



PRETORIA BOYS HIGH SCHOOL

MUSIC

Please read this pamphlet carefully if your son is considering Music as a subject at Pretoria Boys High School.

There is always considerable interest in studying Music as a subject at Boys High. In the past some boys and their parents have not had a clear idea of what this actually entails. The following is an explanation which should help you understand the content of the subject, how the subject is structured, what is expected of the boys and how you can help to make your son's studies meaningful and successful. Studying Music requires more work than the studying of other subjects but the rewards are greater.

Music as a subject consists of two components: Practical Music (learning to play an instrument) and Theory of Music (learning to write and appreciate music.) Both these components must be tackled with equal diligence as they are really two sides of the same coin!

N.B.

It must be stressed that the cost to the School of individual music lessons runs into thousands of rand per year. The music teachers have to be paid and boys who do not take their practical lessons seriously and/or miss these lessons run the very definite risk of being disallowed to continue with the subject.

A. Practical Music

1. Beginners

- II Boys who have never studied Music can start this subject at secondary school.
- II Success depends to some degree on innate ability (which often has not been explored before) and the choice of instrument.
- II The Music Department currently has teachers for the following instruments:
 - Woodwind: Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone
 - Brass: French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Tuba
 - Strings: Violin, Viola, Cello, Double BassWe strongly recommend that you choose one of the above instruments.
- II The following three instruments carry some inherent problems:
 - a) Piano: This is the most difficult of instruments and is not available to Form I beginners. 'Tinkling' on an electronic

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keyboard does not constitute knowledge of piano playing. We do **not** offer 'keyboard' as an instrument.

- b) Guitar: This is an equally difficult instrument to master and only those boys who have learnt guitar formally in primary school will be accepted; a Grade 2 Royal Schools examination must have been passed. Furthermore, we teach it in a formal classical style on an acoustic guitar. The electric guitar is not an option nor is the strumming style of Folk Guitar taught.
- c) Percussion: This instrument consists of snare drum, timpani, marimba and multiple percussion. Because some of the instruments are extremely expensive, the School does not have a full complement nor do we have a teacher. (Banging a drumkit does not qualify as an instrument for a school subject!)

II Acquiring an instrument is a serious matter. The cost of instruments has doubled over the past few years and the School does NOT have instruments available to the boys who must have their own, therefore. (If the cost of a new or good second-hand instrument is out of your reach, your son should not study Music as a subject.) Our panel of teachers (listed at the end of this pamphlet) are all specialists in their field and will be happy to assist you with the purchase of an instrument. (The Junk Mail is a particularly useful source.)

II Boys are taught individually or in small groups and have a practical lesson once a week. This may well be in the afternoon due to time-table constraints. In most cases the teachers are paid by the hour and it is therefore essential, both from a cost and a courtesy point of view, that boys DO NOT MISS THEIR LESSONS. For dayboys this may mean that they remain at School if their lesson is scheduled for some time during the afternoon.

II Success in the subject ultimately depends on **how much a boy practices on his own**. In our experience, boys who play their instrument daily soon establish a healthy practicing habit and experience success. (In this respect, Music is like Maths - you have to do a little each day!)

II If a boy is motivated to play an instrument, his studies will almost certainly be successful. There are external motivations to help him on his way e.g. sitting for the Royal Schools of Music examinations (an internationally recognised qualification) and/or joining one of the School's performing groups e.g. Dixie Band, Orchestra, Wind Ensemble, String Quartet, Cello Quartet, Clarinet Quartet, Brass Ensemble, Saxophone Quartet and Choir, all of which may lead to the award of Colours for Music. In order to join any of the groups, a certain level of competency on the instrument is required. As a rule, few Form I boys qualify.

2. Boys with a formal musical background

II There are boys with some degree of musical training who are obviously at an advantage.

II A boy wishing to study Music to Form V (Grade 12) will have to reach the Grade 3/4 practical level and a Grade 5 theory level by the end of Form II

(Grade 9.) This will remain true for the new NCS syllabus.

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- II Boys are encouraged to either continue their practical lessons with a private teacher (this would be impractical in the case of boarders) or, if an instrument teacher is available at School, change to the school teacher. (It is often a good idea to continue with an existing teacher if the boy is happy and making good progress.)
- II As far as external practical exams are concerned, the Music Department favours the Royal Schools of Music system for its international standing and sensible syllabi. Entry for these external examinations may take place when the teacher, pupil and parent concur.
- II One of the advantages of having already studied Music is that new boys may join one of the performing groups. Auditions are held in October and any aspirant player is welcome to audition whilst still at primary school. (This applies mainly to string players.)
- II A boy who is already proficient in one instrument may wish to consider starting a second instrument. This is considered a privilege, not a right but may be possible after discussion with the Music Department.

B. Theory of Music

1. Beginners

- II Beginners are taught separately so as to focus on the rudiments of music.
- II There is movement of boys between the groups and quick learners may move to the advanced class within the first term. (The reverse is, of course, also possible.)
- II It is important to understand that an entire new graphic communication system is learnt which requires diligent study from the start. Unless the basics are well known, reading and writing music becomes a nightmare!

2. Boys with a formal musical background

- II While filling in the gaps of missing knowledge, students in the advanced theory class aim to complete Grades 1 to 3 in the first year and Grades 4 to 5 in the second year.
- II This is a tall order irrespective of the level at which boys start. Boys who have passed some of these grades have often been exam-trained and it is therefore good for them to revise the work and place their theoretical knowledge into perspective.
- II The only external exam we insist the boys write is the Royal Schools Grade 5 Theory exam which is written at the end of Form II (Grade 9.) Successful completion of this exam indicates that a boy is ready to continue with Music as a subject to Form V (Grade 12) if he so wishes.

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In Conclusion

Our system at PBHS allows an interested boy the opportunity to reach a high standard of playing by the time he matriculates. Many have begun their music careers at high school and left with a Royal Schools of Music Grade 8 certificate. It may be of interest to know that this is an accepted qualification and would certainly allow any boy entry into any of the bands (military etc.) in the country or any Technikon or University music faculty.

There is ample opportunity for the boys to experience live music-making at PBHS through the Dixie Band, the Symphony Orchestra, the Wind Ensemble, the Choir and Chamber groups. Music is also a social activity. The many concerts and tours, the annual school production and the combined activities with our neighbouring schools are all part of the Boys High tradition.

It is our philosophy to firstly establish if a boy is interested in learning to play and read music in a formal way and, secondly, to ascertain if he has the sustained application and disciplined approach which the study of music requires. Without a keen interest and self-discipline, the study of music is doomed from the start.

If you would like to discuss this subject, please contact the School at 012-460.2246 and our permanent staff will be happy to help - Dr Niel van der Watt and Mrs Yvonne Reyburn.

PANEL OF SPECIALIST INSTRUMENT TEACHERS

Flute - Ms Handri Loots - 012-343.4231

Trumpet and Tuba - Mr Jeff Cole - 076 215 9176

Trombone - Mr William Bishop - 082 697 9590

Saxophone - Mr Murray Theron - 082 331 4620

- Mr Matthew Lombard - 072 480 5917

Clarinet - Mrs Lizet Smith - 082 889 2366 / 012-803.5336

Guitar - Mr Abri Jordaan - 012-329.2178 / 082 774 7144

Horn - Ms Loretta van Zyl - 083 450 7420/012-662.0435

Cello - Mrs Gudrun Melck - 012-346.2592

Violin - Ms Camillia Onea - 082 463 0809

Viola - Mrs Elmarie van der Vyfer - 083 285 0949 / 012-667.3118

Double Bass - Mrs Marike Prins - 083 415 5483

Accompanist - Ms Mathilda Hornsveld - 012-331.0697 / 082 463 0809

Piano/Organ - Mr Ockert Vermeulen - 082 444 6057