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Vocal Studio Policies

Introduction

Who Can Study Voice?

In the Blanco Music Studio, anyone age 10 and older with a desire to learn to sing can be admitted to the studio. The students in the studio range from young beginners to advanced pre-college students looking to pursue careers in music, as well as adults with recreational interests in singing and vocal technique. 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:

- vocal technique (exercises), vocal health and care
- music theory
- ear-training
- sight-singing
- solo material
- ensemble singing (if desired)

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, we may begin to offer monthly or bi-monthly Saturday morning "studio" (group) 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 recommended, but not required. More information regarding fees, dates and times will be announced in advance. Even if a student is not ready to sing or play in a recital or group studio class, attendance is encouraged for all students of all levels as it fosters a sense of community and friendship within the studio and it helps students to develop confidence in playing and/or singing for/with others. All information 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 (if you have not already talked with the teacher about an alternative payment plan for the month). Tuition payments may be made by cash or check (made out to “Laura Blanco.”)

The 2011-2013 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

To determine how much your monthly tuition is simply multiply the number of lessons by the \$20, \$30 or \$40 amount. **If a student misses a lesson, this does not affect the tuition rate for that month (unless prior notice is given).** I’m sorry, but there are no refunds. 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. There are three semesters- Fall/Winter (September- December), Winter/Spring (January- May), and Summer (June- August). 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 at the beginning of the month. Once tuition is paid for the month and the schedule is set for 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 voice, it is necessary to commit practice time outside of the lesson. Simply attending lessons does not ensure success, or even progress, in learning the art of singing. In general, a practice commitment of 5 days, including the day of the lesson, yields positive results for most students. The time spent singing each of those days is variable. Below is a recommended guideline for how much time to spend 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