



Prodigy Program

Westwood Performing Arts

PRODIGY PROGRAM FALL 2022 NEWSLETTER

Dear Prodigy Families,

I hope you have been having a great year of music so far! With the holiday season rapidly approaching, I wanted to take a moment to thank you for being an important part of the Prodigy Program, and to provide you with a few updates, notifications, and reminders about the Program.

Prodigy Student Spotlights!

The MMEA Eastern District Auditions were held virtually in November. Congratulations to the following Prodigy Program students for acceptance into Senior Districts. Bravo students and instructors!

Keira Dent, Soprano
Jason Guo, Tenor Saxophone
Jefferson Ji, Alto Saxophone
Alex Mansour, Vocal Bass
Anna McCusker, Alto
Braedan Murphy, Baritone Saxophone
Ali Tariq, Tenor
Conor Tsang, Tenor Saxophone
Jude Vamenta, Tenor Saxophone
Deepak Viswalingam, Clarinet

Prodigy Faculty Updates

This Fall, we welcomed Robert D'Ambrosio to the Prodigy faculty.



Robert D'Ambrosio is a clarinetist, flutist, and saxophonist with more than 25 years of teaching experience. In addition to teaching flute and saxophone to students in the Prodigy Program, Bob provides clarinet, flute, and saxophone lessons in the Wayland Public Schools and the Shrewsbury Instrumental Lesson Program. Previously, Bob served as an instrumental music instructor at the Worcester Academy in Worcester, Massachusetts and the Indian Brook, South Elementary Schools

in Plymouth, Massachusetts. Bob also actively performs throughout Massachusetts, having appeared with the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, and Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra. Bob has served as an adjudicator for the Massachusetts Music Educators Association Eastern District Festival for over 25 years. Bob received his Masters Degree in Clarinet Performance and his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education from the University of Massachusetts. In addition, Bob has studied flute with Donald Zook at the South Shore Conservatory, and completed his post-graduate clarinet studies with Thomas Marin at the Boston Symphony Orchestra.

Prodigy Faculty News and Events



Saxophonist and Prodigy instructor, John Clark, has written a book entitled *Blues on Stage: The Blues Entertainment Industry in the 1920s*, published by SUNY Publishing. The book is currently available for sale at Barnes & Noble. Please go to <https://www.barnesandnoble.com/w/blues-on-stage-john-l-clark/1141732818> to purchase a copy!



Clarinetist, flutist, saxophonist, and Prodigy instructor, Robert D'Ambrosio, performed at Mechanics Hall with the Massachusetts Symphony Orchestra on December 3, 2022.

In-Person and Remote Lesson Options Continue

This Fall, the Prodigy Program began to offer students the option of taking lessons in person or remotely. Many students have taken advantage of the option to study remotely, so we plan to continue offering this option for the 2023-24 school year.

Spring Recitals In Person

We are looking forward to bringing all of our students back in person this Spring for a series of in-person Spring recitals. In-person and remote students will be invited and encouraged to perform. Recital dates and times will be established by individual instructors.

New Program Initiatives: Students Needed

This Fall, we planned to roll out several new initiatives, including Music Theory II and High School String Chamber Ensemble. Although we had some interest, we did not have enough students registered in these classes in order to make it possible to run them this Fall. We understand that the start of the school year can be very stressful, and schedules often shift, so we are gauging student interest at this time. If we have ample interest, we will work with our faculty and staff to introduce these programs in Spring 2023. Please find general class descriptions below:

In Music Theory II, students learn harmony concepts and sophisticated chord progressions; score analysis; and compositional techniques, using GarageBand and other desktop publishing platforms. Classes will meet online. Tuition is \$200 per semester. Days, times, and instructor to be determined based on student interest. We require at least five students in order to run this class.

In High School String Chamber Ensemble, high school students learn, interpret, play, and perform a variety of string ensemble repertoire with others. Classes meet in person on campus. Tuition is \$400 per semester. Room, days, times, and instructors to be determined, based on student interest. We require four high school students in order to run this class.

If you are interested in participating in either class, please contact me by email at mmarkard@westwood.k12.ma.us. Your email is not a commitment to register for the class. It will be used to determine whether or not we should offer these classes in Spring 2023.

A Friendly Reminder About Our Policies

In the interest of student progress, and with an effort to maintain a degree of fairness for both families and lesson instructors, the Prodigy Program previously established policies regarding lesson attendance, cancellations, and make-up lessons.

Upon registration, families are asked to make a substantial time and financial commitment to student's music lessons and classes. Prodigy Program instructors have also committed to teach a total of 30 lessons per year (this number may vary with individual registrations). Lesson teachers rely on the teaching income they receive from the Prodigy Program as part of their livelihood.

Established weekly lesson times are bound to flex at various points throughout the year due to illness, school holidays, weather cancellations, etc. Because both students/families and instructors have a mutual investment in their music lessons and classes together, the Prodigy

Program has asked families and instructors to agree to certain guidelines in the event of a missed lesson or class. Our **current Absence and Makeup Policy** is set forth below. Please click [here](#) to read all of the Program's policies.

Registration Statements / Tuition Payments

In early January, I plan to send out invoices to families to confirm their account balances. My intention in doing so is to provide families with important account information and to identify and resolve any account discrepancies that may exist.

- **If you have already paid your family's tuition in full** you will not receive a statement. Thank you for your payment!
- **If you have already issued a partial payment** for the current school year, this should be reflected on the statement you receive. All remaining tuition balances will be due on February 1, 2023.
- **Families participating in the Monthly Payment** will continue to have payments applied through the remainder of the school year. No additional payments are necessary at this time and you do not need to take any further actions with respect to payment.
- **If you have a past-due balance on your account**, please contact me immediately to make payment. If you believe your past-due balance is an error, kindly let me know.

To make a payment or change your family's billing/account information, please click this link: <https://app.jackrabbitclass.com/jr3.0/ParentPortal/Login?orgId=506099>

Lesson Cancellations and Make-Up Policies

In the interest of student progress, and with an effort to maintain a degree of fairness for both families and lesson instructors, the Prodigy Program previously established policies regarding lesson attendance, cancellations, and make-up lessons. We recently revised our lesson cancellation and make-up policy to provide clarification. Our updated lesson cancellation and make-up policy is as follows:

1. **Private Lessons:** **Two excused absences** per school year will be made up. Excused absences are those in which (i) the student has provided at least 24 hours' prior notice to their instructor, or (ii) the student is ill, cannot attend the lesson, and has provided as much prior notice as possible. Absences caused by **any other reason** are not excused and will be forfeited unless covered by paragraphs 5, 6 or 7 below.
2. Students/parents must notify their instructor **directly** of any absence in advance of the scheduled lesson (not through the Prodigy Program Director or through a child's school office/classroom teacher).
3. **Semi-Private Lessons:** Because semi-private lessons include other students, **lessons are not made up** when a student is absent.

4. **Classes:** Because classes include other students, **lessons are not made up when a student is absent.**
5. **Teacher's Absence:** A teacher's absence from a lesson or class **will be made up** by the end of the school year. In most cases, the lesson term will be extended one week for each lesson cancellation.
6. **School Closing/Holidays:** All lessons missed because of school closings for religious holidays or inclement weather **will** be made up.
7. **Technology Problems/Dropped Internet Connection:** **Up to two full lessons** missed due to dropped internet connection or technical difficulties with Zoom, Facetime, Google Meet or any other remote learning platform students are using with their individual teachers **will** be made up by the end of the school year. Families are responsible to maintain a good internet connection and to use their best efforts to ensure that their technological devices are working properly to avoid technology-related interruptions.
8. Tuition credits or refunds will be provided for **long-term illness** or **injury**.

As always, please let me know if you notice any discrepancies in your registration statement, or if there are any other concerns you may have regarding your child's participation in the Prodigy Program.

Wishing you and your families a safe and happy holiday season and new year! Thanks to each of you for being an important part of the Prodigy Program and best wishes for a great season of music!

Musically yours,

Marlene M. Markard
Prodigy Program Director