Discover boundless harmonies.
As an integral part of school activities, music studies at the school aim to arouse, nurture and develop students’ appreciation for music. Quite apart from the life-long rewards which musical skills can provide, the study of classical music can be shown to provide flow-on benefits in many fields of endeavour.

The music syllabus is crafted around the basic skills of listening, singing and instrumental playing to provide students with a good basis for participation in choirs, orchestras, bands and instrumental groups.

In Years 1 to 7 all students are given instruction in Music. The early emphasis lies on listening and singing, with instrumental opportunities later in the program as students mature in both physical and appreciation senses.

For Years 8 to 12 music is an elective subject, leading to the Victorian Certificate of Education. The syllabus covers a wide field, and therefore is spread over the 5 years from Years 8 to 12. The major subject areas covered are Music Theory, Harmony and Counterpoint, and the History of Literature of Music.

Practical experience is of course a must and all students taking the elective are required to learn at least one instrument, and to participate in at least one of the musical activities, for example, the School Choir, Orchestra, or Concert Band. Involvement of students in at least one of each year’s major musical events is also mandatory. In addition students (and parents) are encouraged to attend major external events, such as ABC and other orchestral concerts, and visiting soloists and musical ensembles.
Instrumental Work in Class

Junior School
Prep to Year 2
In these early years the accent is on music at a simple level, utilising the Kodaly, Orff and Dalcroze approaches to activities grouped under Music, Games and Songs, and Movement and Drama. Individual instrumental tuition may be arranged at Year 2 level only after consultation with the Music staff and the student’s classroom teacher.

Years 3-5
The boys are taught Singing, Musical Appreciation, Movement and Drama during normal lesson times. Individual instrumental tuition is available as part of the curriculum during normal class time (See timetabling section). Boys who join the School in Year 4 are also given the opportunity to learn a stringed instrument during terms 2, 3, or 4.

Middle School
Years 6-8
In Year 6 we encourage students to continue with their instruments and offer instruction to those who may not yet have had the chance to learn.

In Year 7, students not already committed to other orchestral instruments may be given one semester of class tuition on a string, woodwind or brass instrument. Thus by the end of Year 7, every Middle School student should have had a class tuition on at least one orchestral instrument. These classes are part of the normal curriculum, and provide students with the means to discover any latent musical talents they may possess. Recommendation is then made to parents that their son undertakes individual tuition as a desirable means of development and encouragement of that talent.

In Year 8, students may elect to choose either chamber music, music recording technology, or music composition as one of their elective subjects.

Senior School
Years 9-12
Whilst most students begin their instrumental lessons before the end of the Middle School years, some decide to begin instrumental tuition in their Senior School years. This is encouraged and with regular practice and application, quick progress is definitely possible and can lead to inclusion in one or more of the school’s ensembles.

Instrumental Reporting
Reports written by instrumental staff at the end of each semester provide an accurate and encouraging assessment on each student’s progress.

These classes are part of the normal curriculum, and provide students with the means to discover any latent musical talents they may possess.
Numerous studies indicate that parental attitude, support and involvement are important factors in a child’s ability to successfully learn to play and enjoy music.

Benefits for Your Child

Music participation enhances:
- Problem solving
- Teamwork
- Goal setting
- Self-expression
- Coordination
- Memory skills
- Self-confidence and esteem
- Concentration
- Poise
And much, much more.

For Your Family

A child’s music studies also offer opportunities for shared family experiences, for example - musical event attendance, family music-making, performing for, and with family and friends, learning about the lives of the composers, and the cultural heritage of western civilisation and achieving a sense of pride and accomplishment for the entire family.

How You Fit In

Always keep in mind that your support is a key element in your child’s success with music study.

Schedule Practice Times

Music achievement requires effort over a period of time. You can help your child by:
- Providing a quiet place in which to practice.
- Remaining nearby during practice times as often as possible.
- Scheduling a consistent, daily time for practice.
- Praising your child's efforts and achievements.
- Regular short practice sessions are preferable to irregular longer sessions.

What To Do

To give your child the best possible support, you should:
- Encourage your child to play for family and friends.
- Offer compliments and encouragement regularly.
- Expose your child to a wide variety of music, including concerts and recitals.
- Encourage your child to talk with you about his lesson.
- Allow your child to play many types of music, not just study pieces.
- Listen to your child practise, and acknowledge improvement.

What Not To Do

Your child’s progress will be greatly enhanced if you:
- Don’t use practice as punishment
- Don’t insist your child plays for others when they don’t want to.
- Don’t ridicule or make fun of mistakes for less than perfect playing.
- Don’t apologise to others for your child’s weak performance.
- Don’t expect rapid progress and development in the beginning.

If Your Child Loses Interest

In the event your child loses interest in his music studies, don’t panic.
- Discuss the situation with your child to determine why their interest is declining.
- Talk to your child’s music teacher to see what might be done to rekindle his enthusiasm.
- Encourage your child to stick with lessons for an agreed period of time.
- Offer increased enthusiasm and support.
The Music School Tuition structure has been organised to maximise opportunities for the students while optimising School and Music resources, and remaining consistent with the physical and musical development of the individual students.

Hire of Instruments

The Music School offers a hire service for most instruments at attractive rates. Please refer to the enclosed fee schedule for present hire cost. This service allows parents the option of deferring instrument purchase until such time as the beginner student has made a firm attachment to the particular instrument. Furthermore, stringed instruments are available in a range of special fractional sizes to match the needs of younger and smaller students.


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Instruments for hire include: Violin, Viola, Cello, Double Bass, Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Saxophone, French Horn, Trumpet, Trombone, Euphonium, Tuba and glockenspiel.

It is recommended that the student should have his own instrument after two or three years of tuition. This is of benefit to the student, and to the Music School, in releasing an instrument for a new student. However we suggest that parents would be well advised to consult with Music School Staff before finalising a purchase, as independent advice on value and suitability can usually be given.

Normal wear-and-tear maintenance of hire instruments is covered by the School, but responsibility for damage beyond due care remains with the parents, whose account will be charged with the costs of repair or replacement.

Individual Tuition


Year 3 students may begin individual tuition in piano, violin and cello. Tuition in woodwind and brass does not normally commence until Years 4 or 5, although music staff may recommend earlier commencement to those who show particular aptitude.

Students do not have to re-enrol at the commencement of new years or terms; continuation of tuition is automatically assumed.

Should a student wish to discontinue tuition, the Director of Music must have written notification at least one calendar month prior to the end of term. Failure to so notify will require that the following term tuition costs will still be charged, because resources will have been allocated. Likewise, timetabled lessons missed by the student must be charged, regardless of the reason-offered.

The Director must be notified of prolonged absences, and may adjust the charges in extenuating circumstance. Parents contract for a full term of lessons, although a pro-rata adjustment is made for tuition commenced during terms.

Timetabling of lessons

Music lessons are scheduled in parallel with normal school classes, on a pre-programmed “rotating” timetable to avoid consistent clashes with any given school subject. This means that your son is responsible for leaving the ‘normal’ class at the appropriate time to attend music tuition. Failure to attend is considered a disciplinary matter, and the normal lesson fee is charged. Parents will be informed in writing should a boy not attend his lesson.

For Years 11 and 12, music is part of the regular timetable, and academic lessons remain undisturbed.

Music Scholarships

A range of annual scholarships are awarded to students entering Year 5 and above. The duration, value and number of these scholarships is determined by the Headmaster, based on recommendations made by the Director of Music and drawn from auditions and interviews (usually held in February each year). Scholarship applications for other levels can be made by application to the Director of Music or the School Registrar.

Further information can be obtained from the Music Office.
School Orchestras, Concert Bands and Choirs

Camberwell Grammar School has three orchestras – Junior School, Middle School and Senior School – graded to the abilities and interests of the students. As players gain in proficiency they progress through the orchestras, each of which provides opportunities for players in the orchestral sections of strings, woodwinds, brass and percussion.

Rehearsals and tutorials are built into the timetables as part of the weekly routine. Participation in any of the school ensembles is also open to those students learning an instrument outside Camberwell Grammar School.

The Middle School and Senior School Concert Bands provide important ensemble experience for woodwind and brass players. Under normal circumstances all woodwind, brass and percussion players join the Concert Bands. Rehearsals are held weekly during lunch break.

Choirs from the Junior, Middle and Senior School sing at major School concerts, and lead school assembly singing. Rehearsals for massed choirs for the major concerts are built into the School timetable. A Chapel Choir drawn from Senior and Middle School boys is selected as needed for official Church Services and the annual Christmas Service of Lessons and Carols.

We also encourage selected students to participate in smaller ensembles and bands covering the spectrum from Chamber Groups to the two Stage Bands, which rehearse weekly during the lunch break.

School Concerts and Services

Two major concerts are held each year featuring the orchestras, bands and combined choirs of the Junior, Middle and Senior Schools. A major concert continues to be held biennially at Hamer Hall.

The Chapel Choir, and sometimes the School Choir, sing at the annual Leavers’ Service, the Carol Service, and Middle and Junior School term Church Services.

Other Activities

The music school is very active in School Open Day performances. The Senior Band accompanies the Cadet Passing-Out Parade and the Senior Orchestra performs demonstration concerts and workshop rehearsals. Chamber Groups and the Stage Band perform in or near the main lunchroom area. Junior School musicians are active in orchestral or small ensemble performances.

Student Recitals are held each term and are open to all musicians including those learning externally to the school music department. These informal recitals are held at all levels of the school to give students practical experience in music performance.

The Elva Allan Concert is a slightly more formal function, which provides a vehicle for music scholarship holders to demonstrate their talents and gain experience in music performance skills.

The CGS Friends of Performing Arts comprises a group of enthusiastic and interested people who support financially and physically the work of the Music School. Through funds raised from a variety of musical and social events, they have materially assisted the growth and development of the school. Several concrete examples of the results of their efforts are purchases of the Alistair McAllister Harpsichord, a full set of Chapel Choir robes, a Steinway grand piano, pipe organ and many musical instruments, to supplement the school’s hire program. If you think you might like to join this group you can find out more through the Development Office.

Music Staff

Under the active leadership of the Director and Assistant Director of Music, CGS Music School is staffed by thirteen full-time and up to twenty-two part-time personnel. All staff are dedicated, highly-qualified, skilled and active musicians in their chosen fields, above all they are committed to imparting a love and appreciation of music to future generations.

T.C. Henley
Director of Music