



instructor corner

Isai Trejo, B.A., Violin Instructor

It's Just Intonation

3 Reasons You Should Practice With a Drone

A drone is a continuous pitch or stack of pitches that plays for most or all of a musical piece. It is what the bagpipes do for Scottish anthems or what the tanpura does for Indian ragas. I have found a lot of utility in practicing with a drone and will share with you 3 reasons why you might want to try it.

Intonation

This is the most useful reason. A drone pulls the musician towards a tonal reference point and allows them to hear all the intervals from the root, which helps develop our sense of intonation (the accuracy with which one hits pitches) and tonality (our sense of a harmonic/melodic landscape).

Improvisation

This is the most exciting reason. Drones can help us explore going up and down different scales and modes to explore what kind of sound we can create in the moment. I'll give you a clue as to how to start creating unique sounds: Pick

any scale, omit any 2 or 3 scale degrees of that scale, go up and down starting at the drone's pitch, leaving and finding it again in different octaves. With a drone, you might be surprised how freely you start creating!

Meditation

This is the deepest reason. Practicing with a drone can be calming for the musician and help to develop a meditative state of mind. This is good for anybody, as it can help one pay attention, listen, and stay calm during performances or otherwise. Expressing music in its simplest form, a single vibrating tone, might be more profound and beautiful than you imagine.

So turn on your tuner's "fork" function, YouTube search "music drone," or bust out the bagpipes! Drone practicing is for all musicians.

Equal Temperament vs Just Intonation

You're singing your scales along with a drone and you are loving the sound of hitting those wonderfully harmonious thirds and sixths. Now you go to your piano and try singing the same scale along with it, but you find those thirds and sixths don't sound quite as crisp as they just did. What's going on? Were you singing out of tune the entire time? Maybe. Or maybe you are hearing the tiny difference between equal temperament tuning and just intonation.

The piano is a marvelously dynamic instrument capable of playing rich, complex chords over seven octaves. To accomplish this, it essentially uses equal temperament tuning to divide the octave into 12 equally spaced pitches and then translates these pitches across the entire keyboard. This creates an even sound across all the notes, making it easier to play in different keys and form a more

consistent sound when playing with different instruments. However, the intervals that are created are not completely in tune with the natural harmonics. These natural harmonics are what you will discover if you sing, play trombone, theremin, or any bowed string instrument and truly hone your tuning. If you're a vocalist and you find that singing your scales along with a chromatic tuner or a piano doesn't quite satisfy your ear, try practicing with a drone. You might like the difference.

Equal temperament and just tuning are *QUITE* close; in fact, it is something of a marvel and a riddle as to why nature would have these two systems be so close yet not exactly align. See if you can solve it. In the process, you will be making beautiful music.



Staff Birthdays



APR 6 Marta Perinne's Birthday



APR 10 Sam Bryson's Birthday



APR 15 Korbin Priest's Birthday



APR 17 Hannah Petersen's Birthday



APR 21 Jake Ramirez's Birthday



APR 22 Lilly Schnieders's Birthday

Recital Sign-up goes live
on April 7 at 2pm



samusicacademy.com/signup

student of the month

Cassandra P.

is a caring and hardworking student. She always comes prepared and ready to learn, is fearless with any learning challenges, and loves to perform despite being nervous. She learns to overcome her nerves one step at a time and succeed. She is also a caring sister as she supports her sibling in her own musical journey.

Dr. Maria Crystalia, Piano Instructor



congratulations



Kora S., student of Andi Tupponce, placed 3rd in the Petroff Piano Competition

This was Kora's very first competition. We're so happy to see all her hard work pay off. Congratulations, Kora!

congrats!

Thank you to everyone who applied for the Flores Guitar Scholarship. Congratulations to the winner and new owner of an Ibanez acoustic electric guitar - **Steven E!** Steven is a student of Jake Ramirez and a member of Jacob Vallejo's student band, Intrepid. Congrats, Steven! We know you'll put the guitar to good use.

