

## About Piano and Trumpet Lessons

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### Fundamentals

#### 1. *What we learn*

There are basic skills and knowledge that are foundational across musical interests and levels of experience. Whether playing nursery rhymes or rock, classical masterworks or musical theater classics, the ability to coordinate one's movements with ease and expression, to feel musical pulse and rhythm, to play with nuance, to understand and interpret the sounds one hears ... these all come into play from a student's first lessons and as a student progresses.

#### 2. *How we learn*

Music learning can be approached from four directions: by rote (being shown directly which notes to play), by reading music, by ear, and by improvisation. The approach or approaches students and I employ are flexibly determined according to their evolving needs, interests, and musical growth. In time, we will encounter all four modes of learning.

#### 3. *Why we learn*

As we continually develop basics and beyond, we simultaneously and more fundamentally establish and reinforce music lessons and playing an instrument (or two) as core positive experiences. Regardless the starting point, or how far a student progresses, the underlying experience will be one he or she can return to pleurably throughout life.

### First three to five lessons

In the first three to five lessons, my role is to develop a feel for the student's reservedness and assertiveness; self-directedness versus reliance on me for direction; physical ease with their instrument; their range of personal and musical expressiveness. I will also begin to introduce skills, knowledge, and approaches to discover where that student is more and less receptive or experienced. While maintaining the widest possible latitude for the expression of individual traits and interests with the least interference, our lessons will develop their own unique rhythm and form, which will become the flexible basis for our future lessons. Once a foundation is established, the student becomes an explorer, guided by my knowledge and experience. I offer instruction, suggestions, and feedback according to each student's needs, experience, and interests.

**Practice, recitals, exams, etc.**

Given the free-flowing, student-centered nature of our lessons together, specific requirements for practice time, recitals, examinations, and other outside-of-lessons activities are not routine parts of my teaching. Consequently, homework assignments are also not a routine element. Students who stay long enough develop their own at-home practice, with the content of the lesson itself forming the direct or indirect basis for their homework. The basic trust in lessons is that we will pursue students' interests together and that what is learned in lessons, in time, goes home with the student, and vice-versa.

**Business / lesson separation**

To facilitate the lesson process, business and parent-teacher discussions (for example, relating to scheduling, payments, or student progress) are kept as separate as possible from lessons. In this way, lessons focus on music, and parent-teacher relationships, in particular, can be maintained independently from the teacher-student relationship. Parents and adult students are encouraged and welcome to contact me by email or an arranged phone call to discuss any such issues. Although these matters quite naturally arise at the beginning or end of a lesson, especially during drop-off or pick-up of a young student, I defer such conversations to email or a phone call.