Policies for Students and Parents
Fall 2016 – Spring 2017

About
The Center for Piano Studies provides members of the Columbia area with excellent musical instruction at the piano. There is a place for all learners, from age 5 to all ages of adults, and at any level, from beginners to advanced players. Our programs include private and group study and a variety of performance opportunities. The instructors are highly qualified pianists and teachers, each seeking an advanced degree in piano pedagogy or performance.

Enrollment and Interview
All new students will have an interview with the Director or Administrative Assistant to familiarize parents/students with our program and to discuss goals for piano study. Students with prior piano background will play a brief audition to ensure proper placement in our program. Beginning students will be given a mini-lesson to assess readiness. Students are accepted at anytime during the academic year, pending availability (tuition will be prorated).

Tuition, Payments, and Refunds
Tuition is billed every semester and payment is due prior to the start of classes. Payment can be made by the semester, or payments can be made in three (3) installments per semester. Invoices will be sent via email. Please pay correct amounts; requests for a current invoice can be submitted to piano@mozart.sc.edu. Any overpayments will be applied to future tuition charges or refunded, less credit card fees. Overdue accounts will be assessed a $10 late fee ten (10) days after the due date.

Tuition must be paid in full to participate in end-of-semester recitals.

A limited amount of need-based scholarships are available; contact Dr. Sara Ernst at sernst@mozart.sc.edu for more information.

If a full refund is requested before the term begins, the refund will be written for the amount paid minus a $30 processing fee. Refunds may be made by university check and this can take several weeks.

Attendance, Scheduling, and Make-up Lessons
Because the study of music requires consistent effort over time, attendance at every group class and private lesson is essential. Group classes will meet at the scheduled time each week and cannot be made-up. If it is necessary to miss a class, parents/students are asked to email the instructor in advance. Instructors will provide the class assignments so that independent work can keep pace with the class.

Private lessons meet at the scheduled time each week; lesson times remain in effect for the duration of the semester. One make-up lesson is allowed per semester, but only when a 24-hour notice has been provided to the instructor. There are no time adjustments or make-up lessons for students who are tardy.

It may be occasionally necessary for instructors to reschedule lessons due to conflicts with degree-related commitments. Teachers will discuss any rescheduling at least one week in advance.

USC School Closings
If and when the USC campus or the School of Music is closed due to weather or other unforeseen circumstances, all activities in the Center for Piano Studies are cancelled. Parents and students will be notified via email, and closures are posted on university websites. In this situation, classes and lessons will not be made up.

Materials and Practice Pianos
It is essential for students to bring all required materials (music, books, assignment notebooks, and pencils). Instructors will provide information on purchasing materials. Photocopies of copyrighted music are NOT allowed.

All students (except those in Recreational courses) must have a practice piano at home with which to complete the weekly assignment. An acoustic piano is recommended, although for several programs, a digital piano is allowed (88-keys with weighted action). It is equally important to have a proper bench and foot stool (for children) and to have the piano tuned twice yearly. School of Music practice rooms are only available to students in credit-granting courses.
Practice

The pursuit of musical skill requires dedication and a regular practice routine. For pre-college students, parents must structure practice within the family schedule. Instructors give a weekly practice assignment and students are expected to complete this at each home practice session. Instructors will also provide guidance on how to practice.

All students are encouraged to practice every day of the week, but are required to practice no less than the minimum stated in the course description. The most important practice days are the day of the class and the day after. If a day is skipped, be certain to practice the next day; *never miss two days in a row.*

Students/parents are asked to communicate concerns with practice, assignments, or success with the instructor. This type of open discussion is essential to a student's progress. Do not wait until the next class; all instructors are available via email. The Director is also available for consultation on such matters.

Recitals, Events, and Assessments

Recitals are held in the Recital Hall at the School of Music. All pre-college students are required to participate in repertoire classes in advance of the recital to be eligible for recital performance.

Additional events are included in the tuition, and these include the Fall Festival, CMTA Achievement Day or SCMTA District Auditions, and outreach performances. Fees for the Music Development Program performance assessments are included for all Young Artist Programs. Those in other programs are encouraged to participate but will be responsible for assessment fees. Event and program fees are nonrefundable.

Teacher Assignment & Student Records

The Director assigns all incoming students to teachers. To ensure a successful teacher-student relationship, new students are assigned based on factors of personality, prior study, and student goals. Whenever possible, returning students continue with the prior teacher. The Center keeps detailed records of student progress to facilitate assignment and transfer to a new teacher. Parents/students may consult the Director when a new teacher will be assigned; requests are honored when possible. If parents/students seek a change of teacher, a written request must be submitted to the Director outlining the need for a teacher change.

Enrollment, Withdrawal, and Exit Procedure

*Adult group classes and private lessons*: Enrollment in the Center for Piano Studies is for the duration of the program, by semester or session (Recreational courses). No refunds of fees are provided after the first class.

*Children group classes and private lessons*: Enrollment in the Center for Piano Studies is for the duration of the academic year. A four-week notice of withdrawal must be submitted to the Director. Tuition will be assessed during the notice period. A refund will be given for any remaining tuition beyond the four-week notice. No withdrawal is accepted after April 1.

Under certain circumstances, it may be necessary for a student to discontinue study during the academic year or semester for any of the following reasons:

- Excessive absenteeism
- Non-participation in group class
- Recurrent lack of preparedness
- Non-payment of tuition

A refund will be given for any remaining tuition (if applicable).

Facility for Classes and Lessons

All group classes are taught in the state-of-the-art Group Piano Lab at the USC School of Music. The lab is equipped with digital pianos, a Smart Board and projection system, and many other technologies and teaching aids. In addition, a grand piano is used for performance and demonstration in the group lab. All lessons and repertoire classes are taught in classrooms at the USC School of Music. Each classroom has a grand piano, a digital piano, teaching aids, and educational technology. No food or drink is allowed in our piano classrooms.

Contacts

**Administrative Assistant**, contact for billing, registration, and enrollment: 803-777-4414  piano@mozart.sc.edu

**Dr. Sara Ernst**, Director of the Center for Piano Studies: 803-777-1688  sernst@mozart.sc.edu

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