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Piano Studio Policies

Introduction

Who Can Study Piano?

In the Blanco Music Studio, anyone over the age of 4 with a desire to learn piano can be admitted to the studio. The students in the studio range from young beginners to advanced pre-college piano students looking to pursue careers in music, as well as adults with recreational interests in piano. A willingness to learn is really the only prerequisite.

How are the Lessons Structured?

Lessons are held once every week. At each lesson, the student's progress from the previous week is assessed. After analyzing the progress made and coaching the student on how to overcome specific obstacles, a new set of goals for the following lesson is made. Each lesson is unique and student-specific: goals that are set for one student may not be reasonable for another student. Two students at the same age with the same number of years of study may have completely different expectations set for them. This is one of the main benefits of private music study: the personalized lesson experience.

As part of the lesson, each student will have the opportunity to learn and work on:

- technique
- music theory
- ear-training
- sight-reading
- solo material

As the student progresses, I also encourage participation in some type of evaluative performance each year and/or to participate in a studio recital or public performance. Studio recitals occur in May, August, and December. Dates, times, and locations are shared in advance.

As the studio continues to grow in numbers, we will begin offering monthly or bi-monthly Saturday morning "studio" classes where the students will have the opportunity to play and/or sing for each other and receive supportive and encouraging feedback. Attendance at these studio classes is highly recommended for all students of all levels as it fosters a sense of community and friendship within the studio and it helps students build confidence in playing and/or singing for others. The dates will be announced in advance.

The Policies

Tuition Rates and Payment

Tuition for the entire month of lessons is due at the first lesson of the month. Note: If the student is absent for the first lesson, tuition is still due for that lesson (unless otherwise communicated to the teacher that there would be no lesson that week) and must be included in the monthly payment (to be dropped off or mailed) by the 10th of the month. Unless the teacher hears otherwise, she will plan for your lesson the first week of the month, and therefore, a “no show” the first week of the month is considered an “absence” and tuition is owed for that absence. **Tuition not received by the 10th of the month will be considered late, and a \$20.00 late fee will be added on to either that month or the next month’s tuition.** Tuition payments may be made by cash or check (made out to Laura Blanco).

The 2011-2012 rates for tuition are as follows:

\$20.00 for each 30-minute lesson

\$30.00 for each 45-minute lesson

\$40.00 for each 60-minute lesson

These rates are multiplied by how many lessons are scheduled for the month. **If a student misses a lesson, this does not affect the tuition rate for that month (unless prior notice is given).** Non-payment of lessons can result in immediate dismissal from the studio. In the event of an NSF check, the student/parents will be responsible for any bank charges in addition to a \$25.00 fee.

Absences/Make-Up Lessons

Each student will be allowed two make-up lessons per semester. The make-up lessons will be scheduled on a mutually agreed upon day and time. Tuition rates will not be adjusted for student absences, regardless of how much notice of the absence is provided. If the student has accumulated absences and does not attend a schedule make-up lesson, it is understood that the student has forfeited that lesson. Absences do not transfer from one semester to the next. If a student has accumulated more than 3 absences in a semester, I will work with the student and/or parents to determine why so many absences have occurred and to assess possible solutions.

If the student knows that he/she will not be available for a regular weekly lesson, there is no tuition fee for that week as long as this is communicated to the teacher prior to the beginning of the month. Once tuition is paid at the beginning of the month, the teacher will commit time for the lesson and preparation for the lesson. If the student fails to appear, there is no refund. Any failure to appear for a lesson is an “absence.”

Practice Guidelines

When studying piano, it is necessary to commit practice time outside of the lesson. In all cases, a practice instrument at home is a prerequisite for taking lessons. Simply attending lessons does not ensure success, or even progress, in learning the art of playing the piano. If a student only has an electronic piano to practice on, it must be understood that the progress may be affected. An electronic piano, while more affordable, simply does not develop the finger dexterity or sensitivity compared to an acoustic piano. Also, it is essential that piano students with keyboards at home also have the plug in “damper pedal” to practice with.

In general, a practice commitment of 5 days, including the day of the lesson, yields positive results for most students. The time spent at the piano during each of those days is variable. Below is a guideline for how much time should be spent each day:

Age 4-8	10-15 minutes a day
Age 8-12	15-20 minutes a day
Age 12-16	20-40 minutes a day
Age 16- and older	40-60 minutes a day