The Benefits of Joining a Community Music Ensemble - for Children and Adults.

My best High School memories are those of band and orchestra. I was a member of the band, select band, marching band, orchestra and even a jazz orchestra called Studio Orchestra.

We were a close knit group of students whose dedication showed in our many performances. Marching Band highlights included a performance in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade in New York City and a parade on "Main Street" in Disney World. Studio Orchestra gave us the opportunity to learn the jazz standards and perform with well-known professional jazz artists from NYC. What a great learning experience for a teenager!

I encourage my clarinet students to participate in their school band, jazz band or orchestra. Many of them are also members of community youth ensembles in Boston and RI. These ensembles provide an advanced level band or orchestra experience. They perform throughout the school year, and some of them do European performing tours during the summer.

Since these ensembles are comprised of students from many area towns, they are usually larger than many school ensembles and have fuller instrumentation including low brass, percussion, and double reeds. This gives students the opportunity to play more repertoire and experience the sound of a full band or orchestra.

My adult students also enjoy playing in community bands and orchestras which give them an opportunity to continue playing an instrument they learned as children, or to develop a new skill as adults.

Being a member of a community music ensemble gives musicians a sense of accomplishment, camaraderie and self-esteem. Players learn from each other and are motivated by those who are more advanced. Ensemble playing gives students an opportunity to use and expand upon the techniques learned in private lessons. Most importantly, it is an enjoyable educational experience.

For more information about community ensembles visit www.elizabethleehey.com .