

## Lagond Music School

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Merriam - Webster defines a musician as: "...a composer, conductor, or performer of music..."

Wikipedia states that, "... a musician is a person who writes, performs, or makes music."

Dictionary.com's definition is: "...a person who makes music a profession, especially as a performer...."

Meeting Charlie Lagond made me feel as if I was meeting a true musician. He exemplifies all the above definitions. I could tell from Charlie's first few sentences that music is his passion. He reminded me of Jackson Browne. Perhaps it is Charlie's slight build, youthful appearance and welcoming demeanor, or the fact that music seemed to ooze out of his pores. I couldn't help but be impressed by the scads of album covers that hang in the entrance of the Lagond Music School (LMS). Charlie, a proficient and accomplished professional musician has traveled the world sharing his art with all who care to listen.

Charlie immediately put me at ease. As I was waiting for a staff member to give me a tour of the facility, Charlie introduced himself and proceeded to show me around. He was approachable, knowledgeable, gracious and humble. I might not have pegged him as a musician until I spent a few moments speaking with him. Charlie has that rhythmic motion that only a musician seems to possess. A great musician's timing is impeccable, they seem to speak in a cadence that is almost like a song.

Unlike most music schools, LMS focuses on Jazz, Latin, Funk and Rock music. A Not for Profit Organization, LMS offers students an opportunity to get a taste of the "real" music scene. Charlie and 18 other noted and professional musicians instruct the 120 students in the 2,000 square foot studio of LMS at 9 Haven Street in Elmsford. The faculty is active in the real music world. The classes are taught from a working musician's point of view.

It was a balmy Thursday, August afternoon when I interviewed Charlie and his wife Rosanne Lana, Co-Founder and Director of LMS. Haven Street in Elmsford is located in a fairly industrial section of town. I was certain I had the right address but it didn't strike me as a traditional location for a music school. I wondered if I was in the right spot. As I parked my car beneath the studio, I could hear music coming from the open second story window and I was assured, I'd indeed arrived.

Being buzzed in from above, as I climbed the staircase I was immediately struck with the sensation that I was in NYC. Well, clearly I was in Elmsford but the vibe of what the Lagond's have done with the studio makes you forget you are in Westchester County. There is a creativity and vibrancy that is palatable. Charlie and his wife, Roseanne, began Lagond Music School years ago out of their White Plains home. They have been mentoring successful students and professional musicians since 2002.

The studio offers students an opportunity to enhance their musical skills. Charlie and his staff provide instruction on any instrument, including voice. The Lagond's goal is for a student to become proficient in reading music, music theory, and performing music if they are so inclined.

At LMS, the musicians focus on Funk, Latin, Jazz and Rock music. Although it is not a "Classical" music school, Charlie strongly feels that the students receive a strong foundation in music. In fact, music theory is a part of every class. Both Rosanne and Charlie have high expectations of what their students derive from the program. Students are expected to be disciplined, organized and to recognize a sense of community amongst their fellow musicians.

As I traveled from room to room, I listened to students playing all type of instruments; guitars, drums, horns, keyboard and some were using their voice. It was clear that this school is all about the kids and music.

All the students were respectful, cooperative, bright, and appeared professional. These are some of the goals that Rosanne and Charlie have set out to accomplish. Not only do they want their students to be proficient musically, there is a world out there that these kids will have to function within. Knowing how to shake someone's hand, what to wear to an audition, and how to present one self, are equally as important. Roseanne stated, "We want the kids to be responsible and prepared". It doesn't matter how talented a musician you are, if you don't show up on time, you won't have a job.

Miles Applebaum, a local Armonk resident, is a student of LMS. He was participating in a jam session with five other students. They were playing a tune that James Brown made famous, "I Feel Good". Miles and his fellow students were all preparing to enter their senior year in high school or they had recently begun college. LMS conservatory program prepares students for their auditions to universities. This year alone, LMS students were awarded \$880,000 in scholarships.

I had the opportunity to speak with Miles and I asked him how he discovered LMS. Like many others, Miles heard about LMS from a friend, another local Armonk resident. I asked Miles what sets LMS apart from other music schools. Again, Miles spoke so professionally and eloquently for a 17 year old, I was quite impressed. Here is his response,

"At LMS I appreciate the sincerity and genuine interest that the faculty has towards its students. The teachers get to know you. The people are focused and I haven't found that in other schools. Every teacher is a professional musician. As a student here for a year, I began with private guitar lessons. Now I take Jazz guitar with Russ DeFilippis, who is amazing, and I am also studying the keyboard."

Miles intends to apply this fall to NYU, Berklee College of Music, Temple University and the New England Conservatory of Music on Boston.

Another studio housed students in a song-writing workshop taught by Darryl Tookes. They were performing "We Will Rock You", a song written by Brain May, lead guitarist of Queen. A student sang the introduction and when it was time to stomp and clap, all of his peers joined in with perfect timing. Tookes took the music and conversation to another level. A physicist and musician himself, Tookes explained how Queen, (four

musicians) achieved and recorded the stomps and claps along with the reverberations, we all know so well. Tookes posed the question, "How did these four musicians make it seem like they were recording this song in a stadium?" The ten-minute conversation that ensued and the answer that followed are incredible.

"We Will Rock You", a song primarily done a cappella, other than the last 30 seconds containing a guitar solo by Brian May, is made up of stomping and clapping as its rhythmic beat. No drums or other instruments were used on this song. The lead guitarist, Brian May of Queen, a brilliant physicist, determined which type of wood (when stomped upon) made the best reverberations. He had that wood brought over to the cathedral where Queen was recording. Once the recording was completed, May delayed all the prime number beats. In other words, if every fourth beat had a slight delay, it would have sounded calculated and unnatural. The stomping would have sounded like a few people trying to sound like thousands. Instead, all beats that feel upon a prime number; one, three, five, etcetera, were given a millisecond delay. It was planned inconsistent synchronicity, brilliant.

Rosanne never thought a few music students would evolve into the 120 students they now teach and mentor. LMS is currently located in a 2,000 square foot music studio complete with sound proofed recording rooms, drum kits, pianos, electric pianos, recording boards, computer screens, an office where Roseanne does booking for Charlie and the music groups they produce, like the Element. LMS is a school where performing is encouraged. On average, Rosanne produces 80 - 100 shows a year. Rosanne's background was as an artists *and* repertoire representative for a prominent entertainment law firm as well as an artist and talent promoter and manager for 10 years.

For many of us, we know when we are in the presence of a true musician. We sense that they are some how thinking on a different plane. I sensed this upon speaking with both Charlie and Rosanne. In order to relate thoughts and experiences to others, you must be gifted, whether it is through writing, painting, story telling or music. Charlie encourages his students to be creative on all fronts. The Lagond's encourage all forms of creativity with musical performances optionally accompanied by videos, photos, or dance.

Charlie is perhaps most widely known as a musician with Kid Creole and the Coconuts. However, he has played for Princess Diana's charity functions, as well as inaugural parties for Presidents George Bush and Bill Clinton. Charlie is proficient on all saxophones, the clarinet and the flute. He studied at the Eastman School of Music in Rochester and his Jazz Studies Professor was Chuck Mangione. He is quite a musician and what he is giving back to the community by devoting his time and talent to LMS is quite extraordinary.

Charlie performs a few concerts in the area throughout the year. He will be performing at North Castle's Library on September the 25<sup>th</sup>. Admission is free!

To find out more about Lagond Music School, you may go to [www.lagondmusic.org](http://www.lagondmusic.org) or call 914-345-0512.