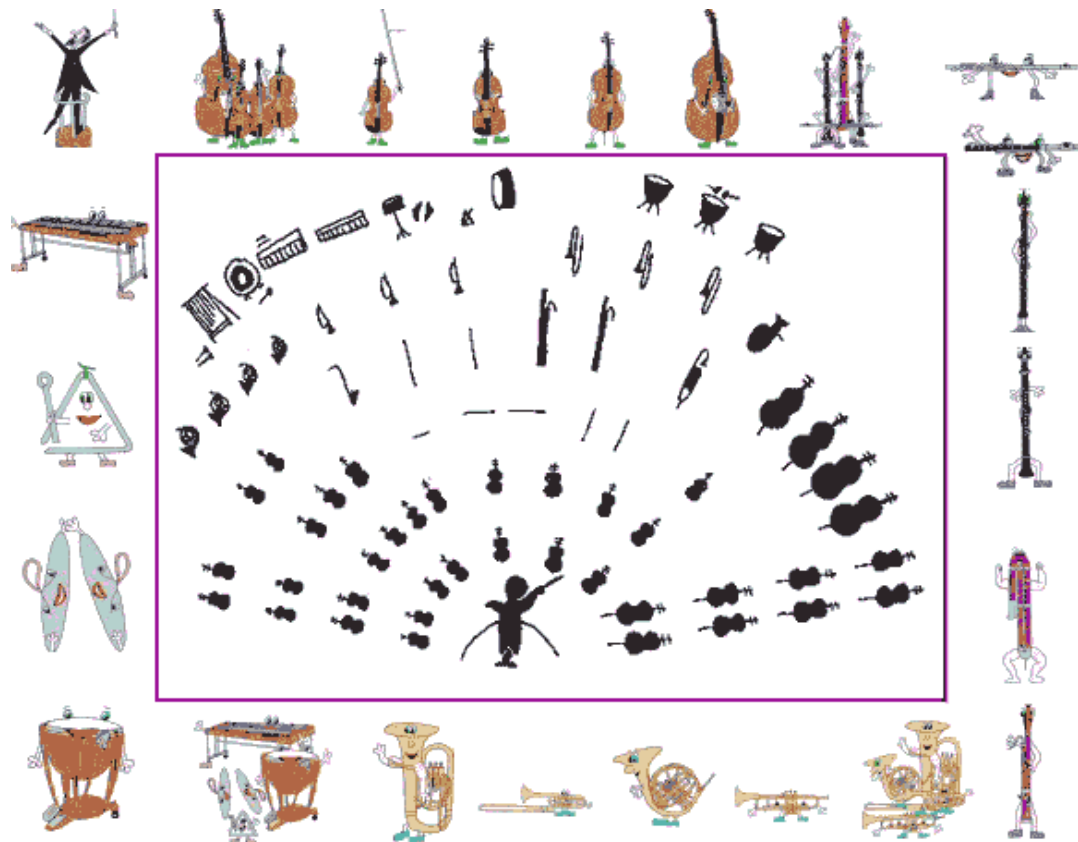


## So ... you want to learn a Music Instrument.

Try and get an over-view in a few pages and 30 minutes at our website <http://musint.com> and/or on the Internet.

1. Get familiar with Classical Music as a whole. Understanding what a Classical Orchestra is all about is a good place to start.
2. In India we have to specify Western Classical Music to differentiate between Classical Music in India which can be Carnatic Music and Hindustani Music both of which are Classical Music In India. NOTE : On the internet and in the west there is no such thing as "Western Classical Music" it's an Indian term to differentiate between these genres.



3. Which instrument do you like. The sound of ... and can picture yourself playing.
  - a. Strings. Violin, viola, cello or double-bass.
  - b. Woodwinds. Flute, Oboe, Clarinet, Bassoon. Recorder. Saxophone.
  - c. Percussion. Xylogphone. Glockenspiel. Timpani.
  - d. Brass. Trumpet. Trombone. French Horn. Tuba.
4. ... but Houston we have a problem.

There are very few groups and orchestras in India/Bangalore. You can't get many of the instruments locally. Some are very expensive. Some are huge. Some are very difficult to learn. You can't get teachers for most of the instruments.
5. A typical orchestra may have about 60 musicians. Smaller groups can also be formed. 4 form a Quartet. You could play solo, duets or trios as 1,2 or 3 musicians. An octet may double the 4 parts (soprano, alto, tenor and bass) of a music score. You could be part of an ensemble, chamber group, choir or chorus, the conductor, manager, librarian, song-writer, composer, transcriber, arranger amongst other related vocations.

## Our solution to the problem ...

Assuming you are not sure; and don't know enough to make this choice by yourself; let me suggest the following ...

1. We have 4 tracks of which you can select one. Stay with one for some time; you can then shift to another based on your experience and learning.
  - I. Recorder. Low cost instrument. Cheaper lessons. Easy to learn. Pick-up the basics. Understand the Strengths, Opportunities, Weaknesses and Threats. (SWOT). Play in a recorder SATB Quartet.
  - II. Guitar. Classical Guitar with western music notation only. No singing you play solo pieces with your fingers on a nylon string classical guitar. Learn to accompany other classical music solo instruments or voice. Play in a Classical Guitar Orchestra.
  - III. Vocal. Learn to sight-read, music notation and getting your voice basics right. Simple tunes. Genre could include Church, German, Spanish, Italian or British/UK

folk and traditional music. Optional learn to use a chord organ or acoustic guitar to accompany yourself.

IV. Strings. Learn to play the violin, viola, cello or double bass.

Certification and Examinations optional in all cases.

2. We will help you select an instrument based on your interest; time-availability for practice; budget; practice environment at home/work etc; opportunities to play; desire to learn; Need for Certification / Examinations; being a part of the Music Industry.
3. Join our weekly classes at the monthly rate prescribed at St. Marks Music Academy or Music International.
4. Avail of our annual Online Subscription that support our weekly or monthly 'Contact-Classes' at St. Marks Music Academy and/or Music International.

## Learn to Play a Musical Instrument (or two)



## 1. Being Human

Bird song. Dolphin clicks. Ocean Waves. Murmur of a brook. Wind in the trees ... definitely not music. Humans have a unique ability to perform, listen to, understand and appreciate music. The more you know and are involved the higher the level of satisfaction and sense of well-being. Research has indicated that all living beings are profoundly affected by music.

## 2. Historically speaking

Quality of music is subjective. The dhak-dhak of music is primitive. The two stroke heartbeat, left-right march of soldiers, tick-tock of a clock gives a fundamental rhythm to dance and link to emotions. The thinking human changed that to 'non-two'. Complex timings in '3' or '5' mode or off-beat. Complex notes, intervals, chords and scales and 'thals' and 'raga' experimented with to arrive at modern accepted standards and sounds.

## 3. Self-Learner or Taught

While you may be any combination; essentially you fall into one of the two ...

- i. You are a self-learner, you know what to do, where to go, and can learn by yourself. You just need a bit of direction.
- ii. You need to be taught, given materials, explanations given, told what to do, monitored, coached and mentored.

## 4. Selecting a Good Teacher

Getting a Quality Teacher for Western Classical Music in India and Bangalore is nearly impossible. The profession is inadequate to support a family. If at all they are already employed in a School OR playing professionally or otherwise occupied full-time. Select and go with the most affordable and the best possible. Once selected – like a guru-sishya; mentor-protégé ... you should trust the relationship for your own betterment.

## 5. Any age

If less than 12 years old, it may be better to start with a 'Recorder'. It is a front-blown flute-like instrument and excellent for beginners to acquire a sense of notes, timings and being a part of a musical group. A junior size violin, piano or other instrument has a range of methods to work with smaller hands and lesser strength. Adults can and should work at a pace consistent with

the motivation, time available and spent and ability to sustain an interest.

## 6. Reduce aging and stress

Studies have shown that retiring older people would be well advised to start learning to play an instrument if they have never done so. It involves using parts of the brain and inter-connectivity and co-ordination that helps the brain re-connect and slow the process of aging. Classical Music has proven to be the most effective stress-buster.

## 7. Selecting an Instrument

The best possible advice is to listen to an instrument and go with your first instincts. If you like the sound of that instrument go for it. If you don't like the sound of an instrument; don't choose that. Given the practical options in Bangalore and India you could select one of the following ...

- i. Piano
- ii. Church Organ
- iii. Violin. (or viola or cello).
- iv. Classical Guitar
- v. Recorder (Alto, Soprano, Tenor and/or Bass)
- vi. Concert Flute
- vii. Clarinet (and the Saxophone later).
- viii. French Horn.
- ix. Oboe or Bassoon (You could be a part of a Wind Quartet)
- x. Trumpet. (Start with a bugle).
- xi. Brass band. (Cornet, Trombone, Tuba, Euphonium)
- xii. Western Classical Voice Training

## 8. A second Instrument

Even if you play an instrument; you may want to learn to read and write formal western music notation. If you know that already then you MUST take up a 2<sup>nd</sup> instrument. Ideally the 2<sup>nd</sup> should be an 'accompaniment' instrument if you play an 'air' instrument. 'Accompaniment' instruments are the Classical Guitar or Piano; while realistic 'air' instruments include the Recorder, Flute, Clarinet, Saxophone, Violin. Instruments such as the Viola, Cello, Tuba, Trombone, soprano instruments require playing with a Group.

## 9. Social Impact

When you play an instrument; you spend quality time and achieve a sense of satisfaction and well-being. It reduces stress. Perceived or otherwise your popularity increases. When you play with others it helps in team work; understanding and working with others to achieve a common goal.

### 10. Genre

Once you have reached a certain level of proficiency in playing an instrument; comes what to play. Western Classical Music from over the last 500 years can keep you busy and playing some of the highest quality music for the next 500 years. However, you can arrange, re-arrange, compose, transcribe, play with others; orchestra, ensemble, chamber, quartet, trios, duets and solo ... that can keep you busy for another 500 years.

However being a 21<sup>st</sup> century person ... you may want to try Jazz, Country, Folk traditions of Germany, Spain, France, British Isles, South America ... the list is – honestly endless.

### *Why Western Classical Music?*

#### **A. Good Reasons.**

1. It's yours, our history of the world. We need to understand and will always be a part of it. Contemporary music is a part of our future history.
2. Curiosity? How is the music of 200 and 500 years old still relevant and keeps so many people interested; spending so much of time, money and effort on this?
3. You learn to read music. Notation. Sight-Reading. Interpretation.
4. You learn Theory of Music. You could do a post-graduate, doctorate and even become a Professor of Music without playing a note on any instrument. There is 'that amount' of learning available with support from the Biggest Universities on the planet.
5. However ... "Writing about Music is like Dancing about Architecture" ... attributed to Frank Zappa is as much a truism as any other.
6. You will never be 'stuck' for learning new pieces. Progress. Growth. Expanding your horizons.

7. Once you learn an instrument; it's far easier to learn another music instrument.
8. It's essence is to play with another to form music together. The whole is more important than the individual.
9. You can play with anyone else in the world. No barrier whatsoever. Age. Sex. Race. Religion. Language. Ability (one can take the easier instrument, simpler part do only the basics). Dumb. Deaf or in any other way Physically or Mentally challenged.
10. Many speech impaired can sing. The deaf produce great music. The feet can be used. Stands can be built to hold an instrument for any handicap.
11. While NOT wanting to start a debate ... calm, soothing, body-rhythm and metabolism synchronized music can have significant impact on even 'clinical' problems in people.
12. It is one of the most directly connected human activity to human emotion. Happiness. Sadness. Pathos. Agitation. Aggression. Melancholy. Vigour. Chant. Trance. Drone. Sporadic. Soft. Loud. Fast. Slow.
13. Playing an instrument is VERY, VERY, VERY hard-work. It takes years. Definitely one hour each day. The more hours you spend you should see the benefits.
14. Music lessons and instruments can be very expensive. Good teachers are hard to come by. Good instruments a little less so. Make the most of the time you get from a good teacher ... whether you are paying for it or not. Look after your instrument.
15. It's one of the most rewarding human experiences. Once you learn and play a piece and actually listen to it. It's 'happiness', 'satisfaction' and 'well-being' rolled into one. There is the added benefit that it is usually genuinely appreciated by those who listen to you for whatever their reason.
16. Music teaches you lessons for other disciplines in life and builds you in many ways. Patience. Discipline. Physical, Emotional and Intellectual Concentration. Focus. Attention to detail. Quality. Team-work. How to dress, behave and present yourself to an audience commanding respect, undivided attention and admiration all at the same time. Taking care of an Instrument. The individual's contribution to a whole. Non-verbal communication. Listening skills.

Hand-eye co-ordination. Eurhythmics. Improvisation, creativity, innovation & micro-innovation.

## B. Bad Reasons.

1. I think music is cool.
2. It's elitist, up market, classy, superior to any and all other forms of music.
3. I can show off. My expensive instrument. My designer clothes. My virtuoso ability. My technique; speed; flamboyance; style; personality; charisma and a whole lot that I have to offer.
4. My parents and peers are forcing me to do this.
5. You appreciate others playing because you want to sound knowledgeable. It's the done thing.

## Contact :

Casper Abraham  
[casper@themusicinternational.com](mailto:casper@themusicinternational.com)  
+91 98450-61870

Music International  
62-B Modi Residency  
Millers Road, Benson Town  
Bangalore 560 046 INDIA  
Website at <http://themusicinternational.com>  
Email : [thedean@themusicinternational.com](mailto:thedean@themusicinternational.com)