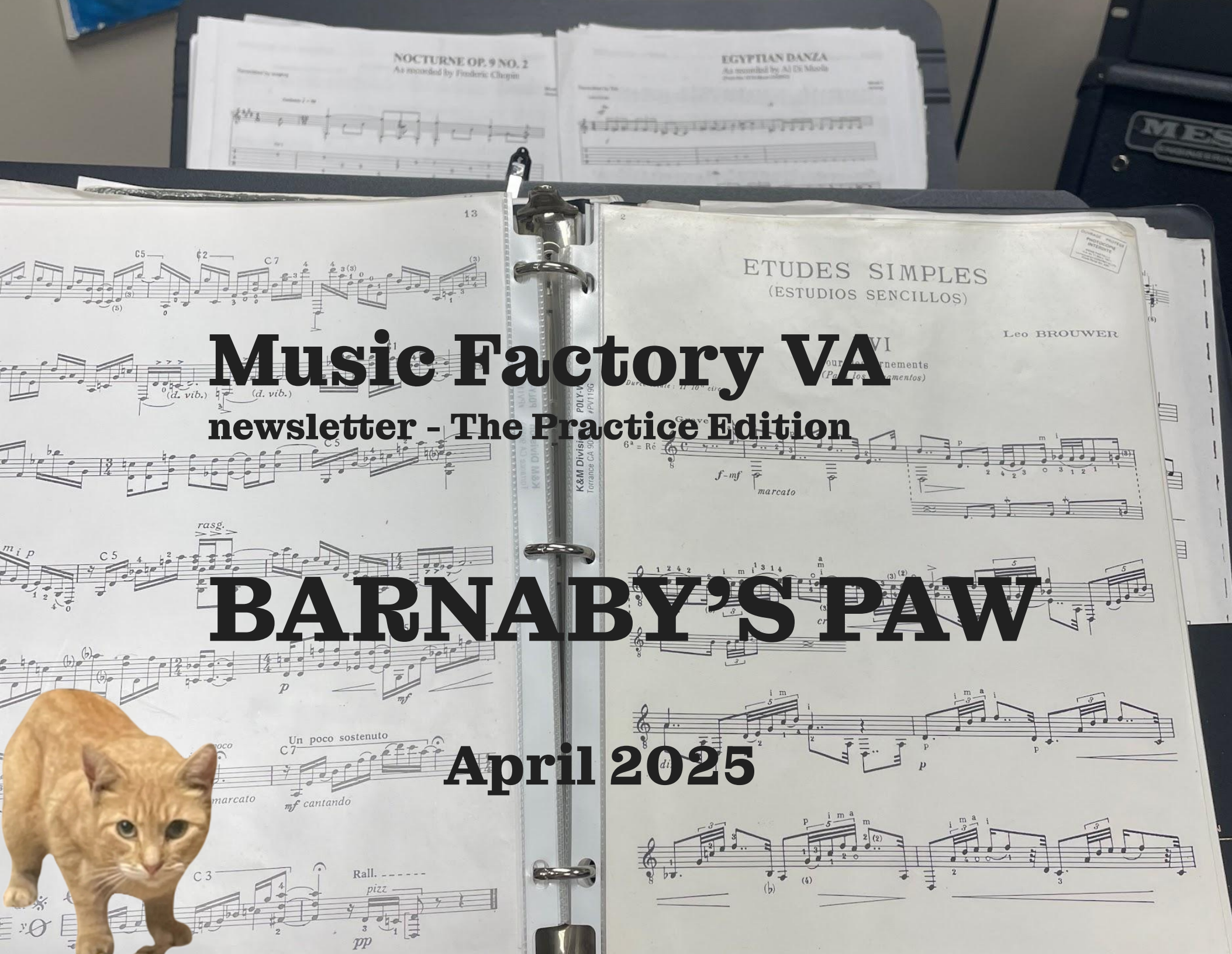


Music Factory VA
newsletter - The Practice Edition

BARNABY'S PAW

April 2025





Practice doesn't
make perfect.
Perfect practice
makes perfect.

Man to cab driver: How do you get to Carnegie
Hall?

Cab Driver: Practice, Practice Practice!

This month's newsletter is all about
practice...the word that we all love and we all
hate. But we can't live without practice if we
want to reach our full potential as musicians.

Read on for tips on everything regarding
practice!

Happy practicing!

Cheers!

Lane

“I’m Going to Quit!”

90% of guitar players quit in their first year. The most common reasons for quitting are:

- lack of patience
- lack of determination
- difficulty

It is hard to immediately get nice sounds from your guitar and your fingers can hurt for a little while. If you are playing on a low quality guitar and have a bad guitar setup, you can face even more challenges.

Students may have too many other activities, too much schoolwork or no private place to practice. They might not have parents or siblings that enjoy music to share and inspire them in their musical journey.

Each of these challenges has a solution. The first step is to set an intention and a goal. Envision yourself as a masterful player. Schedule devoted time to practice. Set weekly goals to develop micro-skills like chord progressions, sight reading, scale practice and warm ups.

Remember the Pareto Principle: 80% of your result will come from 20% of your effort. Even short practice sessions done consistently make a huge difference in your overall development!



The Running Analogy

Sometimes we set daily practice goals that far exceed our time, patience and determination. For example, as a runner myself, I would allow myself a certain distance, maybe half a mile, or a mile. I soon increased that distance and went on to completing half marathons. My comparison to practicing and running is this.

If I told you to go run across the parking lot, your brain would quickly determine the distance and agree to yourself that it was a possible feat! Your brain would react by allowing release of energy to accomplish the task. Now, if I said, "Let's run 10 miles!" your brain would say "Uh....we have never done that" and having no mental record of that it would not supply the body with the energy necessary to complete the run acting as a safety measure.

To protect the body, we would also need to be conditioned. Just think about where the energy comes from when we see the finish line! Our body releases the energy that we need to accomplish and we often sprint to the finish line.

So...applying this to our practice...looking at a song or a piece of music or scales can be like a 10-mile-run to your brain. But if we only do say the verse of a song in one practice session or a certain number of measures then we set up a scenario that we can comfortably achieve. Say the piece of music is 21 measures long. Try 3 measures a day and in a week you will have it!



Instructor Tip:

3 Helpful Stages to Approach a Piece of Music



1) LOOK AT THE FIRST MEASURE AND ENVISION HOW IT IS PLAYED.

Identify what notes are on what strings and the fingerings needed. If it is a chord progression, imagine yourself playing the chords. Your image could be the guitar neck or the notes on the page.



2) WHILE LOOKING AT THE MEASURE, PLACE YOUR FINGERS ON THE NOTES.

Make sure all is correct before playing. The first impression pattern sound sticks in the brain and muscle memory so make sure it is correct. Now play the measure or chord. Repeat several times to get the sound and muscle memory.



3) TURN YOUR STAND AROUND AND PLAY FROM MEMORY.

The sound of the measure should be pretty solid in your ear at this point so any incorrect notes will stand out. Repeat this until you can't play it wrong! The next day when you practice you shouldn't have to look at the music.

“

The goal is not to rent or lease the music but to buy the music, own it, memorized, so you can add expression, dynamics, and your own personal touch to it.

LANE DRUM

Setting up your practice space

Make sure you have a practice space that is comfortable and has all the materials you will need:

- quality music stand
- quality guitar stand (Don't leave the guitar in its case. You're less determined to practice. Have everything out and ready to go.)
- nice, comfy chair
- laptop with speakers for using music programs or playing along with songs
- books should be kept on the stand (but don't forget to pack them in your guitar case or bag the night before your lesson)
- privacy! Try to minimize interruptions from siblings or pets. It can also be nerve-wracking to have people listen to your practice so privacy is important.
- picks, a metronome and a tuner should be in hands reach.

Inspired? Send us a picture of your practice space for possible inclusion in a future newsletter!



Practice Strategies of Legendary Musicians



Julian Bream

Julian Bream is one of the greatest classical guitarists of all time. He was drafted into the British Army in 1952 and was only allowed 40 minutes per day to practice. The time limitation forced him to focus and he grew as a player from the intense focus.



Jimi Hendrix

Jimi Hendrix played for hours on end walking around the house with a guitar around his neck.



Eric Clapton

Eric Clapton practiced 8-12 hours a day! He focused on learning licks and tunes off of his favorite American Blues artists. He learned primarily by ear. He began busking around London at age 16. When he wasn't practicing, he was always listening and studying blues records.



Jimmy Page

Jimmy Page practiced 6-7 hours per day learning licks off of records. Sometimes he would take his guitar to school. He did take lessons early in his development and later jazz lessons.



Slash practiced for up to 12 hours a day! His first song was "Smoke on the Water."



Steve Vai practiced 9-15 hours per day!

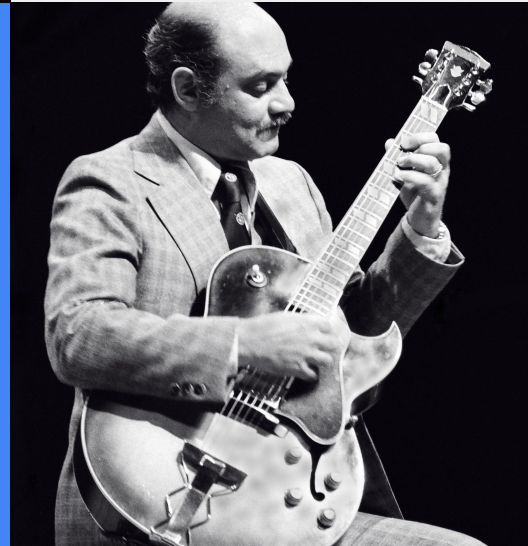
John Mayer spends 5-6 hours practicing every day! He is always learning and listening to the blues.



Zakk Wylde would spend up to 14 hours a day practicing! He would get home, practice, eat, do his homework, and then practice until late at night.



Eddie Van Halen practiced up to 8 hours a day and sometimes all day and all night! He put in over 30,000 to 40,000 hours!



Joe Pass practiced two hours at 6 am before school and another two hours after he got home from school.



Student of the Month

Josh

Josh has been my student for about two years. He plays bass and guitar as well as double bass in his school orchestra.


I've seen him grow tremendously in those two years, embracing styles that maybe he would not have chosen if not introduced to him. His love for music and his drive for perfection is going to take him very far! His ear, his ability to absorb the music, and his technical facility are all assets that Josh has that will help him in his journey into a career of music. His kindness and desire to help other people, especially in the Rock

Ensemble really has defined his character. He's a leader and that's why he is the player of the month at the Music Factory VA.

Parental Responsibilities

I once got a call from a parent saying “Brian will not put his guitar down!” Well, there is such a thing as balance!

- 1) Make sure your child practices at the same time every day and try to enforce a healthy practice routine.
- 2) It's not always fun. I have heard from many parents throughout my 35+ year teaching career that “I want it to be fun for my child and not like work.” Well, it is work and disciplining your child to practice is not a bad thing. Treat it like brushing their teeth. Once they get through the beginning stages they most likely will love it and you will not have to tell them to practice.
- 3) Sit in on your child's lessons. I encourage parents to attend the lessons themselves to learn a few things so they can help their child practice. You don't have to be an amazing guitarist to help. It is a great way to bond with your child (unless he/she wants privacy).
- 4) Share your musical influences and favorites with your child. What did you listen to when you were a teenager or now?
- 5) Pick one night out of the week and set up a small performance area and ask your child to play something that he or she has been working on. It doesn't have to be a full song. It can just be a few measures or a chord. It gives the student a weekly goal and acclimates them to playing in front of people (or the dog) which gives them confidence that will affect other areas of their life such as school.
- 6) Reward practice efforts with a small treat like pizza or cookies or watching a favorite movie together.



Musical Words of Wisdom

*Music is a higher revelation
than all wisdom and
philosophy.*

–Ludwig van Beethoven

**Pablo Casals, in his 80's,
was asked why he still
practiced 4-5 hours a day.
He said, "Because I think
I'm making progress."**

**If I were not a physicist, I
would probably be a
musician. I often think in
music. I live my daydreams
in music. I see my life in
terms of music.**

–Albert Einstein

All music should have no
other end and aim than the
glory of God and the soul's
refreshment; where this is
not remembered, there is no
real music but only a
devilish hubbub.

–Johann Sebastian Bach

*Practice only
on the days
you eat.*

Even
professional
musicians
started out as
beginners.

I'm not telling
you it will be
easy. I'm telling
you it will be
worth it.

It's not about
perfect, it's about
effort, and when
you bring that
effort every single
day, that's where
transformation
happens!

Be better
than you
were
yesterday.

IF I DON'T PRACTICE FOR A
DAY, I KNOW IT. IF I DON'T
PRACTICE FOR TWO DAYS, THE
CRITICS KNOW IT. AND IF I
DON'T PRACTICE FOR THREE
DAYS, THE PUBLIC KNOWS IT.

—LOUIS ARMSTRONG

There's no glory
in practice but
without practice
there is no
glory.

Repetition is
the key to
mastery.

You've got to learn your
instrument, then
practice, practice,
practice, and then when
you finally get on the
stage, forget it all and
just play.

—Charlie Parker

The beautiful thing
about learning is
that no one can take
it away from you.

—B.B. King

*It's taken all my
life to learn what
not to play.*

—Dizzy Gillespie

Education in music is
most sovereign
because, more than
anything else, rhythm
and harmony find
their way to the
innermost soul and
take strongest hold
upon it.

—Plato

*Music—that's been my
education. There's not a day
that goes by that I take it
for granted.*

—Billie Joe Armstrong

Music enhances the education of our children by helping them to make connections and broadening the depth with which they think and feel. If we are to hope for a society of culturally literate people, music must be a vital part of our children's education.

—Yo-Yo Ma

Music has the power of forming the character and should therefore be introduced into the education of the young.

—Aristotle

I always loved music; who has skill in this art is of good temperament, fitted for all things. We must teach music in schools; a schoolmaster must have skill in music.

—Martin Luther

Around the studio



Wesley Hockaday's piano students hard at work!



Maddie making progress on her musical goals and ambitions.



Evelyn rocks!!!



Josh practicing for his All-State Orchestra audition on double bass



Francis practicing for the Aguado Classical Guitar Competition.



Ellie starred recently as Wednesday Addams in a production of "The Addams Family" at Battlefield Middle School. Congratulations, Ellie! Our students are multi-talented!



Rock Ensemble rehearsals are going great!
The summer session will begin in June. We are always looking for talented musicians to audition!



About us

The Music Factory VA provides music education from professionally accredited teachers to students of all ages and musical backgrounds. We offer both private lessons and ensembles. We can accommodate students interested in any style and on any level. We believe that giving students the opportunity to develop skills in a professional performance environment not only encourages students to practice but also builds social and communication skills that will carry into all areas of their lives.

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