

Best APProaches to Teaching Music

Welcome MTNA friends! Here you'll find links to and notes about the apps we talked about in the session, as well as quite a few bonus ones that deserve honorable mention. Enjoy!

If you want to follow up with us later, here's where you can find us.

- Jennifer Foxx: <https://musiceducatorresources.com>
 - Leah Drake: <https://www.vibrantvalleymusicstudio.com>
 - Marie Lee: <https://www.musicalityschools.com>
 - Nicola Cantan: <https://vibrantmusicteaching.com>
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ORGANIZATION

ForScore (iOS)

I use ForScore a lot in my studio! I store all my flashcards (Minterval and 60-Second Challenges) in there as well as digital copies of many pieces my students are learning and teacher duet books. – Nicola

I use ForScore every single day! It's a clean way to store sheet music and flashcards. I pre-load tabs for each class so I can quickly access the relevant material. I also project my iPad screen on the TV so we can all look at things together in a group class. If a student forgets their book, I can also quickly bring up the music on my iPad so we don't have to print anything. - Leah

ForScore does so much more than meets the eye. Not only is it a great organizational tool for your music and theory sheets, but you can use it with your page turner device when you play your music, annotate, create set lists, bookmark, flag, set a performance mode so accidental page turns don't happen, crop, rearrange the score by deleting, duplicating (makes handling repeats easier), inserting or split a file up into several parts. And so much more! Highly recommend it! - Jennifer

COMPOSING

Garageband (iOS)

Garageband can be used in so many different ways. I use it most in group workshops and buddy lessons. I get the students to create a chord progression and then loop it to allow them to improvise with it as a backing track. –

Nicola

Noteflight (Web)

Noteflight is a great tool for composing. Students can share their compositions with you, create collaboration projects, practice notating and so much more. Noteflight also has the ability to do letters inside the note heads. You can scale the notation however big you want. It's an easy tool for both students and teachers. I have the premium membership (currently \$49 a year) and highly recommend it. There is also the Noteflight Learn option (currently \$69 a year) for schools. Try out the free version first to see what you think. The free version allows you to create up to 10 scores, use basic notation and formatting options, share scores publicly, and view or join groups. -

Jennifer

EAR TRAINING

Bell Game ([iOS](#))

The concept is simple: the app plays a tune and then you play it back on little (virtual) deskbells. There are quite a few levels. It starts with just two notes – do and re – and gradually increases in number of notes and tune length. – *Nicola*

ADAPTABLE

YouTube ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

I use YouTube almost daily in my piano classes for rhythm activities, bucket drumming, playalongs for bells/boomwhackers/chimes, ear training games, inspirational or creative performances, music history, and recordings of pieces students are learning. A lot of composers and music publishers now have their own YouTube channels if you're looking for recordings or tutorials of specific pieces. – *Marie*

Favorite channels:

[Musication](#) rhythm, boomwhacker activities

[Sammy Foster Bucket Drumming](#)

[Rhythm Recess](#)

[Ready Go Music](#)

[Swick's Classroom](#) boomwhackers

[Music with Mr Reyna](#)

[Kristin Martin](#)

[The Piano Guys](#)

[Peter Bence](#)

[Pentatonix](#)

[Savvy Music Studio](#) marketing, retention

MUSIC THEORY

Chordify ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

Chordify is a fun way to introduce the chord progression of almost any piece that's on YouTube. Chord symbols and diagrams are shown on a scrolling screen while the piece is playing in the background, giving instant satisfaction to students as they're playing along with the "real" thing. The site is free, allowing three songs each day. Annual membership of \$25, gives you unlimited plays and chord charts for printing. Very popular with my preteens, teens and adults. – *Marie*

SproutBeat ([Web](#))

20% off first payment of all plans with code MTNA2024

Sproutbeat has thousands of short games and worksheets. I use Sproutbeat during music lab time with students. It has thousands of options in all different levels. You can use it for a quick review during the lesson or combine different games for a longer review. I've also used it online with students with success. - *Jennifer*

Playing a game in a lesson or class only takes a few minutes but is a great reinforcer and motivator for students. The developer continues to release new content almost weekly, and is open to teacher suggestions for content. Games also coordinate with popular method books. - *Marie*

SproutBeat is an incredibly extensive and engaging platform that makes theory fun and exciting. The vast library of games and worksheets is constantly growing and allows teachers to provide subject-specific activities to meet the needs of each student. I love that students earn points for completing assignments. They can exchange their points for prizes and are celebrated for being on the weekly and monthly leaderboards. - *Leah*

SIGHT READING

Piano Maestro ([iOS](#))

I encourage students to work on Piano Maestro as a way to add variety to their weekly assignments. I don't usually use the app in class other than to introduce it to new students and show them how it works. I encourage students to learn songs on their own to complete the 30 Piece Challenge. I also appreciate how the developers host Summer Camp as a practice incentive - *Leah*

I have been using Piano Maestro before it was called Piano Maestro (*Fun Fact: it used to be called Piano Mania*) I love the "learn" steps which help students break down the piece in smaller bite size chunks. I've held full piano recitals using the Piano Maestro app! So fun! I've held this style of recital both outside and inside. I add all the performance pieces under the "studio" student account I set up. And add them inside the home challenge so all the pieces are ready to play when it's their turn. - *Jennifer*

This app was the reason for my first iPad purchase because it's so worth it. Thousands of pieces in all genres that get students excited about sight reading. They offer a very reasonably priced studio subscription that you can share with every student you teach. One of my most used apps! - *Marie*

TomPlay ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

I've found this app a lot more recently and my students and I are loving it! It's essentially a sheet music catalog with playalong features. There are many apps like that out there but this is the best one I've come across so far. The sheet music selection is really good (it's not like they have everything under the sun but what they do have is popular with students) and the way the playalong works is very effective. My favorite thing is the loop feature which encourages students to practice tricky spots. - *Nicola*

SCALES

Super Metronome Groovebox ([iOS](#))

Drumbeats are often a much better choice than metronomes – students find it more fun, more musical and, in many cases, easier to play along with. This app has a long name but that's the most complicated thing about it. It's pretty intuitive and you can use it to accompany scales, pieces, improvisation, you name it! – *Nicola*

So much more fun than a regular metronome! I use this almost daily in my classes for scale work and chord progressions, or working on keeping a steady beat in pieces. One of my favorites! - *Marie*

Musiclock ([iOS](#))

Musiclock has some great backing tracks for scales and improvisation. The track speed cannot be adjusted, unfortunately, but it's a beautiful design and the tracks are really good. – *Nicola*

I love how MusiClock displays scales as a continuous geography on the keyboard. I use this to help students understand the concept of playing "in a key". The tracks are very well done and I love that they loop indefinitely. It's a great improv tool and also nice for general background music. - *Leah*

Fun tool for improvisation or accompanying scales. Very easy to pull out quickly to use in a lesson. I wish they had more accompaniment tracks, but the ones they have are well done. - *Marie*

NOTE NAMES

Note Rush ([iOS](#))

One of my favourite Note Rush features is that you can set up a link to send to your student so it preloads a certain set of notes. I use this for our 60-Second Challenges so they can practice the correct note range through the app. – *Nicola*

I love using Note Rush to drill Landmark Notes when we start discussing the staff. I'll set it up as a quick filler activity if we have a few extra minutes in the middle/end of class. I also set it up as a station that students can rotate through. When we start discussing how to name notes across the staff, I'll use this app to quiz students - they can either name the note verbally (I'll play it if it's correct) or play the answer when they're ready to extend that challenge. In a group, I'll have each student name one note before going to the back of the line. The group competes against their best time and it's always a ton of fun! - *Leah*

Students enjoy the different themes they can choose in Note Rush. I love the ability to customize the notes if desired. - *Jennifer*

Staff Wars Live ([iOS](#))

Star Wars type theme where staff notes scroll across the screen and students play the correct note on the piano to "blast" it before it reaches the other side. Scrolling speeds up as the game continues making it even more exciting for the students. Customizable with however many notes you choose to work on, which makes this really flexible for all reading levels. - *Marie*

NinGenius ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

Sometimes you just need some ninjas! The theme is super fun for kiddos and it has a good range of customisation options for the notes and answers. – *Nicola*

The web version is super affordable for each student to have their own account and for the teacher to monitor progress. I think this would make a fun summer studio challenge. - *Marie*

Note Quest ([iOS](#))

This is one of the few apps that covers intervals as well as note names. Great for developing strong, well-rounded readers. – *Nicola*

I really like how this app focuses on training students to read landmark notes and intervals, which are key skills to note reading fluency. - *Marie*

CREATIVITY

Chrome Music Lab ([Web](#))

Chrome Music lab is a free website that allows students to explore musically. Students "experiment" with different activities through the science of sound. – *Jennifer*

Musescore ([Web](#))

Every year my students do a composing project and we notate this in Musescore. This does wonders for their music theory which is why I've put it in this category! My students ages 9 and older notate the whole thing themselves. If they're a bit younger I do a lot of the actual clicking but I show them what I'm doing and let them do a few bits. They love seeing it instantly play back what they wrote. - *Nicola*

Loopimal ([iOS](#)) and Bandimal ([iOS](#))

Clever apps for young children to learn about making music – melodies and rhythms – with one, two or four animals. The creative looping possibilities are endless with no right or wrong. Perfect for ages 3 and up. - *Marie*

BUSINESS

Vivid Practice App ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

Web version for teachers
iOS and Android versions only for students.

Full disclosure: this is my own app! But I truly love using it. The interface is clean and modern, but powerful. Vivid Practice helps you keep all your student assignments organised and up-to-date and the app lets your students access your notes, videos, audio and other attachments easily. Vivid Practice also has 4 different practice modes that helps your students learn to structure their practice more efficiently. - *Nicola*

Practice Space ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

Practice Space is both a web based app and iOS and Android. It includes a media and assignment library (audio, video, PDF, JPG, etc.). Students can earn points/awards, including the ability to customize your own awards. Practice Space includes a practice leaderboard, a practice video feed students can share with you, chat groups between you and your individual students, plus groups you create between students. *I like to host my asynchronous lessons in PracticeSpace. Assignments are all ready to go in the assignment library complete with video lessons, and any supporting material they need. I also like to upload summer Practice Challenges in advance.

Save 50% your first two months after the free trial when you use the code: foxx50. - *Jennifer*

My students and I appreciate that this can be used on ALL devices and that everything my students need to be successful is in one place. No more emailing or texting assignments, or parents sending me their student's videos for feedback. And no more printing and writing in assignment books as everything is digital. - *Marie*

My Music Staff ([Web](#))

While I use Vivid Practice for organising everything to do with students and assignments, My Music Staff is for everything to do with the parents and teachers. We have our timetable on here with our four different teachers and I keep it up-to-date. This helps me stay organised with

scheduling changes and calculating payroll each month. I also store all my student information here and use it to manage my waiting list. - *Nicola*

MMS is my main organizational platform. I use it for scheduling/attendance, lesson notes, tracking completed repertoire for the 30 Piece Challenge, tracking student stats and contact info, automated invoicing and auto-pay, new student intake forms, archiving lesson plans and lesson note templates - the list goes on! I make sure to train my families about how to access their Online Resources, Lesson Notes, and the calendar to update their attendance and book classes. - *Leah*

Lots of features for only \$15 a month, but I only use it for invoicing and collecting automatic payments, which is reason enough. The printed reports for tax time are an immense help too. - *Marie*

Canva ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

I use Canva to make every single graphic in my business from class announcements, to marketing materials, to custom designs for awards and practice challenges. I love how versatile and easy it is to use. - *Leah*

Canva will make you look like a professional graphic designer. Very cost-effective for the premium version if you can create a "team" of four people and share the cost, but the free version still has a lot to offer and is a good place to start. - *Marie*

Canva is fun and super easy to use. There is a free version for teachers. (MTNA membership card is valid as proof of teacher verification.) Read more:

<https://www.canva.com/education/> - *Jennifer*

Loom ([Web](#), [iOS](#), [Android](#))

If you create tutorial videos for your students, you need Loom! It has saved me so many hours of work. No more filming on your phone and then uploading to YouTube. You film directly into Loom and then copy and share the link. Couldn't be easier! - *Marie*