

To enable success at every level, it is helpful to lay out expectations for students and their development at the beginning. These guidelines have been developed over my thirty-five years of teaching experience, and they have proven effective for both keyboard players and vocalists. Of course, questions are always encouraged. David Hastings Studios' highest goal is the growth of each student.

Regarding Lessons

Practice Expectations

Every attention is given to helping students develop as quickly as possible, and progress is enhanced when students make a consistent effort. Musical proficiency is the result of good habits and fine motor skills, which are developed during daily practice sessions. For beginning students, 20 to 30 minutes of practice, five days per week, is ideal. For more advanced students, one to three hours is expected, depending on the skill level of the student.

Repertoire

Students are more interested if they can work on music they enjoy. While assigned pieces teach specific techniques and skills, students are also encouraged to round out their lessons with music of their own selection. (Be aware that adjudication or competition rules may require the preparation of a specific repertoire.) In evaluating a student's music choices, the teacher may suggest a sequence for learning that promotes a logical technical development. Also, because music literacy is so vital for beginning vocal students especially, considerable time may be spent in early lessons helping students develop music-reading and basic piano skills.

Lesson Preparation

Memorizing music is encouraged and should be accomplished at home as soon as possible after the assignment of a piece, especially for vocal students. Rehearsal tracks are often available to speed learning and memorization. When pieces are already memorized, lessons can focus on technical and artistic issues, rather than on "learning the notes."

Rehearsal Accompaniment

For all students, music-reading skills are vitally important and a core part of the curriculum. (Can you imagine an actor who can't read words?) For vocal students, a rehearsal accompaniment is often helpful, especially during final preparations for a performance. When appropriate, a rehearsal piano part is recorded by the teacher and provided free to the student as an MP3 file for an iPod or other music player.

Parental Observation

Parents are always encouraged to attend lessons and see first-hand what their students are learning. However, please keep in mind that a parental presence can sometimes be “embarrassing” to students and therefore disruptive. There are several options at the studio to observe your students from a position that is out of their direct line of sight.

Recitals

Music is a performance art, and performance skills are learned with practice. Students work harder when they are preparing for a public performance. These are sometimes stressful, to be sure, but we hope there is an atmosphere of encouragement and celebration at these events that also make them fun and entertaining. Recitals are offered several times a year and create a natural place to mark your student’s development and celebrate their artistic growth. A performance at a recital is considered a lesson time, and recital days are rotated so that students have at most one recital date in any school year that falls on their lesson day.

Regarding Payment

Attendance Policy

Lessons are held weekly at a scheduled time. Your half-hour is reserved for you, and your teacher will be there, prepared to teach. Your tuition calculation is based on 37 paid lessons for the year, plus the annual studio fee of \$44.50.

With regular attendance at your 37 paid lessons, your lesson package also includes **three free “bonus” lessons** per year—about one per quarter.

About Lesson Scheduling

Before you schedule your normal lesson time, please review your upcoming commitments to find a time that will consistently work for you. Regular attendance at your lessons is the single greatest investment you can make in your weekly progress.

If you will be unavoidably absent for a lesson, please give your teacher as much advance notice as possible—five days in the case of a known obligation (to another performing group, for instance), or early in the day in the case of sudden illness. With such notice, these absences are considered excused. No-shows or absences without sufficient notice are considered unexcused.

In general, missed lessons are difficult to reschedule, and make-up lessons are not always possible. They will be offered only if time is available. The bonus lessons included in your tuition allow some flexibility, though. These free lessons, held at your normal weekly time, make up for as many as three excused absences. Under no circumstances, however, are bonus lessons used to compensate for unexcused absences.

If you attend all your scheduled lessons, your bonus sessions are truly that—freebies to honor your consistent presence and engagement.

Tuition

Monthly tuition will not increase in 2010–2011, remaining at \$124.70 per month for the third year in a row. Your tuition includes all lessons and fees from September 6, 2010, through June 30, 2011. This 43-week period includes 37 paid half-hour lessons (\$32.50 each), three free bonus lessons, and three non-teaching weeks during Christmas and Spring Break. Tuition also includes a \$44.50 annual studio fee that supports other expenses during the year (recital hall rentals, reference library, website, curriculum printing, blog, and Internet support).

Tuition is due in 10 equal monthly payments of \$124.70 beginning September 6, 2010, and is payable at the first lesson of each month. Tuition is past due—and subject to a \$15 late fee—if it is not paid by the 10th of the month. Lessons are suspended until payments are brought current.

In keeping with the attendance policy, there are no refunds or discounts for missed lessons. The free bonus lessons are included to cover unexpected illnesses, and make-up lessons are scheduled when possible to compensate for excused absences. However, remember that, as with college, tuition pays for the expenses of your education, whether or not you actually attend “class.”

Payment Method

Tuition may be paid by personal check or through PayPal.com, with PayPal being preferred. Your personal information remains private and secure with PayPal, an industry leader in Internet security, and registration is quick and simple. To facilitate your PayPal payment, go to www.DavidHastingsStudios.com and click “Make a Payment.”

Thank you for choosing David Hastings Studios as a partner in your music education. Here’s to a great year of studying and making music together.