

Sterling Wilson's Clarinet Studio Syllabus

How to Reach me:

970-219-1258

S.wilsonclarinet@gmail.com

Please provide your contact info for me at your first lesson. This will help us stay in touch and will allow me to send out information rapidly in case of schedule changes or on the chance that I find interesting web sites or details about clarinet conventions, competitions, etc.

Payment and policies must be discussed in the lesson contract, which is to be signed at the start of lessons.

Required Materials (All students):

Notebook for Lessons

Method Book (*The Clarinet Guru*, purchased from me, or another recommended set of books)

Pencils

CD Player/MP3 Player/Computer for listening to recordings

Email address

Though I do not require my students to buy these materials before the first lesson, I like to list them on the Syllabus so that when they are needed, you can simply look up the titles and purchase them.

Depending on the lesson package you paid for, different materials will be required. Copies of *The Clarinet Guru* will only be included in Package A, which features a personalized login for the website's blog where the copy of this method book can be found and printed-out. This allows students to customize their experience of working with me. Read the section on rates/fees for more information.

For Beginners:

The Clarinet Guru Vol. 1, my personal teaching compendium featuring excerpts from the leading method books.

Any school band books required to participate
Solo and ensemble material as you like

For Intermediate/Advanced students

The Clarinet Guru, Vol .2

Baermann Division III

H. Klosé Celebrated Method for Clarinet

C. Rose 32 Studies for Clarinet

Solo and ensemble material as you like/required

Also useful:

Leon Russianoff Method for Clarinet Books 1 and 2—these are rare, if you see them, BUY THEM.

The Inner Game of Music by Barry Green

Lesson Structure:

No one likes to go through lessons that feel like a chore—it's hard on everyone involved. That's why I don't teach that way, period. I try to maintain a relaxed, casual, and as a result, focused environment. I guarantee that we'll be wondering where the time went, rather than waiting for the clock to run out. In general everyone's lessons follow a similar structure to this:

Relaxation (5-10min)

Scales, techniques, and intonation

Etudes/Duets

Solo Material

School Band Music

Listening/Sight-Reading/Sight-Singing*

Beginners Only:

Scales/Theory/exercises from the previous week

Solo material/Band Music

Pick a Concept**

Listening/Sight-Reading/Sight-Singing*

Usually with beginning students, we'll work on finishing one scale in one key every week, moving on to a new one the next time we meet. Depending on the frequency of our lessons, I'll assign an according amount of material, but I maintain an open and friendly relationship with my students—communication is essential to progress! We'll work out just how much work you can accomplish, and how much we can cover in our lessons: you deserve the most for your money.

The First Lesson

For all of my students, I start with a brief assessment that consists of a few questions. For those who are more advanced, this will not take long at all. For beginners, the very first lesson will look like this:

- 1) Parts of the Clarinet, how to handle them, what they are called, how they go together
- 2) Set-up the Clarinet
- 3) How to put the reed on the mouthpiece
- 4) Make the first sounds
- 5) How to take the reed off of the mouthpiece and put it away safely
- 6) How to put away the clarinet, review of the parts.

Normally, in a school band setting, the first two weeks don't involve *any* playing at all, though this does vary. Still, the first lesson with me covers more in 30 minutes than a lot of school band classes can cover in a week.

For more advanced students this will be a short Q/A session in which I ask some questions and hear the student play. The approach will vary from person to person. For intermediate students, I will go over some of the basics and review them so that we don't skip over any important details.

Practicing:

How much should you practice? I say, as long as it takes you to get everything done that you want to accomplish every day. This might mean 45 minutes for some, and three hours for others... it also depends on how much time you have in your daily schedule and your lifestyle. My general rule is this:

PRACTICE EVERY DAY, EVEN IF YOU JUST PLAY SCALES. The late Leon Russianoff, a great teacher, once wrote: even ten minutes of practice is better than not playing at all as long as you work to accomplish something in that short time. I don't chide students for not practicing, nor do I spend time lecturing about how much time I spend in the practice room. We need to find out how you make progress, so I encourage you to experiment with different routines until you find out what works for you. I'll monitor your progress and help you determine what is best.

Students are expected to practice no matter what. If a student doesn't practice, the money spent on the lesson is wasted. There are extenuating circumstances.

If you're sick or maybe just need a break, don't be afraid to take a day or two off—don't make a habit of it, but after a long period of heavy practicing it's a good idea to take some time off and then start up again with simple studies. I don't expect you to practice if you've got a 104 degree fever or broke your leg or something—your body is more important than your clarinet playing! Take care of yourself first.

Students are welcome to record lessons, in fact I encourage you to do so. If you do not own a good recorder, I can most certainly record your lesson for you with my equipment and email you the Mp3 file when we're done. Just let me know! (I encourage you to buy a good recording device for yourself, but not everyone has the budget for that and new instruments, I understand)

Every lesson should be unique—we should always try to vary our activities, as students progress at different rates and some days it may be more important to focus on techniques, theory, solo repertoire, or duets for an entire lesson. If there's something we don't get to, don't fret, we'll save it for later or you can take care of it in your practice time.

*it's an important part of music, and I don't care if you're not a good singer—I guarantee you're better than I am!

**This works quite simply--it's not a silly game, but it adds an element of surprise to our lessons. Instead of me deciding what you should do for an entire week, the student gets to roll a die or draw a card. The number on the die or card will match one on a list of topics we can cover. There is only one rule: the student has to practice that concept for the entire week and keep focusing on it over time. I find this prevents confusion in younger students but still maintains what they will not get in a public school. We will of course work on other concepts in lessons, but for individual practice time I like to make it easier for students to set goals.

Recitals

Every six months a recital will be held at a pre-selected venue. Students will be required to perform at the recital unless a significant scheduling conflict (school function, illness, etc.) exists.

Piano Accompanists

For all recitals a student may be asked to play a piece that requires accompaniment. I will provide a list of approved accompanists who are very affordable. Exceptions to fees will be made for students with financial need, or they will be assigned solo repertoire.

Policies

All policies will be duplicated in the lesson contract signed at the beginning of the first lesson. I will email a copy to you or bring one to the lesson.

- You will provide current contact information and respond to all voicemails or emails sent.
- The clarinet will be set up and ready to go at the start of each lesson, unless the student is a beginner and cannot yet put the clarinet together without help.
- You will arrive on-time for each lesson and respect that it begins and ends at a set time. I will not make up lesson-time if a student is more than five minutes late.
- You will provide 24 hours notice if you need to cancel a lesson. Lessons missed without prior notice will be charged for the full price of a lesson. Exceptions include: Weather/National Emergencies, Sickness, Family Emergencies, and Personal Injury.
- I agree that I will not charge for lessons I must cancel for the aforementioned reasons.
- You agree that I am to teach your child and your child alone. Babysitting services will not be provided before, during, or after each lesson. You may drop your student at the music school and pick him/her up without seeing me.
- You agree that you will respect my time and will not keep me from other students or engagements with commentary or criticism.
- I agree to provide 5-15 minutes at the end or beginning of each lesson to address any commentary or questions unless my schedule does not permit.
- I am open to discussion. **I WORK FOR YOU.** If you have any questions, needs, or thoughts that have not been addressed, please do not hesitate to share them.
- You agree to respect my teaching policies and assist your student in following them appropriately.
- I respect your time tremendously. Please be courteous to me and other students.
- Recitals will be held every 6 months. If your student is performing, there is a \$15 recital fee.

- If any materials or fees (books, recitals, etc.) cannot be paid, I will adjust totals for special circumstances.
- If lesson prices are beyond a family's budget, I agree to provide scholarships to those who can prove financial need through a brief audition process. By signing this contract you agree to provide documentation of financial need when necessary.
- We agree to lessons at a specified location unless otherwise noted. A new contract is to be signed if lessons are to be given at any other location than the original.
- You understand that all fees and payments will be assessed on the monthly invoice issued on the 15th day of each month. All payments will be made by the 1st of each month.
- You agree to the right to cancel lessons before the next monthly payment is due.
- Refunds for lessons already given will not be issued.

Rates:

Package A

- **\$20 per half hour lesson**
- **\$30 per hour lesson**
- **\$25 annual fee for a subscription to *The Clarinet Guru***
- **\$15 per recital**
- **Independently paid piano accompaniment fees to be given to an accompanist**

Package B

- **\$20 per half hour lesson**
- **\$30 per hour lesson**
- **\$15 per recital**
- **Independently paid piano accompaniment fees to be given to an accompanist**

Package C (Commuter)

- **\$20 per half hour lesson**
- **\$30 per hour lesson**
- **(Optional) \$25 annual fee for a subscription to *The Clarinet Guru***
- **\$15 per recital**
- **Independently paid piano accompaniment fees to be given to an accompanist**
- **Mileage at \$5.00 minimum plus standard federal rate for each additional mile over 2 miles for calendar year. Subject to scheduling limitations and availability until further notice.**

Additional Details

General:

- Recitals are negotiable, but by signing this contract you agree that they are part of the educational process and will assist in your child's preparation.
- You will agree to attend all recitals in which your student performs. You are encouraged to bring guests.
- All late payments for monthly tuition bills will be assessed a \$2 fee for every day overdue.

If lessons are to be given **at a student's home**, I require that you acknowledge the following:

- There must be a **Guardian *or* Relative of Legal Age** present on the premises at all times during the lesson. I charge a \$50 fee for every hour I am left waiting if I arrive and no one is home but the children.
- I am not a babysitter. Even though you are home with your kids, please make sure their siblings are entertained and do not interfere with the progress of the lesson. I will charge a \$50 fee if unattended children are left in my care in addition to giving them a complimentary Kazoo. This is rare, but I have been expected to care for siblings in the past and I have to be clear. This fee will be assessed hourly.
- A \$25 fee will be applied to all in-home lessons cancelled without prior notice.

If you require a scholarship:

- I must see a copy of your latest 1098T adjusted income form. Three recent pay stubs are also acceptable.
- The student must audition if significant financial need can be assessed. The audition will consist of some simple repertoire chosen based upon initial ability levels.
- If a student has never played before, my rates will be adjusted accordingly:
 - \$20 per half-hour lesson
 - \$30 per hour lesson
 - Books/materials provided for free
 - Penalty fees reduced by 10%
- Special rates will be determined based on financial need and/or OKCU's policies.

Please make me aware of any special learning disabilities before we begin lessons. Federal regulations require me to accommodate any and all documented learning disabilities.

I have worked with all levels of students and will not turn any student away based on a learning disability, and I agree to accommodate any needs a student may have.

Important equipment sites:

www.weinermusic.com Weiner Music is a good company, family owned, located in upstate New York. They ship all orders over \$45 for free and usually have an abundant stock of most reed brands and accessories. I use them for my reed purchases.

www.wbw.com : The Woodwind and Brasswind store. This is the equivalent to a big box store, but they offer good prices and fast shipping. I recommend buying your reeds here, because you can purchase more of them for less than what you could spend at a local music store.

<http://www.vandoren.com/en/ANIM/index.html> : Maker of reeds and mouthpieces. They are very good, though a little common--that's because they WORK. I use Vandoren Traditional strength 3 ½ almost exclusively, with a few hand made reeds thrown in here and there.

<http://www.ricoreeds.com/RicoHome.Page?ActiveID=1195> : Specifically Rico Reserve Reeds have served me well in the past. I highly recommend them. Also, the new line of rico reserve mouthpieces have picked up a good following.

<http://www.behnmouthpieces.com/> Brad Behn made my current mouthpiece (Vintage Series), but he is an expert craftsman and I highly recommend his products to any one of my students. He sells a line of student mouthpieces that can be traded up for a professional mouthpiece when you improve your playing skills.

<http://www.redwinejazz.com/Products.htm> The source for Canyes Xilema (Can-yes She-Lemma) Reeds. They're Spanish, cost the same as other brands, but are often more consistent.

Websites for sheet music:

Contact me for the official version