

To: Students of Dr. Paul Wirth
From: Jeanne Barrett, Asst. Artistic Director of CMMS
Re: Studio policy and information update – 2007-2008

MUST READING FOR ALL STUDENTS!

Congratulations! If you have been accepted by, or are a continuing student of Dr. Paul Wirth, you are obviously a talented musician with “pianistic potential” - and I’m sure you are headed for a very exciting year working with him! **Please read the following information whether you are a new student or not** -- it may well save you some “wonder” later:

Studio Philosophy

Musical: The purpose of music is to express ourselves. Music is a language of direct emotional expression which, rather than being too vague for words, is actually too precise for words as Mendelssohn said! “If a picture is worth a thousand words, a melody is worth a million!” as Dr. Wirth likes to say. In fact there is no prose, no poetry, nor even any other art form that can more directly express the deepest of our feelings than can music. It is the noblest of arts. Our goal is to develop the ability to speak the amazing language of music!

Pedagogical: Dr. Wirth’s primary goal in teaching you is to give you the best information you can get to progress the most you can in the time you have allotted to practice. The presence of highly skilled players in his studio is one of the “guarantees” you are getting this kind of information at your lessons. It is also his goal to inspire you to do your best and enjoy your level of ability. Because he teaches so many levels of students, he encourages you not to compare yourself to others who are at different levels - especially in master classes and musicales. This is crucial to your happiness in his studio - and in life itself. If you find yourself falling into the “comparison pit” please tell him about it so that you can put a check on these thoughts. Comparing yourself to others is unwarranted and destructive behavior for amateurs and professionals alike. Our work is to do the best we can with what we have. Dr. Wirth is proud of every one of his students and does what he feels best for each and every one. Please be proud of yourselves and thankful for the gifts God has given you!

Ten Benefits of an Applied Music Education: Know why you do what you do!!

1. Music makes you smarter. It lights up your whole brain, simultaneously using cognitive, coordinative and aesthetic faculties - and simultaneously using both hemispheres.
2. Music is a discipline, requiring that we sometimes do what we don’t feel like doing at the moment. Fortunately, there are great rewards, because ...
3. Music is a language of direct emotional expression (above!).
4. Music is a service - especially to organizations like churches, Rotary, Kiwanis and also to assisted living centers and nursing homes.
5. Applied music develops performances skills. Whatever we do in life, if we do it well, we will be asked to do it in front of other people. In applied music study, we learn how to prepare for and deal with performance anxiety.
6. Music is a science. The circle of fifths and the overtone series are universal scientific phenomena with which we connect emotionally while making music.
7. Music is a social activity when it comes to playing in ensemble with others. We learn how to work as a team. It also fills the home with a festive atmosphere during holidays.
8. Music is an applied skill - teaching us how to learn a craft (e.g., a Doctor learning surgical skills).
9. Music is fun - and a resume item for college admission!
10. Music is a career - one which must be started earlier than almost any other.

About **Performance Opportunities:** From time to time, opportunities for performances are offered by outside organizations (YPSCA, The St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, conductors etc.) to Dr. Wirth who must recommend a student to fill a need. His recommendations are based on the performances alone of his students - not on their personalities or relationship with him. At times these are very significant opportunities and he must use his best musical judgment to select the right performance for the occasion. This is his responsibility and his decisions are not made lightly

Studio Policies

Lesson Procedure: At your lesson time, enter the studio and be seated quietly. This way your lesson time will be noted. Be courteous of the next person's lesson time and leave promptly when your lesson is over. If you are late for your lesson, you will lose that time as the next lesson will begin on time. Also please remember: you are paying tuition for the overall guidance and pedagogy Dr. Wirth provides. He spends many hours working on fingerings, interpretive possibilities and other pedagogical considerations outside of your lesson that have a direct effect upon your studies. For example, while he may spend lesson time on fingering your music (many teachers spend entire lessons doing this important work), he often does this at other times, saving you lesson time. If you miss five or more minutes of lesson time for whatever reason, remember these things. Nevertheless, if you ever feel you are being shortchanged, Dr. Wirth is very sensitive about this and would like you to tell him. If you are taping a lesson for review during the week, please remember the recording is "for your ears and/or eyes only". If it is to be heard or seen by anyone else, please ask about it.

Practicing: is the responsibility of every pianist. After discussing your goals with Dr. Wirth, the amount of practice needed to achieve them will be discussed. Once that amount is arrived at, he will expect that you are doing it. If you are not, you must tell him because you probably need to readjust your "goals"!

About **physical pain:** You are learning from Dr. Wirth the easiest possible way to play the piano. Still, overuse can cause pain in some people for various reasons. Never ever practice in pain! If you experience any abnormal pains - sharp shooting pains, deep aching pains, buzzing or cramping pains in your body while practicing, STOP IMMEDIATELY and contact Dr. Wirth.

NEVER EVER PRACTICE IN PAIN!!

Performing:

Musicales: are normally held once a month. In the winter months there will be candlelight to perform by in St. Cloud! You are expected to attend at least four, whether you are performing or not. Dr. Wirth will confer with you in lessons as to what you might play. If, for any reason you are scheduled to perform and cannot be there, please contact him and leave a message as to why.

Salon se Leve: If you live in the Twin Cities area, you should attend at least two Salon se Leve concerts this year. Hearing the chosen first place winners perform in this setting is both inspiring and instructive! Please ask Dr. Wirth for the Salon se Leve schedule; you may find it on your Studio Calendar as well.

Recitals: ... are held at CMMS usually twice a year. Participation is not "mandatory" but these performance opportunities are a very important part of your musical education. So many valuable skills are learned by performing in recitals! Dress is semiformal and every student is expected to stay the full length of the recital. Numerous recital times are offered for your convenience so there is no reason to leave early. Anyone asking to leave early will be dismissed before the recital begins. Anyone autonomously leaving early will need to explain their actions in their next lesson.

About **Competitions:** The reason we enter contests is to challenge ourselves to play our best -- no more, no less! They are just a tool to help us sharpen our performing skills. Any other goal - especially that of "winning" is unwise. This is because contests are intrinsically subjective and unpredictable (you can play terrifically and not get anything - and play with mediocrity and win a top prize!). If you can enter with the object to play your best - and that's all - then Dr. Wirth encourages you to take advantage of this kind of opportunity. If not, he strongly encourages you to forego contests.

All information about contests (applications, deadlines and repertoire requirements) for any competitions you may want to enter is **your own responsibility**. Normal procedure for entering is to bring the requirements to Dr. Wirth and discuss the feasibility of entering and the repertoire choices. This information has been sent to you via e-mail, and will be posted on the CMMS web site

www.cmmusicschool.org

which is updated in mid-late summer for the following school year, and will be available shortly.

Accompaniments: Due to the teaching and performing demands on his schedule, Dr. Wirth does not accompany any of his students in competitions. The last year he did this, he carried sixteen accompaniments - so this gives you an idea why! In the Twin Cities, Dr. Megan Wallace is Dr. Wirth's approved accompanist, provided you can honor the policy below*. Here in St. Cloud, Dr. Jim Dennihan and Jeanne Barrett (me!) have been providing this service. You may ask about us through Dr. Wirth.

Make-up Lessons: Missed lessons are made up for sickness and emergency only. Lessons that Dr. Wirth cancels are made up, with one exception: Every teacher at CMMS is entitled to one sick day per student per year - this paid-for lesson will not be made up. It is your responsibility to honor this policy and to keep track of any valid make-ups you have due you.

Borrowed materials: From time to time, Dr. Wirth may loan you a score or a CD or a book. PLEASE return it WITHIN ONE WEEK as these items are very valuable to other students as well - especially scores with fingerings in them! If you find something you have not returned for a while, it is far better to return it than keep it on your conscience! Dr. Wirth is always happy to see returned materials!

Your Instrument: ... Dr. Wirth strongly recommends that you work on a real **grand piano**. At every level of teaching, performing and practicing there is nothing that can replace the pedaling and touch of a grand piano to build real pianistic skill. Even if it is an old grand and the tone doesn't equal that of a new - say, Kawai - vertical piano, the advantage of a grand's precise pedaling and direct touch will far outweigh any discrepancies in of tone. If the "pedal is the soul of the piano" as Anton Rubinstein once said, and the touch can bring out the "smallest intentions and grandest desires of our hearts" as Sidney Foster said, we can all avoid the "If only I knew then what I know now" when later it becomes evident exactly how essential it was! He feels it's his responsibility to help you find the right instrument for you and would be delighted to help.

Dropping Procedure: In accordance with CMMS policy, one month's notice must be given if it becomes necessary for a student to drop his or her piano lessons.

Contacting Dr. Wirth: is difficult at times! The best thing to do is persistently leave messages on his cell phone (320) 420-0164, or his machine at home (320) 363-7356 (Wednesday through Saturday only) - about one per day if you really need to talk with him. Sometimes he is able to answer the phone at 11 p.m. or at 9:15 a.m.

Again - congratulations on being accepted into Dr. Wirth's studio - I look forward to seeing you all in the fall, or meeting you if I have not already! If you have not completed the registration form already, **please do so now by asking for one from the CMMS business office (320.255.0318)** -- even if you are not planning to enter contests and competitions, I need your personal information so that I can easily distribute updates to you! Feel free to e-mail me at jeannerbarrett@yahoo.com

Thank you!
Jeanne Barrett, Assistant Artistic Director of CMMS

Dr. Wirth's 2006-2007 fees:

St Cloud:	Twin Cities:	Associate Instruction (with Dr. Wallace EO Week - TC only)
1 hour: \$62	1 hour: \$72	1 hour: \$62
3/4 hour: \$46.50	3/4hour: \$54	3/4hour \$46.50
1/2hour: \$31	1/2hour: \$36	

Please direct any questions about tuition to the business office, 320.255.0318.

*Accompanist Policy for Dr. Megan Wallace

As Dr. Wirth’s first choice in accompanists, Dr. Megan Wallace is a particularly sensitive and accomplished collaborative artist. Working with her requires an accordingly sensitive and rigorously followed procedure. Her fees are most reasonable for the expertise with which she delivers these services. The only mitigating factors are her poor business sense and an extremely modest estimation of her value to you. Those of Dr. Wirth’s students who can strictly adhere to these guidelines (below) can benefit from her skills. Those who cannot, will definitely need to find another accompanist.

Dr. Wallace’s fees are:

<u>Service</u>	<u>Fee</u>
Musical performance	\$ 30.00
Any other performance (regardless of length)	\$ 60.00
Minimum rehearsal fee for one student (30 minutes or less).....	\$ 20.00
Each 15 minutes of rehearsal beyond one half hour (or portion thereof).....	\$ 9.00
Travel/Long Distance performance	Fee to be determined one month in advance of travel/performance.

Guidelines

1. It is the responsibility of the student/parent to keep track of the rehearsals and performances!
2. At the conclusion of each service, a check for the appropriate amount is to be made out to “Dr. Megan Wallace” and given to her immediately. She has promised to receive these graciously.

N.B. Failure to adhere to these guidelines will result in the loss of Dr. Wallace’s services.