

Instrument Recommendations

These are general guidelines that will help you to have a successful and rewarding experience learning an instrument. These are practical tips that we have discovered from years of teaching, our experiences with teaching hundreds of students, as well as researching various topics on this subject.

Piano or Keyboard -When one begins to pursue piano lessons for themselves or their child the question often asked is “Do we need a real piano to take lessons”? While purchasing a 9’ Steinway Grand Concert Piano may sound appealing, it may not be the most practical instrument to begin with. The main concern of most individuals is that they are unsure how far their or their child’s interest will take them and they are reluctant to invest a large sum of money in a piano. This is a very valid concern.

For those of you new to lessons, there are numerous options to investing a substantial amount of money in an acoustic piano. There are many affordable electronic keyboards available that will give you the same sound, feel, and range of a traditional piano. These are three very important factors to consider when purchasing an electronic keyboard while taking piano lessons.

Some companies have done extensive research on duplicating the sound of an acoustic piano through digital sampling. Many companies now build full size electronic keyboards with 88 keys to match the range of a traditional piano, as well as match the feel of the instrument through weighted or touch-sensitive keys and pedals. A touch-sensitive keyboard’s volume is determined on how hard or soft you hit the keys and the pedals are used to sustain or dampen the desired sound like an acoustic piano. Portable electronic keyboards missing any one of these options should be avoided.

If purchasing an acoustic piano is not an option, a keyboard like the one described above is the next best choice. Then later, if you decide it is time to upgrade, you will feel great about it! In the meantime, you will still be able to enrich your life making great music playing the piano at an affordable price and most importantly having lots of fun too!!

Recommended Models

There are many companies that offer mid-range to higher-range keyboards. Here are a few suggestions:

- Baldwin, Kurzweil, Korg, Roland, Suzuki, Yamaha,

Guitar - It is not always best to begin learning on an acoustic guitar. The best guitar to begin learning on is going to be based on the style of music that you want to learn. If Rock-n-Roll is the kind of music that you want to learn how to play, then the electric guitar would definitely be the best pick. An acoustic guitar would be better suited to a more mellow sound of rock or some other popular styles of music. If your interests are in classical music, the nylon string or classical guitar is the only choice. For jazz music there are many hybrid electric and acoustic types of guitars that are used.

Choosing the right guitar for a specific style of music involves two important factors. The first one is the size of the instrument and the second factor is the type of guitar necessary to play a specific style.

Size- Sizing up the best guitar with the right person for a specific style of music can be a daunting task although it doesn’t have to be. It is vital that the student gain optimal playing capabilities and learn on a size-appropriate instrument. Having a guitar that is the right size will aid the student in ease and efficiency in developing proper technique, positioning, and other skills necessary to play music on the guitar well.

There are many fractional size acoustic guitars available that come in 1/4, 1/2, 3/4, and full sizes. The student will less likely become frustrated and lose interest in learning when they can easily hold and play the instrument properly. Learning to play on an instrument that is large and too hard to play will result in frustration, faulty technique, and ultimately will lead to repetitive stress injuries such as tendonitis, carpal tunnel syndrome, or focal dystonia.

Different types of guitars- There are many differences between guitars. The length/width of the neck, strings, and the size of the body of the guitar differ between instruments. The three most common types used are the nylon-string, steel-string, and electric guitars. Listed below are some general characteristics of each.

The Nylon-String Guitar is an acoustic guitar with a short/wide neck with nylon strings. The sound of this guitar is rich and warm and it is very easy on the fingertips when fretting a note due to the light tension of the strings. The body of the guitar is smaller than most acoustic instruments and it is also easy to hold. This kind of guitar is also known as the classical guitar and it is made in ¼, ½, ¾ sizes as well. This is the kind of guitar that we recommend for the aspiring classical guitarist and also for students enrolled in the *Childbloom Guitar Program*.

The Steel-String Acoustic Guitar has a much thinner neck than the traditional classical guitar. It is much easier to wrap your fingers around the neck of this type of guitar. The strings on this guitar are made of various metal alloys and have a bright and brilliant sound to them. These strings have high tension and are a bit difficult to fret in the beginning. Body dimensions on these instruments vary from model to model. The largest body size for this guitar is known as the dreadnaught. It has a very large body size as well as a wide body depth. It is sometimes harder to hold for a smaller person. There are also smaller size instruments for the steel-string guitar, too. These models are known as or named folk, auditorium, triple O (ooo) guitar and have more slender dimensions. The size of this guitar is similar to a traditional classical guitar but with a thinner neck, steel strings, and a brighter sound. There are many fractional size steel-string instruments available as well. This kind of guitar is recommended for a wide range of popular music.

The Electric Guitar has a long thin neck with steel strings. This guitar can produce a wide array of sounds with the proper amplification or effects. This guitar is very easy to play and hold if the person is sized up correctly. There is also very light string tension even though it has steel strings. Body shapes vary quite a bit between instruments, but the body depths of these guitars are universally thin. Although these guitars are thin, they are solid thus making them heavier than their acoustic counterparts. This kind of guitar is highly recommended for anyone wanting to play rock or any other styles of popular music.

Amplification is absolutely necessary for the electric guitar. The electric guitar cannot be heard without an amplifier. There are just as many different kinds of amps as there are guitars ranging from little ones that can be fastened to a belt buckle all the way up to a full stack that can tower over an adult! For the beginner on a budget it is recommended to invest in a good practice amp that has some effects such as distortion with a single 8"-10" speaker. You will also need some guitar picks, a strap, and a cable to plug the guitar into the amp to be heard. Most popular music does not limit itself to only one style of guitar. The most important thing to keep in mind is that you want an instrument that is going to produce the same sound of music that you are going to play.

Recommended Models

There are many companies that make all three of the types of guitars mentioned above. Here are a few suggestions:

Nylon-String -Aria, Amada, Lucida, Ramirez, Strunal, Suzuki, Yamaha. (All sizes)

Steel -String - Alvarez, Godall, Gibson, Martin, Seagull, Taylor, as well as the above companies.

Electric - B.C. Rich, Charvel, Dean, Fender, G&L, Gibson, Ibanez, and Jackson.

Amplification- Berringer, Crate, Fender, Hughes & Kettner, Line 6, Peavy, and Marshall.

The Music School of CNY is a dynamic and exciting school that offers a unique approach to private guitar, bass, and piano instruction in the traditions of rock, folk, classical, and jazz. Our up-to-date facilities and personable staff provide a comfortable learning environment to meet the needs of our students. Our instructors are well-trained, experienced professionals dedicated to providing instruction second to none. We aim to establish a new set of standards in music education. The **Music School of CNY** is also proud to feature The **Childbloom Guitar Program**, which is a nationally recognized program developed for children between the ages of 5 and 12. The Childbloom Guitar Program offers fun and personal achievement in a low pressure environment. The Childbloom curriculum prepares the student to play music at a high standard quickly and enjoyably. Register now by calling us at **455-5006** or visit us at www.musicschoolofcny.com