

Teaching Philosophy

Edward W. Hardy*

The purest way to communicate the human condition is through the beauty of music.

My teaching philosophy is grounded in the belief that music is a universal language that connects cultures, retells our human history, and is the most prominent display of our imagination. Over the past decade, I've held violin teaching/ performing residencies and, as a visiting artist, gave masterclasses and lectures at numerous music programs and universities spanning New York City to Los Angeles, California. I have ardently cultivated a learning environment that fosters inclusivity, nurturing the seeds of creativity, critical analysis, and innovation. Simultaneously, my pedagogical journey has fortified my leadership and communication capabilities, honing these vital skills to their utmost proficiency. Through inspirational stories, representation, and self-reflection, my students develop a passion for music while nurturing their artistic, technical, and personal development.

Although I am a violin teacher and graduate instructor, I view these positions as that of a mentor. Students and I create a nurturing and empowering learning atmosphere that fosters a sense of worth, active listening, and motivation while making space to express their abilities, difficulties, and ambitions. While the structure of my teaching conforms to traditional methods (e.g., individual instruction, ensemble rehearsals, mock/ college auditions, college recitals), I enjoy integrating music technology and multimedia resources to have relevancy to our current times. This personalized approach allows me to tailor my teaching methods and repertoire selections to each student's unique needs and goals.

Central to my teaching is the cultivation of a solid technical foundation. Beginning in our first lesson, I emphasize proper posture, bowing technique, intonation, and tone production. These fundamental aspects are critical to equip my students with the technical skills necessary for expressive and confident violin playing. I also integrate music theory, sight-reading, and ear training into my lessons to foster a well-rounded understanding of music.

In the words of the great violinist Jascha Heifetz, *the discipline of practice every day is essential*. Aiming for technical proficiency, musicality, and expression are all equally vital. In my teaching, I embrace a holistic approach that exceeds the acquisition of displaying technical

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virtuosity and encourage my students to explore the artistic and emotional aspects of music, which in return help them develop unique interpretive ideas and a musical voice. Students should have a space for encouragement, support, and motivation while acquiring knowledge of diverse repertoire, including classical masterpieces, contemporary works, and music from various cultures (e.g., spirituals, folk music, jazz, tangos, and pop music). By including different musical genres in our lessons, I broaden their musical horizons and nurture their versatility as musicians. And through discussions, listening exercises, acting exercises, and guided performances, I strive to cultivate a deep appreciation for stage presence, phrasing, dynamics, and musical nuances - enabling my students to bring their performances to life and connect with audiences on a profound level.

Just as music bridges cultures, I believe students should participate in chamber music groups, orchestras, and collaborative projects, as these foster teamwork, communication, and a sense of musical community. As a result, students acquire invaluable opportunities for expedited growth as musicians. For validation, I encourage my students to embrace challenges, persevere through setbacks, and celebrate their accomplishments, no matter how small. By nurturing a positive and resilient attitude, I aim to empower them to become independent learners and confident performers on and off the stage.

As an active performing artist who leads by example, my teaching philosophy revolves around a supportive and empowering learning environment that builds trust, confidence, and a new chapter in my student's musical journey. As I believe there is always more to learn, my students and I discover the transformative power and beauty that is music.

Teaching References

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