

## **Suggestions for Learning**

Forward – As I wrote last night in my email to you all, ANY movement you take towards discipline and personal growth is fantastic (particularly since none of this is graded or evaluated in any way). That said, I am here, here to watch and evaluate that practice video, listen to you play scales, hear your progress on an etude. It would make my day to receive a theory assignment you need help with, or a video you'd like me to offer suggestions to help you. I still want the opportunity to teach you.

Any concern you have of the future: Is the year done? Will I be able to graduate? What about auditions for next year? What about band scholarships? Will we get to play again? (all good questions) will just make you a bit loco! Deal with what you can deal with...stressing out about the future will not help you in the present. And regarding those important questions, they will all be answered...in due time.

You are allowed to be a little angry, a little stressed, a little frustrated. I am too! Just don't allow those emotions to control you. Do your best to stay centered and calm. Music is a social experience, and so I repeat what I sent you last night, find healthy ways to reach out to each other and interact. Share wonderful music with one another. As we transition to deal specifically with music now, here are some ways you can grow.

- Mr Bahr

General Tips – Before we deal with specific ideas, do not forget these things:

1. Practice with a purpose. Have a goal, and do your best to stay focused during that time (set the phone aside).
2. Breathing gym. Learn the art of the breath. Be still and...exhale. Let your body relax as you release the full amount of air (and stress) from your body. Practice filling up your lungs with a deep, full, relaxed breath. Do not underestimate the importance of air to improve your intonation, enhance your phrasing and round out your tone.
3. Listen. Outside of the obvious artists and recordings I could suggest, many fantastic groups (like the Berlin Philharmonic and Metropolitan Opera) are opening up FREE opportunities to listen to true Masterworks during this time. This has never been the case before...and, we may never see it again!

Music Theory – Music Theory is the subject everyone says they want to learn, but don't take enough time to actually do!

1. An AP Music Theory or general theory book can be purchased through many online sources. Many have complimentary CD's or online resources to help guide you through your study.
2. An excellent online resource is [musictheory.net](http://musictheory.net) – They have a wide amount of free exercises and lessons to help with your knowledge.
3. An app I strongly recommend is Music Theory Pro. It is worth every penny (under 5 bucks), and has an endless amount of valuable resources.

Music History – Besides the overwhelming assignment of tracing back 1,000 years of music history around the globe, focus on one thing:

1. Biography – Listen to, study and learn about one of your music heroes. We have never had more access to the past. Outside of books, there are many excellent resources on YouTube and with documentaries/movies about historically significant artists.
2. Era – Find an era you enjoy, and just focus on that...educate yourself. Whether it is the Baroque Period, the British Invasion, the Romantic Era or the Disco Era you can learn about the major players and that music

specifically. I will say that it is helpful to listen to the type of music you aspire to play. Want to be in orchestra? Disco can't help you very much! Want to get into jazz? Maybe avoid studying about early hip-hop...

3. Instruments – It is fascinating to learn about the history of an instrument...might I suggest the one you play?? When was it built? What did it sound like at first?
4. Instrumentation – On that note (and we are heading a bit towards music composition here) it is fascinating to learn about what instruments were used during different eras...and why they were used during that time. Back to the era discussion a bit, instrumentation plays an enormous role in your enjoyment of particular eras...
5. Masterworks – Gershwin's Rhapsody in Blue, Berlioz's Symphony Fantastique, Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup>, Dvorak's New World Symphony, Mozart's Requiem, Mahler's 5<sup>th</sup>, Holst's Planets, Bach's Toccata and Fugue in D Minor...the list goes on and on. As a musician, there is an expectation that you are familiar with many of these. What a great time to check a few out. These are the great musical works of all time. They deserve a listen.

Art – Music is an art form. Your enjoyment of music can be enhanced by experiencing other art forms.

1. Think about channeling your breath support into your voice. Work on signing and your tone. Even developing your speaking voice, and the roundness of that sound can help. So many actors and vocalists started off playing trombone in a high school band! You never know where the arts can lead you!
2. Draw. Get a sketchbook and some colored pencils and create something. Take time for yourself. You can even go online and find lots of lessons to help with any of these things: Painting, watercolor, chalk, etc...
3. Read. Do you have a favorite poet? "Why would I do that to myself, Mr. Bahr?!?" Well, because poetry (and literature in general) help broaden your worldview and increase your level of awareness in so many things...including yourself.

FHS Courses – Band I/Band II/Orchestra/Jazz A/Jazz B

1. If you have the ability to download iReal Pro, do it! It is worth it. I will use this app every single day until I see you again. It has everything you need except for the melody. I have PDFs of just about every fake book that I can send to you. You can buy a fake book. If you are a trumpet player, you can type "All of Me Bb Fake Book PDF" into Google, and an image will pop right up. Give yourself a chance to learn, and use the internet! Speaking of using the internet...YouTube! There are lessons/licks/patterns/scales/play-along tracks...and an endless amount of live concert and recorded music available. Less time on Instagram, more time on YouTube!
2. Listen listen listen. Get some new favorites, and then try to play like them. I know I'm a broken record...but, in music, you are who you listen to. Like I said at the top of this, there are major performance companies offering live streaming, or releasing past performances for free right now. Check it out!
3. Transcribe a song or a solo. Dig in and try to write something down. It's fun!

Lastly, and most importantly, know that I care about each one of you. You are missed and I look forward to our next rehearsal together (whenever that may be). I'm an email away [mbahr@suhsd.net](mailto:mbahr@suhsd.net)