

Listen up & learn

In March, lockdown forced The Music School on the High Street to close for the first time in 18 years. As the school prepares to reopen, **Liliana Dimovska** explains why children and adults alike should listen up

The interruption that lockdown brought prompted us to reflect on the values and benefits of participating in music activities and why it is so important now, more than ever, to offer high-quality music education to the Wanstead community. As an experienced music performer and educator, I am thrilled to be introducing, for the first time, an Early Years program based on the colourstrings method, as well as well structured courses for adults, starting this month.



The colourstrings approach is a unique general musicianship education for children from birth to five years and provides a foundation for future musical training. The classes have a relaxing and positive atmosphere that encourages creativity, listening, and active participation. Hungarian violinist Géza Szilvay developed the colourstrings method in Finland in the 1970s after finding the need to help his own children through the early, challenging years of playing. He wanted to make the learning process more joyful, more natural.

When children are five, they are ready to start learning to play a musical instrument. The colourstrings program provides them with a fun and engaging introduction to the violin using nursery rhymes they love and vibrant, colourful visual representation. As all children learn in their own way, lessons can be taken on an individual, paired, or small-group basis. Individual lessons are good for those who want one-on-one tuition, and paired and small-group lessons are good for social interaction and learning to listen to other players.

But children are not the only ones who benefit from musical activities. Adults can make

new social connections when they learn an instrument. Maybe you learnt to play as child and want to brush up old skills, or you wish you had learnt, but never had a chance. It is never too late. Research shows the benefits of participating in music as it relates to physical, mental, emotional and spiritual wellbeing.

Music lessons have been shown to improve memory in a study of adults between the ages of 60 and 85 (Jennifer Bugos, University of South Florida), and it can also reduce anxiety, depression and loneliness.

During lockdown, we all had to learn and adapt to new way of online learning. Our experience was so positive that we will continue to offer a full online programme for those who are shielding but still want access to lessons. On the other hand, for those who prefer face-to-face tuition, we plan to re-open on 7 September, with all necessary safety steps in place in line with government regulations.

The Music School Wanstead is located at 59a High Street, Wanstead. For more information, call **020 8502 0932** or visit the-music-school.co.uk

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"We can't recommend Marina at the Music School in Wanstead highly enough."

"The school is well run and the teachers and management are very helpful."

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