our community whose talents are extraordinary, and there are many, I commend our program to you and urge you to join, and play your part, both for your own enjoyment and for the enjoyment of others. To those who want to learn, you are more than welcome to make music a stronger part of your lives, and we look forward to you joining us.

We at JMSS are very proud of our music program and are all keen to see it grow. Our students have performed remarkably in a number of forums, both at school such as assemblies and soirees, and beyond, including such well-known forums in Ballarat and at Dizzy's Jazz Club in Melbourne. We hope to perform at the prestigious Mt Gambier Music Competition later this year. The annual Music camp is a highlight of the year for our young musicians, teachers and visiting experts. I eagerly look forward to your collective contributions this year as our program expands and develops. Keep being extraordinary!

Peter Corkill

Principal

## **Why Learn an instrument?**

Learning music is about more than just playing an instrument. Learning music facilitates learning in other subjects and helps the development of skills that are used in other areas. Whilst learning music in early stages benefits areas such as language development, music continues to affect later development and should be a lifelong activity.

Students who are learning instruments benefit from the developments in fine motor skills, sound discrimination, memory, and self-discipline that are required to practice music. Similarly, students increase their ability to express themselves and grow their individuality, which is part of the 'Learning to be' pillar of the JMSS educational philosophy.

The social benefits of playing music, especially from playing in an ensemble and attending events like Music Camp, are many fold. Friendships are formed quickly through music, especially in year 10 where students are attending a new school. Many of our students find that the friendships they have formed through music help them further in life, and the social skills they have gained through music help them as they progress into university.

The lifelong benefits of music including developing the self-discipline required to practice, the social skills involved in playing in ensembles, and the team working skills that are needed to produce a polished piece of music in a group. The sense of achievement, self identity, and confidence that playing music brings, all contribute towards creating well rounded individuals.

## **Why learn at JMSS?**

While learning an instrument outside of JMSS with a private teacher is completely adequate, choosing to study music at JMSS brings many advantages that are not applicable with a private teacher.

These include:

- A guaranteed qualified instrumental teacher that has been selected by JMSS.
- Progress reports, including semester reports, communicating student development.
- Student performance is monitored by the music department, the Head of Music, and the principals.
- Ensemble participation in appropriate ensembles.
- External examinations through AMEB, ANZCA, Trinity Guildhall, ABRSM.
- Internal examinations for those not taking an external exam.
- VCE performance subjects such as group and solo performance, music investigation, music composition, include lessons and mentoring from the Music Department.
- Regular performance opportunities, including Soirees, Concerts, Jazz Night, and Assemblies.
- The opportunity to attend Masterclasses hosted by both JMSS, and by the Monash University Music Department.
- Opportunity to attend the Monash University Music Department lunchtime concert series.
- Inexpensive hiring or purchasing of instruments.
- Regular contact between parents and teachers and access to online practice diaries

### **Is it too late to start learning an instrument in year 10, 11, 12?**

It is **never** too late to start learning a musical instrument at any stage in life. The benefits of playing and learning an instrument continue to apply to students who begin an instrument in year 10, 11, or 12. This is doubly important at JMSS as students need to develop their self-discipline in regards to their home work. Similarly as all new students are coming together at JMSS from different schools, the social benefits of learning an instrument and playing in an ensemble are unmeasurable. The benefits of having learnt an instrument later in life are also well documented.

There are appropriate ensembles for students of all musical levels, and our ensembles leaders are able to arrange and differentiate music to include everybody.

### **Can students try a new instrument?**

JMSS has a program in which students who have never played an instrument before, or who wish to play a new instrument, may have 2 lessons with a JMSS instrumental teacher for a reduced cost. This is a great way to find out if the students instrument choice is the correct one. This program is available throughout the whole year.

## **Structure of the Music Department**

The JMSS Music Department is lead by the Head of Music, Mr Damon Key. Mr Key is supported by the Assistant Head of Music and the Instrumental Staff.

### **Head of Music**

Mr Sean Smyth                      [sean.smyth@jmss.vic.edu.au](mailto:sean.smyth@jmss.vic.edu.au)                      99029710

### **Assistant Head of Music**

Mr Benjamin Delves

99029711

## **Enrolment procedure for instrumental lessons**

To begin lessons at JMSS, at any level, a Music Enrolment form must be filled out and returned to the front office. This form can be obtained from the Music Staff, the Front Office, or in the rear of your student orientation handbook. Students may commence lessons at any time during the year, however some instruments are very popular and it is best to enrol early to ensure a place.

## **Theory and Composition Lessons**

Theory and compositions lessons are also offered at JMSS. Music theory is important to study, especially for students studying AMEB or similar exams beyond grade 6.

Compositions lessons are offered in all styles from rock and pop, all forms of classical composition including modern and experimental music, and jazz. These lessons may complement those studying VCE composition, but are also available to those who wish to focus on composition.

There are many opportunities for composition students to have their pieces played and recorded at JMSS concerts and events.

## **Hire of Instruments**

Instruments may be hired through JMSS. Hiring an instrument is a good option for beginner students who do not possess an instrument when they commence lessons.

For particularly large instruments, such as the Double Bass, the school has instruments for the student to play at school. This means that the student won't have to transport such a large instrument to and from school via public transport.



Hire instruments and personal instruments are in no way covered by the Schools insurance policy and it is up to the individual student to make sure that the instrument is adequately covered in case of damage. Parents and guardians of the student will therefore be responsible for any damage that occurs to a hire instrument.

### **Lesson Time-tabling**

The corresponding head of instrument assigns instrumental lesson timetables. Lessons will be scheduled throughout the school day, Monday to Friday. Lessons will be scheduled into the COMPASS system and classroom teachers will be aware if a student has a music lesson at any given time. Students can sync the compass timetable to their mobile devices and set an alarm that will notify them 5 minutes before their lesson is to begin. Absences, non-attendance, and late attendance are all recorded into the COMPASS system and parents/guardians are able to track student attendance.

Students may request before school, after school, lunchtime, or recess lessons, but these are assigned on teacher availability, and on a first serve basis.

### **Student illness or Absences**

In case of illness or absence the normal lesson charges will apply. In the case of exams, or excursions, or other school related events the student must notify their teacher one week before the affected lesson. Students must endeavour to then swap lesson times with another student, the instrumental teacher will also help to assist in changing the lesson time if enough notice is given.

If there is a long term absence parents must notify the school in writing and an exception may be made.

## **Duration of Music Lessons**

The length of music lessons vary from 30 minutes up to an hour. For VCE Students we recommend an hour lesson. For everyone else, we recommend 45 minutes, however 30 minutes is available.

## **Instrumental Lesson Fees**

The costs for a full year of lessons are:

Individual 1/2 Hour	\$995
Individual 1 Hour	\$1,990

Parents will be responsible for all extra costs such as books, instrument hire, examination fees, and instrument maintenance.

The fee may be paid in two ways:

- one instalment deducted or in
- two instalments

For those starting at a mid-point throughout the year, the number of remaining lessons will be totalled and a fee will be calculated. Lessons commence once a payment is received.

The instrumental department expects a commitment to continue with lessons once they have commenced till the completion of the year. This allows the department to fulfil our commitment to our highly qualified instrumental staff whose services are engaged for the year.

## **Opportunity Scholarships**

These scholarships are for students who wish to enrol and participate in music but are unable to do so due to financial hardship. An application must be made and submitted to the front office, along with a copy of their Families Health Care Card (Health Care Card exceptions may be made in extenuating circumstances). Applications are available from music staff or from the front office.

## **Low Brass Incentive**

In an effort to fill Low Brass positions (trombone, bass trombone, tuba, sousaphone) in our Stage Band and Concert band, JMSS offers loan instruments for a year and limited lessons to any student who wishes to start on a Low Brass instrument.

## **Start of year procedure**

Lessons begin the second week of first term, this allows for students to settle into life at JMSS and adjust to the new years timetable before lessons begin.

Lessons are scheduled into the COMPASS system for students. Students will need to regularly check compass, as there may be changes. Students are advised to sync their calendar on their mobile device with compass and to set an alarm to remind them to attend music lessons.

Ensembles begin the same week as lessons, that is the second week of first term. Details will be displayed on the music board on the ground level.

Changes to lesson times should be addressed to the students instrumental teacher. This should be addressed as early as possible as it may be difficult to change later in the year.

## **Instrumental Care and Security**

Instruments are the responsibility of the student and all care should be taken to store and transport the instrument safely. The JMSS insurance will not cover private instruments at all, so parents will need to make sure that student instruments are covered at all times.

Students will be able to leave their instruments at JMSS overnight in a secure storage area however it is advised that students do not leave their instrument at school for longer than 3 days. Please note again that JMSS's insurance will not cover student instruments should anything happen whilst the instrument is on school property.

We also recommend that students obtain a 'hard case' for their instrument so that it is properly protected against accidental drops and bumps whilst being transported to school and to events.

## **What can parents do to help?**

The role parents and guardians can play in the development of the musical abilities of students can never be underestimated. Instrumental teachers only spend a short amount of time with students each week compared to the many hours of practice that parents and guardians can support at home. Therefore, parent and guardian encouragement is paramount to achieving high results.

Parents can help by:

- Help the student to establish a regular practice time each day. This should be the same time each day, and should be a minimum of 30 minutes (1 hour plus for VCE Students).
- Making sure that the students practice diary is thoroughly maintained and filled in. This helps the instrumental teacher to monitor practice and institute changes where necessary.

- Assure that the student has a safe space in which they can practice undisturbed.
- Be encouraging! No matter if the students is just starting out on violin, or sitting grade 7 pianoforte exams, they need all the encouragement we can give them.
- Help to maintain or purchase equipment, such as strings, bows, plectrums, tuners, and music stands.
- Ensure the student is practicing everything they are supposed to, not just the parts they enjoy, and not just 'jamming'.
- Casually plucking the strings in front of the TV is not practice.
- Attending concerts and recitals. Support at performances and concerts is particularly important for student confidence. Playing to an empty room is incredibly disheartening.

Parents and guardians should check the students practice diary every week to ensure that it has been filled out correctly, and maintain contact with the students instrumental teacher to ensure that the student is attending lessons and ensembles (This can be check through the COMPASS system). Lastly, parent and guardian attendance at concerts and recitals is important to help the student develop self-confidence, the amount of encouragement students gain from family and friends attending performances is invaluable.

## **Ensembles**

Playing music in an ensemble is an integral part of learning music. Ensembles at JMSS range from rock bands, drum group, string quartets, orchestra, and stage bands. Students benefit from the social nature of playing music in a group, building self-confidence and social skills. Students will see improvements in sight reading, rhythm, and tuning. Beyond this, students will benefit mostly from the motivational aspect of playing music with their peers and working together to present their music at the schools many concerts and performance activities.

Participation in at least one ensemble is mandatory for any student learning an instrument at JMSS. Although ensemble places are open to everybody, including those learning outside of JMSS, first preference for places in the more popular ensembles will go to students enrolled at instrumental lessons at JMSS. There are many ensembles at JMSS, including Jazz, Rock, Strings, Choir, and Vocal groups. Students are also encouraged to form their own ensembles and apply to the Head or Assistant Head of Music to have a rehearsal time.

The ensemble timetable is at the rear of this book.

## **Examinations and Assessment**

John Monash Science School offers assessment through external groups, such as AMEB, and internally. Examinations are an important part of a student's development, as they offer a clear goal for the student to work towards. Examinations also allow teachers to better guide students in their lessons.

External examinations (AMEB, TRINITY GUILD, ANZCA, ABRSM)

John Monash Science School offers students the chance to participate in external formal assessments offered by the major assessing groups.

These are:

- The Australian Music Examinations Board (AMEB)
- The Australian and New Zealand Cultural Arts Limited (ANZCA)
- Trinity Guild Hall RockSchool
- The Associate Board of the Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM)

Students, in consultation with their teacher, can be enrolled in their preferred examination.

### **Internal Assessments**

For those not participating in external assessments, JMSS conducts internal assessments in term 4. The date of the assessment will be given to students in term 1, 2017. Internal assessments include elements such as scales, intervals, rhythmic recognition, aural recognition, theory, and performance pieces. These elements are selected, in consultation with the student's teacher, to help the student better achieve their personal musical goals. Internal assessment results will be given to students through their end of year reports.

### **Master Classes**

John Monash Science School has a close relationship with the Monash University Music Department. We are able to offer students the opportunity to attend many Master Classes throughout the year, both at the Monash University Music Department and at the John Monash Science School. These master classes are held by distinguished professionals and offer the students incredible opportunities to learn about music from a second source, often reinforcing the lessons of their instrumental teachers.

In 2015 students competed in the VSMF stage band division and received a masterclass from Dr. Rob McWilliams. Many have also attended improvisation masterclasses by local piano legends Bob Sedergreen, and Steve Sedergreen in 2015, held at the John Monash

Science School. JMSS Students, in conjunction with Monash University Music students, were also able to attend a strings masterclass Dr. Daniel Yeadon from the Australian Chamber Orchestra.

### **Concerts and Recitals**

Concerts, recitals, and public performances are an important part of musical life at JMSS. There are the spring and autumn soirees, presentation night, battle of the bands, science fair, jazz night (at Dizzy's Jazz Club), PFA night, and assemblies throughout the year. JMSS Students will also compete in an array of competitions and eisteddfods including South Street. In 2017 JMSS will compete in the Mount Gambier stage band competition, a highlight of the year.

These performance opportunities are vital in a musician's development, and give students a sense of achievement the self-confidence through performance.

### **John Monash Science School Diploma**

In 2014 JMSS introduced the John Monash Science School Diploma. The JMSS Diploma acknowledges and rewards the development of important skills and attributes as outlined in the school's Learner Developmental Framework. The Diploma provides recognition for the achievements of our students outside of the classroom including leadership, service, sport, performing arts, competitions and the co-curricular program.

The school believes that these skills and attributes are important in the education and growth of the highly capable leaders and pioneers in science which JMSS produces. The Diploma champions the development of the whole person, not only their academic achievement and will complement the Victorian Certificate of Education.

Starting at Year Ten, the JMSS Diploma aims to encourage and inspire students to:



- Lead balanced, enriched and passionate lives;
- Develop as well-rounded individuals with a broad range of skills, perspectives and interests;
- Fully develop their interests, strengths and capacities;
- Gain recognition for student-driven initiatives, talents, strengths and service;
- Foster broad academic interests.
- Students who participate in musical studies at John Monash are well prepared to fulfil the requirements for the JMSS Diploma, and are often well ahead of their peers in terms of the JMSS Diploma.

## **VCE Music**

At the VCE level JMSS offers Music Performance (Group and Solo), Music Investigation, and Music Styles and Composition. VCE music performance is offered usually in year 11 and 12, and it is suggested that strong performing students in year 11 complete units 3 and 4. This choice should be made in consultation with the students instrumental teacher.

In VCE music most of the assessment is performance based. In music performance and investigation this assessment is a 25 minute recital in October, which comprises the majority of the students score. In VCE performance the students have an end of year written examination that includes theory and aural elements, as well as a half year technical SAC. In VCE investigation students complete a written research paper that is submitted in place of a final theory SAC. Investigation is suggested for students who can approach music from a research viewpoint and have a clear idea of a musical subject which they would like to investigate. In summary, the difference between performance and investigation is that Performance students complete a theory exam at the end of the year and Investigation students complete a research paper on a musical topic instead.

VCE Music Styles and Composition allows students to develop a portfolio of compositions that focus on themes highlighted through the coursework. The use of ICT in this subject makes it very appealing for students who engage with diverse music genres. Students focus on themes such as repetition and variation in music, and apply this knowledge to their own compositions.

### **Co-Curricular Music**

The Co-Curricular Program runs between 1:30 pm and 3:30 pm on Wednesday afternoons every week. It is a valued part of the curriculum and offers our students a rich and diverse range of activities which open up new opportunities and experiences away from academic study. It offers students the chance to work in teams, learn new skills and develop leadership. It is a key part of the year 10 and 11 Curriculum and helps us to develop the “whole person” at John Monash Science School. Co-Curricular classes also contribute towards credits for the JMSS Diploma.

The Music Department offers a number of options in the Co-Curricular Program.

### **Alumni ensembles**

Alumni are an important part of the JMSS Community and maintaining the friendships and contacts that are made at JMSS is beneficial for both University studies and the workplace. Many students also find that once they have graduated they miss the camaraderie that they experienced in ensembles during their time at JMSS.

For these reasons there are many opportunities for alumni to rejoin ensembles for specific performances, or on a more regular basis. In 2015 JMSS will also begin an Alumni Band in which to continue to develop the musical skills of past students and to continue the friendships and contacts for past students.

## **Captains/Vice Captains**

There are many achievements and rewards that acknowledge the participation and leadership skills of music students at JMSS. Each year, two Music Captains are selected.

The Captains and Vice-Captains have many responsibilities including helping to organise concerts, promotions, attending meetings, and setting an example in ensembles. Our 2017 captains will be chosen at the beginning of the year. The 2017 captains and vice captains will be further supported by Ensemble Leaders, who are elected from within their respective ensembles.