

Rhapsody ARTS CENTER

Fall, 2011

As the founder and executive director of Rhapsody, I am always thinking about ways to improve the quality of our programs while keeping our lessons affordable. I look for the best value in the programs I choose to enroll my own kids in, and I expect that you do the same for your family.

As a seasoned teacher now beginning my 24th year of teaching private piano lessons, I struggle to squeeze everything in to a 30-minute lesson, even for a new beginner. In talking with other music teachers across the nation, our teachers at Rhapsody, and reading articles about lesson length, I've learned that other teachers struggle as well. Beginning the summer of 2011, Rhapsody no longer offers a 30 minute lesson.

1. Our lessons are either 40 or 55 minutes, with a 5 minute parent conference time between lessons.
2. Parents are encouraged to regularly sit in on the last 10 minutes of their child's lesson, or at least touch base with the teacher at the conclusion of each lesson. We've found that consistent communication with parents fosters the best student satisfaction.
3. Teachers will use the additional time to:
 - a. Give a more in-depth explanation of theory and history of the assigned music, making the music easier and more fun to learn
 - b. Encourage listening to recordings of different styles and genres
 - c. Work on practice techniques, making it faster and easier to learn new pieces
 - d. Review basic concepts and terminology
 - e. Encourage the further development of technique, sightreading and memorization skills, as well as composition, improvisation, and other skills relevant to that particular instrument

"I can understand the benefits, but how will this affect my tuition rate?"

Our tuition rate has been the same since the summer of 2009. The Tuition rate has not increased for the 2011-12 academic year, but the minimum lesson length has increased. Your tuition payment will be more, because you're getting more of the teacher's time. As in the past, we have payment plans for your convenience (3 payments per year, 6 payments per year, monthly payments, or pay for the year in full and receive a 3% discount).

It has always been important to me that we stay focused on providing what's best for our students. I've thought about this change for several years now, and I really feel that increasing the amount of time we see our students each week will greatly enhance the progress we see. Our job is to inspire them for the *whole week* in what we present to them in *one lesson!* Please feel free to speak with your teacher about how a longer lesson format benefits your budding musician.

"What else is new at Rhapsody for 2011-12?"

There are a few other new items to note:

1. Online registration: sign up for classes, recitals, and other student events from the convenience of your home.

2. Online customer portal: check your family account through the same online registration program. Even email the office or your teacher from the portal.
3. Flexible and revamped Ensemble Experiences: sign up online for the class you want to attend. For added convenience to your family's schedule, there is no need to attend the same class day/time for each Ensemble week (except for School of Rock). In addition to age/level-appropriate classes that incorporate the National Standards for Music Education, there are extra Specialty Classes as well as Parent Enrichment classes. Attend as many classes during Ensemble Experience week as you like.

If you have any questions, suggestions, or comments, please feel free to contact us! We're looking forward to a great year in the arts.

Mickey

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