

STRIKE UP THE BAND

by: Ed Lettner



Have you ever dreamed of playing in a jazz or rock band, or perhaps a classical ensemble? If you've learned at least the basics of your instrument, you are ready to make music with others in a group that is appropriate to your skill level.

You may join an organized group at your school or a private music school, a community band or orchestra, or a community theatre group that is producing a Broadway musical. One of the advantages of these groups is that you will rehearse under the guidance of a teacher or conductor.

You may also put your own group together with some musical friends or seek out like-minded musicians in the community. When choosing members, select musicians who play at a similar ability level, share a common taste in music and are able to commit to a practice schedule. If it is not practical to rehearse in someone's home, you may rent a rehearsal space.

You should have a leader to direct rehearsals so that they are organized and productive. You will help to ensure steady progress by choosing in advance the music to be practiced at each rehearsal. Each member should suggest music to play, taking into account the group's skill level.

Will your group perform in public? This is a question for group members to consider because not everyone is comfortable doing so. However, having the goal of a performance to work toward is a great source of inspiration. Performing is exciting and rewarding, provided your group is well-prepared. There are many possible performance venues such as talent shows, restaurants, retirement homes, office parties and community festivals.

Another exciting aspect of being in a group is recording yourselves using a computer or in a recording studio. This allows you to document your progress as a group.

As you can see, there are many ways for you to experience the joy of making music with others. So whatever your ability level and musical taste, it's time to strike up the band!

Ed Lettner owns The Music Studio in Etobicoke, which has offered music instruction since 1990. He has performed in many groups representing a variety of musical styles. For information about the programs at The Music Studio, please call 416-234-9268, email ed@themusicstudio.ca or visit www.themusicstudio.ca.