

# David Howard's Music Studio

## Professional Music Instruction

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## Client Service Agreement

### PLEASE READ THIS AGREEMENT CAREFULLY

#### Lesson Policy and Student Conduct

This Client Service Agreement is primarily a codified teaching and practice system for the students to follow. The lessons; however, will still be taught in a fun and friendly environment. The only difference now is that, much like the student concert policy, the onus of behavior is the student's responsibility now. Over the last couple of years I have seen certain students display lesson attendance, practice and study habits that are seriously detrimental to their success in music lessons. This well structured system that I have created is intended to solely deal with these very behaviors and attitudes in a systematic manner.

**I strongly believe that the study of music should be enjoyable and rewarding (always have and always will);** however, there has been a serious misunderstanding among some students and their parents that music lessons should be only fun and recreational with no effort at home by either the student or, apparently, the support of the parents and that such crucially important areas of study as regular lesson attendance, practicing or lesson preparation are not important. These misconceptions almost always lead to failure on the part of the student to progress in a sequential and orderly process and hence the student can become increasingly frustrated and discouraged (bored as well). In most instances, the student progresses either very slowly or not at all.

To properly study a musical instrument requires considerable hard work, commitment and dedication over many years. There is no other way that I know or am aware of. For instance, when I was taking my Royal Conservatory exams, I practiced, whenever possible, upwards of 8-10 hours per day every day (I don't recommend nor expect such levels from my students however). I have experienced certain students coming into lessons over the last couple of years not having practiced at all over a 2-3 week period on a frequent and habitual basis. This inevitably leads to an inquiry by the parents as to how their son/daughter is doing and why there seems to be a lack of progress!

Team sports have regular practices, as do theater groups so why is there this misconception that music should be effortless and always fun with no discipline, hard work and effort involved? Part of the problem, I suspect, is that some parents may have never formally studied a musical instrument and thus may not be aware of the amount of effort and dedication required.

1. Students are required to bring **all** of their **books and CD's** to each and every lesson that David Howard has indicated are current teaching materials and until such time that David Howard has indicated that a particular book or CD is no longer required. It is not acceptable behavior to forget books, CD's or leave the Student Agenda at home.
2. Students are expected to practice on a regular and on going basis. It is not acceptable conduct for a student to come in to the lesson unprepared and having not practiced at all during the week. Students are expected to practice a minimum of 30-45 minutes four times per week. During each practice session, the student is to follow the "Practice Log" that is recorded each week. For example, students are expected to practice their scales and sight-reading in addition to their pieces of music. Regular technical practicing, such as scales and arpeggios leads to greater command of more difficult music and the inherent technical demands that such music requires.
3. All students will be assigned a particular grade level in September. Students **are not** to skip levels or leave their currently assigned level until they have satisfied the requirements of each grade level and have been tested thoroughly by David Howard and passed the particular grade. This is to ensure that the student builds a strong technical and musical foundation free of areas of weakness and develops the required technical facility to be able to properly handle the technical requirements in the next level. For example, one student last year wanted to go from studying "Back in Black" by AC/DC (level 1 piece) to Stairway to Heaven by Led Zeppelin (level 3 piece) back to back! The technical requirements to properly perform "Stairway to Heaven" so are much higher than "Back in Black" that to try to begin teaching this student (who was a beginner) the song would be next to impossible. Incidentally, should the student wish to learn a song which is currently not listed and graded, David Howard will be pleased to grade it immediately and add it to the list.

4. Classical guitar students are to remain in their assigned grade level and **are not** to progress to the next level without either passing an official **Royal Conservatory** examination or passing the grade as examined by David Howard.
5. All students are required to learn entire songs not just the “riffs” or solos. A student should not be working on more than 3 songs at any given time. The study of a particular song is not completed until the student is able to play through the song in a competent manner more or less free of mistakes and if possible, pieces should be memorized.
6. All students in lower levels are encouraged to study standard music notation and music theory; however, this is required in the higher levels. Music is a symbolic language no different than French, German, Chinese, mathematics etc. When one studies a language such as French they will study all aspects of the language such as spelling and grammar. The more a student understands how music is structured, the more rapid the student will be in understanding how to perform a particular piece of music. In the study of music at the higher levels, substantial knowledge of music theory becomes increasingly critical for success.
7. Students are expected to behave in a respectful and courteous manner at all times during their lessons with David Howard and David Howard will do likewise.
8. Students must understand that as they progress to higher levels of instruction that songs will inevitably take longer to learn and perfect. It is unreasonable to always expect a new song every week or to drop a song because a student has failed to properly play it within a very short time period.
9. If the student continues to set forth a habitual pattern of disregard to any or all of the policies set forth in this document and the student has been advised of such behavior yet continues in such a manner, then a phone call will be placed to the parents reminding them of the lesson policy in this regard. If, after a period of time this behavioral pattern begins again, then a letter will go home to the parents outlining the problem with several recommendations. If there is not an improvement in the student’s behavior and/or the full cooperation of the parent(s), then the student may be, in an extreme case, regretfully, removed entirely from lessons with David Howard’s Music Studio and any remaining lessons in the semester will be refunded within 5 business days.

### **Student Concert Policy**

In order to provide the utmost level of professionalism and efficiency during David Howard’s Music Studio “Student Concerts”, participating students are asked to comply with the following:

1. Beginner level students must have studied a least one-year with David Howard in order to participate in the concert.
2. Each student is to prepare **one song** no longer than five minutes in duration.
3. Students are to use the guitar and bass that are already set up on stage as the frequent changing of instruments slows down the concert considerably. If a student absolutely must use his/her own instrument then he/she will have to get permission ahead of the concert from David Howard. All students using their own equipment **must have** their guitars or basses tuned prior to the beginning of the concert. To facilitate this, students are to arrive 10 minutes early on the day of the concert. There will be someone on hand to assist the participants.
4. There will be no stoppage in the concert for out of tune instruments or broken strings. In the event of a string breaking or an out of tune guitar, there will be a guitar and a bass on stage as backup for the students to use.
5. Music **must be** memorized. No sheet music nor music stands on stage. Reading music on stage can induce nerves and distract focus. Music stands tend to obstruct sight lines.
6. Students are expected to arrive at the beginning of the concert and wait for their turn to perform. They are not permitted to “drop in” at any time during the concert and leave immediately after performing.
7. Students are encouraged to dress in appropriate “stage clothes” that is reflective of the type of music they are performing.

## Student Concert Auditions

Although, I strongly encourage **all students** to perform in the “Student Concerts”, some students are not preparing fully and/or properly. Usually this lack of preparation is through not practising enough. There is a significant difference between playing one’s instrument and practicing one’s instrument. Practising involves working on areas of weakness while playing is rehearsing previously studied material. To best ensure that **all students have a positive and rewarding experience** onstage relatively free of stress and fear they must be well prepared and confident in their playing skills and the piece that they have chosen to perform. Consequently, students must audition for the “Student Concerts”

Students are required to audition for the concert four weeks prior to the week of the concert. The qualities and characteristics that I am looking for from students wanting to participate in the concert are:

- Is the piece played through its entirety from memory in a competent and complete manner without frequent mistakes, hesitations, stops and starts or memory crashing?
- Is the piece within the musical capabilities of the student?
- If the piece requires a full band, can the student play in time with the rest of the band from memory?

Each student requiring a full band must submit to me a copy of the song they are playing on CD no later than one four weeks before the concert so that the drummer can learn the piece. There will be a full band rehearsal three weeks prior to the concert and all affected students are expected attend. Because of limited space and facilities, parents are asked to wait for their children who normally, will not require more than 5-10 minutes.

## Student Conduct Policy for the Student Concerts

- There is **zero tolerance** for any type of **racism (including symbolic signs), profanity, derogatory comments, sexism or hate messages** whether in lyrics or printed on shirts or other articles of clothing. Parents, please check your children’s attire on the day of the concert to ensure that they are not wearing something in contradiction to this policy. Students will not be allowed on stage if they are in violation of this policy and will be asked to change their attire or as a minimum, fully cover up the offensive material.

## Lesson Cancellation Policy

- David Howard’s Music Studio reserves each student’s time slot for the entire duration of the semester. Each student is enrolled in a course of study within that time period. Each student is expected to honor their mutual commitment between themselves and David Howard to be in attendance during that time slot on a regular basis. Lesson times reserved within a particular semester with David Howard’s Music Studio are part of a course of study much like night school, and are not a series of individual “appointments” that can be cancelled and rescheduled at will, like that offered, for example, in a Doctor’s office.
  1. **David Howard’s Music Studio requires 48 hrs notice to reschedule a lesson and the lesson must be taken within the current week of the cancellation (time permitting).**
  2. **David Howard’s Music Studio offers up to 2 weeks vacation stop during the 2009 school year term (September 2009- June 2010). The lesson(s) cancelled will be rescheduled to a time that is at the client’s convenience and must be taken before the end of June 2010.**
  3. **Students that frequently find themselves having to cancel lessons may find that the “Irregular Attendance” program is a more appropriate time schedule than the more traditional “once per week at the same time” lesson scheduling.**
  4. **In-Home rescheduled lessons take place at my teaching studio and the lesson must be taken within the current week of the cancellation (time permitting).**

## Irregular Attendance

Those students that are unable to attend lessons on a regular basis and on a set time schedule may wish to enroll in lessons with David Howard’s Music Studio under the “Irregular Attendance” program. A retainer of 8 lessons is paid in full to David Howard’s Music Studio and the student books their lessons around their current schedule. The student will then ‘draw’ down their lesson credits as they go until all of the lesson credits have been used up.

## **Refund Policy (some conditions apply)\***

**Your satisfaction fully guaranteed\***. If, for any reason, you are not completely satisfied your lessons with David Howard's Music Studio, a refund of all unused lesson monies will be issued via cheque within 3 business days.

\*Clients can also pay for the whole year in advance lump sum and receive a 10% discount on the total amount, however, they are committed to the entire school year with no refund(s) offered. Clients that pay for the entire year in advance lump sum and receive a 10% discount have 10 days to cancel this agreement which must be in writing from the date they originally signed and received a copy of this agreement and receive their lump sum payment back within 3 business days. After 10 days has expired from the date of the original signature by the client and receipt of a copy of this agreement, the client is committed to the full length of the "Client Service Agreement" contract terms with no refunds offered.

## **Non Sufficient Cheques**

- There is a \$45.00 charge for each Non Sufficient Fund (N.S.F) cheque written by a client and returned to David Howard's Music Studio. The student's lesson time will be immediately suspended until such time that a cash payment equal in value to the N.S.F cheque has been made.

## **Client/Student Expectations**

- I make no guarantees whatsoever that a student will be successful studying under my tutelage even if they explicitly follow my "Lesson and Student Conduct Policy". I do; however, believe that I have a fair and common sense policy designed to assist each student in reaching his/her full potential as a music student if he/she makes a genuine effort to follow it. This policy, which was formally codified in September of 2005, has been devised over many years (1000's of hours worth) of music teaching experience both in the classroom and in private practice and has been very successful
- Innate music ability ranges over the entire spectrum of capabilities from the student who encounters constant struggle to learn each new piece or concept to prodigious abilities of a career bound concert artist. Some music students have much stronger inherent abilities than others and are thus able to progress faster and further over time. It is not my policy to ever be concerned with each of my student's individual innate musical abilities but, rather, I accept each student at his/her own individual level, whatever that may be, and help nurture them to his/her fullest potential.
- Success in regular academic schooling, that this does not necessarily mean success in music lessons as they are a separate field of study with many different demands, ability requirements and aptitudes. For instance, while some of my students are very quick at playing by ear, others require the music to be written down; some can improvise while others cannot and some advance on the guitar at a rapid pace while others seemingly take a great deal of time to make very modest progress. Many are bright and successful students in regular academic schooling though. I endeavor in good faith, with each student that I teach, to assist him/her to the best of my abilities, in reaching his/her full potential whatever that might be.

## **Indemnification**

- The undersigned hereby releases David Howard's Music Studio from any claims whatsoever for personal injury sustained by the undersigned and/or his/her children or wards in, on or about the facilities of David Howard's Music Studio or during the student concerts including without limitation any claims for personal injuries resulting from or arising out of the negligence of David Howard's Music Studio.

## **Consent**

- CONSENT: I, the Undersigned have been informed of the possible dangers of hearing loss or damage when participating in the student concerts and hereby agreed to wear adequate hearing protection at all times and to cause my children and/or wards to do likewise. I acknowledge that said participation is voluntary and, further, in the event that I choose not to wear hearing protection or fail to cause my children and/or wards to wear hearing protection, I hereby release David Howard's Music Studio from any claims for damages whatsoever. (\_\_\_\_\_) Initials)
- Time is of the essence of this agreement.
- The terms of this agreement may only be amended in writing signed by both parties.

Client Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_ Today's Date \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ Province: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_ Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Business Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email Address \_\_\_\_\_

Fee per each individual lesson \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Lesson Duration (1/2 hour or 1 hour) \_\_\_\_\_

Lesson Scheduling: Day of week \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ In-Home Lessons?: Y / N

**Length of Term:**

This agreement commences on \_\_\_\_\_ and expires on \_\_\_\_\_

Signed on the \_\_\_\_\_ day of \_\_\_\_\_, 2011. (Dated at 126 Lowe Blvd. Newmarket, ON)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent, Guardian or Legal-Aged Client signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(David Howard, Owner)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Total Amount Paid)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheque # ( ) Cash  
(Payment Method)

**Installment Payment Amounts:**

September: \_\_\_\_\_

October: \_\_\_\_\_

November: \_\_\_\_\_

December: \_\_\_\_\_

January: \_\_\_\_\_

February: \_\_\_\_\_

March: \_\_\_\_\_

April: \_\_\_\_\_

May: \_\_\_\_\_

June: \_\_\_\_\_

Total Amount Paid: \_\_\_\_\_

Method of Payment(s): \_\_\_\_\_