

## Commendations

‘The whole focus on God and learning of music is what we have been longing for. It ties in with our homeschooling philosophy of a Christ-centred education.’  
*Sally Tay*

‘It’s an overall excellent program interacting God’s Word with music.’  
*Sophie Athan*

‘*The Elements of Music* course brings music back to its basic elements so that people of all ages can learn about music and God. Teaching music through the elements helps avoid a lot of confusion for people. I know many college graduates who would benefit from this course.’  
*Matthew Field (teacher)*

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# More Than Music

WENDY HILL

When I was a young music student studying for exams I had an old dictionary which defined music as ‘a succession of sounds so arranged that they are pleasing to the ear.’ God has shown me a far bigger picture which has inspired *The Elements of Music*.

‘Education is the unfolding of God — His character and His creation.’ (Peter Frogley) Nowadays I see music as like a beautiful rose. It grows and blossoms and as each petal is removed, we see deeper into the seed and where a new plant and life begin. I am amazed at this exquisite design and how it reflects so much of its Creator. It is exactly the same with music. You can go much deeper than the surface level exams, performance, theory, practising, enjoyment and the satisfaction of singing or playing an instrument.

A closer study of the basic building blocks — the elements of music — reveals much about the Great Composer. God designed each music element. In every element, we see evidence of His character and signature. The very first music element is the humble sound wave. A sound wave is made of God’s basic building blocks, molecules bumping into each other in a wave pattern

and carrying music to our ears. Sound waves teach us that God is a Giver and Provider. Colossians 1:16 tells He created all things visible and invisible — molecules including sound waves.

Music is God's gift to teach us about Himself. As we discover more, we discover God. Romans 1:20 tells us that, 'Since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities — His eternal power and divine nature — have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made so that men are without excuse.' (NIV) Each of the fourteen elements of music has a message through revelation about its Creator.

In the four year *Elements of Music* program the fourteen elements of music are unfolded including simple definitions, explanations, God messages and supporting scriptures. The program is written for eight to twelve year old children, although it is usable by other ages.

Music is much more than food for the soul. *The Elements of Music* aims to feed the whole man — body, soul and spirit.

**For the body:** reading, writing, listening and basic keyboard skills.

**For the soul, the intellectual and understanding part:** musical analysis, memorising definitions with actions, puzzles, games, flashcards, charts, colouring, review exercises and musical examples to enjoy.

**For the spirit, the part designed in God's image:** creativity in composing simple music, scripture memorisation and training to discern what is acceptable to God.

God designed us to appreciate art and music. We have the physical ability to sing and play an instrument. We have the emotional and intellectual ability to feel, express, analyse and understand music. We also have the spiritual perspective and gift of creativity to combine the music elements in a variety of ways.

Twenty-five years of music teaching including eight years of homeschooling have taught me —

1. There is an imbalance in the way music is taught with an over-emphasis on knowledge, performance, humanistic philosophies and commercialism. These focus on body/soul and neglect the spirit. Without a solid spiritual foundation, music becomes just another tool in the inventory of humanism.
2. There is a lack of music programs with a solid Biblical perspective.
3. Parents believe music is important enough to be taught as part of the core curriculum along with mathematics, language and science etc.
4. Parents are often discouraged from private music lessons by the expense, discipline required for practice and the emphasis on performance.
5. It is assumed that one must play an instrument. Playing an instrument well is impressive but not essential for a basic music education and learning about God.
6. Many parents sense that there must be more to music than what the world offers.

This article is entitled 'More than Music' because *The Elements of Music* teaches much more than playing an instrument. The four year course provides a broad overview of music from a Biblical perspective linking the whole of God's creation with other subjects. The course links music to:

**Languages:** through music reading, writing, verbalising, poetry and meter.

**Science:** through sound waves of different instruments.

**History:** of music history from Creation to Twenty-first Century, timelines with hymnwriters alongside the classical composers, secular and Church history.

**Musical Styles:** Different types of music and when they were written.

**Geography:** Maps showing the spread of western music.

**Maths:** Rhythm maths, relationships between notes in scales.

**Physical Coordination:** Basic keyboard skills.

**Aural Training:** CDs with hundreds of aural questions identifying music elements and developing listening skills, how to build your own music collection.

**Creativity:** Composing melodies and rhythms, putting scripture to music.

**Method of Teaching:** A multi-sensory approach based on Moses' method of teaching the Ten Commandments in Deuteronomy 6:1–9. This involves seeing (reading, music), hearing (listening), touch (writing and playing) and taste/talking (verbalising).

**Music Fundamentals:** definitions, God-messages and supporting scriptures for the fourteen elements.

**Activities:** These incorporate the four senses using colouring, music dictation, flashcards, puzzles, wordfinds, true/false questions, multiple choice, charts, board game.

**Enjoyment:** Satisfaction and pleasure come from learning and feeding the spirit, soul and body with eternal truths rather than gimmicky pictures and 'edutainment'.

Education is the unfolding of God — His character and His creation. *The Elements of Music* course is unique in that it takes students deeper than the outer petals of the 'music-rose.' God's signature is written in the design of all of the elements of music. The manual in this music course is the Bible and the Music-Maker is God.

For only \$3.50 per week, where else would you find such a comprehensive music program?