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Useful Information for Guitar Lessons

Teaching Style

Initial lessons focus on how to hold the guitar, and how to produce a good tone with the instrument. As the lessons progress, I teach my pupils how to read music, gradually and in a practical manner. Pupils get lots of chances to try out what they are learning, and are soon able to play simple melodies. From there, pupils are introduced to all of the various skills and techniques they need to play the guitar. Everything we cover in lessons is necessary for playing any style of guitar.

Once pupils have mastered the basics, they can look at preparing to take graded examinations if they wish, or can simply learn more pieces in whatever style takes their interest.

Lesson Details

Lessons normally take place on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, and last 30 minutes. Pupils will normally have a different lesson time each week, to avoid disrupting their classroom learning. I have a small amount of lesson times before school begins, I usually give these as regular slots to students who are available for the earlier start time.

Pupils will receive a lesson every week unless it is impractical because of other events or activities being organized by the school – residential visits, for example.

I charge £17 per lesson, payable in advance at the start of each term. There is also a administrative fee charged by the Froebelian School – this is usually around £1-2 per term.

Arranging Lessons

Please get in touch with me directly using the details at the top of the page.

Practice

Practice is the most important factor in every pupil's progress. Every music teacher knows from experience that when pupils practice, they do better in lessons, make more progress and (most importantly), have more fun. Therefore, I would ask that you to help ensure that pupils practice regularly. Encouragement and praise from you (or other relatives) will mean a huge amount.

For a beginner, four practice sessions a week of 10 minutes each is sufficient. As they progress, these can gradually increase to 30 minute sessions. Practice is best spread evenly through the week. In this way, pupils will make the most progress and have fun, and you will be getting the best value for your money.

Essential Items

Guitar

I recommend that pupils should use a $\frac{3}{4}$ **size nylon-string** guitar (sometimes called a classical guitar). These are easier and more comfortable for beginners to play (as well as less painful on the fingertips than steel strings), and are more versatile – only nylon-strung guitars can be used in grade exams. Pupils who have learnt on a nylon-string guitar will easily be able to transfer their skills to an electric or a steel-strung guitar. Once a pupil has mastered the basics, and if they would prefer not to play classical pieces or sit grade exams, they can use an electric or acoustic guitar if they wish.

Left-handed pupils do **not** need left-handed guitars – since both hands are needed for the instrument, there is no benefit, especially as left-handed guitars are usually more expensive.

A three-quarter size guitar is an appropriate size for most pupils, especially in Form 1, but particularly small children could consider a half-size guitar, and particularly tall children a full-size instrument. The easiest way to tell is to stand the guitar next to the pupil – if it reaches their waist, it is an appropriate size.

Searching Amazon for '3/4 classical guitar' will bring up lots of instruments – I can recommend the Jose Ferrer Estudiante and Valencia brands. At the end of this document is a list of music shops in Leeds which should stock suitable instruments.

Footstool

All pupils need a footstool, which is placed under the left foot whilst playing to assist in securely holding the instrument. An adjustable footstool should cost around £10, either online or from the stores listed below.

Music Stand

A music stand for use at home is essential for comfort and posture whilst playing – again these should cost around £10.

Teaching Books

Usually I would buy any books my pupils would need (after informing you), and invoice you for the cost.

I teach from a series of books called **The Guitarist's Way**, by Peter Nuttall and John Whitworth. The books cost £6 each. Unless you wish to purchase this yourself, I will invoice you for this together with the first term's lessons.

Guitar Tuner

Guitar tuners can be purchased separately (for around £15), but nowadays the cheapest option is to download one of the many free guitar tuning apps (e.g. "Guitar Tuna") which are available for smartphones and tablets, which work just as well as a dedicated tuner.

Music Shops in Leeds

Hobgoblin – Eastgate
PMT – Kirkstall Road

Any questions?

If you have any questions about the above, or about any aspect of learning guitar, please contact me by phone or by email – my details are at the top of this document.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Grainger', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

David Grainger