

## **Five Key Standards To Consider When Choosing A Music School**

Choosing a music school can be a daunting task. We believe there are five key standards that every music school must incorporate into their program. We encourage prospective students and parents to use this list as a tool to help in choosing an appropriate program. We guarantee that our studio incorporates every one of these attributes, and we challenge you to find another local studio that can say the same!

### **1. Commitment to music education as a process**

Many studios focus on product, rather than process. They teach by imitation alone. In our experience, this can be detrimental to a beginning student's skills. If students are not taught the fundamentals of music from the very beginning--including theory, rhythm, note-reading and ear-training--they will soon discover they are dependent on their teacher to learn new material. When those students leave their lessons they may be able to play a handful of songs from memory, but will not have gained the skills necessary to proceed without this crutch. Their initial excitement about learning music will turn to frustration.

A studio that considers the best interests of the student will split the lesson time evenly between solidifying this foundation of music theory, and teaching the student to play inspiring music that is within their grasp. Music is a language. With careful attention to learning its mechanics, a student will gain momentum on their own, and begin to realize his or her full potential.

### **2. Qualified, dedicated instructors**

It is of the utmost importance to select a teacher who holds a degree from a credible music school. We also believe that instructors should be actively studying and perfecting their craft. They should be aware of current trends in music, and possess an in-depth knowledge of diverse historical and traditional influences.

A skilled, experienced teacher has the patience to guide and encourage their student towards a solid musical foundation. They can coach and mentor a student towards expanding their creativity. They will help their student become a well-rounded, disciplined musician who can grow in any direction.

### **3. Management of lesson content and quality**

Instructors should be held accountable to meet the standards of the studio where they are employed. In our experience, this can only be accomplished when teachers are faculty, and not simply independent contractors using someone else's studio space, as is often the case. Instructors should be allowed the freedom to teach according to their own strengths and experiences, but while working within a framework tested to meet the needs of each individual student. The quality of music education should be consistent throughout a studio.

#### **4. Performance Opportunities**

Becoming a performer is an essential part of a musician's training. Although it can be intimidating at first, when students are given a safe and supportive place to start, their sense of accomplishment can be enormous. Students should be given the opportunity to perform both on their own and as part of an ensemble. Playing alongside their peers teaches students how to listen and cooperate, and allows them to develop the accountability and trust that are essential to any ensemble. The friendly competition that arises out of solo recitals and group performances is undeniably a great motivational tool, and it challenges students to track their own progress from year to year. Most importantly, performances are the most concrete way for students to see the results of all their hard work, and to feel proud of their achievements.

#### **5. Contacts within the professional music community**

Exposure to professional musicians can be a great motivational tool, showing students how far hard work and dedication can take them. We are extremely lucky to live in such close proximity to New York City, home to the world's finest musicians. Any serious institution will take full advantage of this tremendous resource, by providing their students access to the inspiring musicians who work right in their own backyard.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to call and/or email us.

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