

# Who We Are

## The Joy of the Musician's Journey

Southern Oregon School of Music is a community of teachers and students sharing together the joys of the musician's journey. We provide music classes and lessons in a warm and accepting environment where both teachers and students experience joy in individual and shared music-making.

We believe that the youngest music learners are best served by the Kindermusik program—a joyful curriculum of music, movement, and learning for ages birth to seven. This program harnesses the power of music to support each child's development in every area, including cognitive, language, physical, social-emotional, and musical skills. Students who graduate from the Kindermusik program are well prepared for private lessons and further music study.

For students ages eight to adult, we offer private and group lessons. Our teachers aim to build supportive relationships with students that help them to thrive as musicians and also experience the power of music to enhance personal growth, self-esteem, and life skills.

Our curricula focus on providing a strong foundation in music theory, technical skills, and accessible beginner repertoire that allows the student to experience success in music making. We also offer students opportunities to choose some of the music they play, especially for concerts and special events. Above all, we want students to love their lessons!

## Our History

In 1999, Deborah Pratt founded Music4Kids, leasing space at the Gilbert Greek Early Childhood Center where she taught Kindermusik classes. In 2000, Music4Kids moved to a small rented space near the Boys and Girls Club, adding a youth choir and a limited retail section with music products for young children.

In 2001, Deb signed a lease for a 2,000-square-foot retail space in Town Center Plaza, expanded retail offerings, added instrument rentals, and began offering private voice and instrument lessons. By 2005 Music4Kids had grown to include lessons and classes for both adults and children, and the business was renamed Great Northwest Music (GNWM). By 2008, GNWM employed five teachers and served 150 students, 65 of whom were in the Kindermusik program.

In June 2008, Andy and Teresa Martin purchased Great Northwest Music. Over the years from 2008 to 2013, the GNWM Kindermusik program had been reduced to only a few students. In 2013, GNWM hired Deb as Kindermusik Program Director to revitalize the program. Within a couple of years, a piano class for Kindermusik graduates and a children's choir were added. By 2017, Deb's classes had outgrown the space at GNWM.

In May 2018, Deb and Andy mutually agreed to separate, and Deb relocated her studio to 141 NW C Street in Grants Pass, once again taking the name Music4Kids. The two businesses remain mutually supportive and often refer students to each other.

From 2018 to 2025, Music4Kids grew to a multi-teacher studio with nine part-time teachers, two part-time administrative staff, and 170 students. At that time, the studio offered Kindermusik classes as well as private lessons in piano, voice, violin, guitar, ukulele, bass guitar, drums, and saxophone, along with piano classes and the Rogue Valley Kids Choir.

In 2025, Music4Kids rebranded as Southern Oregon School of Music and expanded to occupy the entire top floor of the building, positioning the school for future growth, additional music classes and ensembles for all ages, including adults. In 2026, viola lessons and a younger children's choir were added, and 5 digital pianos were added to the 5 keyboards currently in use at that time to accommodate the Piano Express 2-room curriculum model.

## **Our Mission**

### **The Young Musician's Journey**

At Southern Oregon School of Music, we invite children and their families to embark on a seven-to-ten-year journey with us that will...

### **Nurture Musicianship**

Our curriculum and learning activities are designed to nurture students' musicianship. We focus on foundational concepts and essential skills needed to play any style of music. As students progress, they can take their music wherever they want it to go.

For our youngest learners, Kindermusik teachers guide children ages birth to seven years through each developmental stage. Children begin to understand basic music concepts and gain key skills, such as keeping a steady beat and singing in tune.

### **Unlock Potential**

We aim to support students' personal growth through the power of music making.

Research over the past 25 years shows the power of music-making to enhance learning and development. Not only is it enjoyable, but it also helps students develop focus, perseverance, listening skills, coordination, and even brain structure. Music-making activates almost all brain regions, strengthening pathways related to cognitive function, well-being, and happiness. Studies show that the area connecting the two sides of the brain is larger in musicians.

For little ones, Kindermusik activities harness the power of music to boost language skills, improve coordination, spark creativity, and build social-emotional confidence—setting the stage for a happy, healthy, and lifelong love of learning.

## **Celebrate Family and Community**

Music has a special way of bringing people together. One of the joys of making music is sharing it with family and friends. Part of our mission is to help families grow closer through shared musical experiences at Southern Oregon School of Music events and also at home.

Our teachers and staff foster a community of young musicians who share their passion for music and support each other along the way. Musical friendships often last a lifetime! As students develop their skills, they find joy in playing and singing together in bands or ensembles, creating memorable experiences and lasting bonds.

## **How Do We Accomplish Our Mission?**

At Southern Oregon School of Music, we strive to create a warm, welcoming space where teachers and students enjoy making music together. We also foster a close-knit community among our teachers and staff, ensuring a supportive and rewarding environment for all.

Together, we create a transformative atmosphere at Southern Oregon School of Music. Our hope is that the power of music, combined with our dedication to the young musicians we teach, will inspire students to stay with us throughout their seven-to-ten-year musical journey. Along the way, they develop a lifelong love of music and learning, cultivating a passion that propels them toward a bright and successful future, both personally and musically.

## **Core Values**

Teachers and staff at Southern Oregon School of Music have worked together to identify these core values that guide all our decisions, activities, and interpersonal relationships:

**Warm, Welcoming, Caring Community.** We are a warm and caring community that likes to have fun, celebrate successes, and collaborate together as we experience the joy of shared music-making and learning.

**Highest Levels of Character.** We strive for personal excellence, being committed to continued personal improvement, professionalism, honesty, integrity, and mutual respect for one another, our students, and their families.

**Consistent, Prompt Communication.** We commit to quickly respond to communication from each other, our students, and their families with accurate information, kindness, and encouragement.

**Personalized, Structured, Classical Musical Foundation.** We provide a structured, personalized music education with a classical foundation. As their musical skills mature, we help each student build upon this foundation, equipping each one to excel at playing their chosen musical style(s).

**Consistent and Effective Curriculum.** We work together as teachers to curate, develop, and agree upon an effective, consistent curriculum for every instrument. This includes weekly focus on foundational skills and music theory, along with progressive mastery of the instrument through method books and supplemental music of interest to the student.

**Positive and Uplifting Music.** We vet all the music that we use in our curricula and lessons to make sure the lyrics and the emotional impact of the music are age-appropriate, positive, and uplifting. We are aware that the music students learn in our lessons becomes part of their personal mental playlist. We only teach music that we would want our students to be singing in their heads for life.