

# Lexington Entrepreneur Authors

## #1 BEST-SELLING BOOK **The Ultimate Guide to Music Lessons**

by Katie Gantt

school photos by Angela McCall, Happy Clicker Photography

book photo by Sean Rayford

Local entrepreneur and musician **Marty Fort** is at it again with his latest successful endeavor, the #1 Amazon best-selling book *The Ultimate Guide to Music Lessons: For parents, students or anyone who's ready to play music.*

Following the success of Fort's professional career as a musician, his two local music academies, and the now international success of his patent pending Musical Ladder System®, it's fair to say Fort is more than qualified to "write the book" on the matter of music education.

**Fort is happy to provide a free copy of his new book to any interested Midlands parents. To get yours, visit [LexingtonSchoolofMusic.com](http://LexingtonSchoolofMusic.com) or call/text 803-996-0623.**

Fort was inspired to write the guide after years of having taken lessons himself and now after years of having offered them at his schools: Lexington School of Music and Columbia Arts Academy®. He is intimately familiar with the many questions and concerns that parents and students have when shopping around for the right school as he has operated South Carolina's largest music school with over 1,200 students for 15 years. He was also a guitar teacher for 25 years and a music professor at USC Upstate for six years. The book is for sale on Amazon.com where it achieved #1 status for a new release on the Music Appreciation chart – not once, but twice – due to the book's popularity and far reach. Adding to the excitement, it was ranked #1 right above rock and roll legend Alice Cooper's latest book release this year.

"I couldn't be happier with the response to the book" Fort says. "Since then, it has remained in the top 100 in a few different music categories." A large part of the book's national success can be attributed to the fact that Fort offers co-authorships to other music school operators nationwide. To be granted co-authorship, they must contribute an original chapter to the book. Current co-authors are in Arkansas, Arizona, and Texas. "I think a lot of the success of the book is also due to the fact that it's teaching other schools how to operate safely

and how to use the Musical Ladder System® and other methods to motivate and reward students" says Fort.

He has spared no expense at his own schools when it comes to ensuring the safety of his students and teachers. His front desks are staffed at all times, meaning that students and teachers are never left alone on the premises. Parents are always welcome to sit in on lessons; there is a large window on the door of each lesson room and a security camera, a massive monitor in the reception room, and he runs seven (yes, seven) background checks on each new teacher he hires. "We're going all the way when it comes to our students' safety," he says. "I literally can't think of anything I can do to make it safer."

Parents, students, and teachers are all appreciating Fort's efforts as business continues to boom. His original location, Columbia Arts Academy® in Shandon, just added two new rooms to accommodate growth and is celebrating its fifteenth anniversary this year. Lexington School of Music on Barr Road, which opened just three short years ago, has already outgrown the Columbia location in terms of



enrollment. "I never saw that coming," Fort says. Fortunately, he can keep up with those kinds of numbers because his success is also attracting top-notch instructors from around the country. His schools have added fifteen new teachers in the last sixty days alone.

The Musical Ladder System® (MLS) also continues to thrive and is now licensed and serving over 30,000 students

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worldwide. MLS is a student achievement system that rewards students with wristbands when they pass a test and move on to the next level of the system. Some levels also reward the students with certificates and trophies. Fort was inspired to create the system to motivate students at his own schools, but was given the idea to license the product to other schools by Shark Tank judge and owner of the Dallas Mavericks, Mark Cuban when Fort briefly showed the

system to him at a business conference in Nashville a few years back. The system has proven so successful that Fort had to hire four full time employees at his Ballentine headquarters to keep up with the manufacturing and distribution of the system's wristbands, certificates, and trophies.

Fort encourages musicians of all ages, both seasoned and aspiring, to contact

one of his locations for more information on classes, a book, and a tour. He suggests that parents of younger children wait until their child is five to get started and highly recommends that the piano be the first instrument they learn. "If a child learns to play piano, you are setting them up to play any instrument. It's the best foundation," he says.

