**PHILOSOPHY**

I believe each student is unique, therefore that requires a unique approach to teaching and customizing a lesson plan catered to that student is what I feel is the best approach. Some of the material I use is Essential Elements, Suzuki, All for Strings, and ABC’s of Violin. The Suzuki method will always have a special place in my heart because I learned so much about the Violin through the repertoire provided. However, it’s not for everyone and I believe we should always have several “tools” in our belt to adjust to every type of student.

That being said, Scales and Etudes are an essential component of any developing musician and necessary for a great foundation. As learning progresses I believe using Wohlfart Sixty Studies for Violin, Galamian Scales, and Simon Fischers basics will reinforce those foundational learning elements.

**RATES**

30 minutes: $30

45 minutes: $45

1 hour: $60

**STUDENTS ACCEPTED**

I am currently accepting violin students of all ages and beginner to beginner-intermediate level. If your child needs any special accommodations PLEASE make sure to give me a heads up so we can determine if I’m a good fit for them.

**PAYMENTS**

Lesson fees are due in FULL at the beginning of the month at the FIRST lesson of each month. Payment in Cash is highly preferred, but I do accept checks made out to “Victoria Bietz”. At this time I can also accept Venmo or Zelle in lieu of check. Overall, I would greatly appreciate all lessons being paid in cash at the beginning of the month. When paying in cash, please make it easier for me and put it inside an envelope, or have sticky with the paid amount and your name. If paying the month in full is a hardship, I can accept cash  for individual lessons, but please take the time to communicate your preference with me.

After the first two lessons, new students should plan on committing to a minimum of three full months of lessons. I would prefer students to commit to an entire year of lessons with me, or 2 recitals. Violin is a difficult instrument, and takes time and patience to get to change teachers or start the violin in general. For example, it can easily take an entire year to get through Suzuki Book 1.

**STUDIO LOCATIONS**

My Violin Studio is conveniently located in University Heights: Washington East off the 163, or Texas Street off the 8. Both ways are less than 5 minutes from the freeway. Please note that I have two cats, in case you have any allergies.

On Mondays I teach at The Violin Shop, located at The 5 and 805 split in Sorrento Valley. The address is: 10505 Sorrento Valley Road #385, San Diego 92121. Unfortunately I do not teach at the shop on other days, as Monday is my only teaching day.

Please note that I do not offer lessons every other week, and I do not drive to student’s homes for lessons. I have found that there is minimal progress when lessons are every other week.  Bad habits are formed and it is nearly impossible for a teacher to make changes as progress is very slow and limited.  Lessons every other week is frustrating in different ways for both teacher and student. After years of teaching, I have seen that students do better in every way by having lessons away from the comfortable home environment. When lessons are held at the teacher’s studio, there is a more formal and professional attitude from all involved: student, parent, and teacher.

I need both parents on board- ESPECIALLY when parents are divorced.  For example, I cannot have a student practicing only at mom’s house, and leaving the violin at home when staying with dad (or visa versa). I need both parents to commit to scheduling and get their child to the lesson each week. Both parents have to commit to making sure their child has daily and weekly practice.

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**CANCELLATION POLICIES**

Parents/students who cancel lessons less than 24 hours in advance will be charged IN FULL for the missed lesson. Lessons cancelled due to sickness and emergencies can possibly be rescheduled for makeup later in the week or month, but only if I can accommodate the change in my schedule. I would be happy to work with you to reschedule your weekly lesson time if you notify me at least 24 hours in advance. I should not have to state this, but “please” and “thank you” and “sorry for the inconvenience” go a long way with me making the accommodation Please note that I do not make up missed or forgotten lessons- no exceptions. Please plan ahead and TEXT me (not email) the request.

If you are running late on a lesson, please text me immediately. If I don’t hear from you within 15 minutes of the lesson start time, I reserve the right to leave, and you have forfeited your lesson time. Additionally, lessons cannot be made up when canceled after the set lesson time has already started. Please do not ask me to make up this type of missed lesson as I have set aside my time for your lesson.

There are times when I am called to perform for an event, which may require me to reschedule your lesson. I will always notify students/parents ASAP if and when this part of my profession impacts your scheduled lesson time. Thank you for understanding.

**DISCONTINUING LESSONS**

For students/parents who are changing teachers and/or discontinuing lessons mid-month, I do not refund money for unused lessons. I will gladly finish out the month of paid lessons and cannot refund money that has already been received. No exceptions. Please be considerate and give me two weeks notice, as I have your lesson time reserved for the entire year. I get lesson requests all the time from students wanting lesson times already taken. This two week period allows me to plan head, time to fill the available lesson time and therefore re-coup the loss of income. Thank you for your understanding.

Additionally, please talk to me on the phone or in person if you or your child is planning on stopping lessons. I would prefer that there be communication with me BEFORE you decide to quit, if you feel I am not tough enough, or I am expecting too much from you, or your child etc. etc. I am not a mind-reader, and would greatly appreciate communication, so that I can be a better teacher:) I have many hats that I put on as a teacher- I am not the same teacher to every single student. If you have decided you are discontinuing lessons, please do not text me this news. Please take the time to be considerate and call me and talk to me on the phone.

**MY EXPECTATIONS**

Please keep your nails cut and trimmed. It is impossible to play the violin correctly with long nails. I do not want to waste our lesson time waiting for students to cut their nails. Make sure you cut them the day before the scheduled lesson.

I expect all of my students to practice between lessons and listen to their songs on the CDs and YouTube on a weekly basis. Please listen to the entire CD, and always be prepared with your listening for the next song in the book. I do not want to start teaching any song, unless the student has done their homework and already listened to the song. Being ready for the next song should include active listening to the new song while following along with the music. If you have not done your homework with the listening, you are wasting precious lesson time and your money.

Between lessons, I would be more than willing to view and critique any videos you have taken of yourself playing specific passages. You are also welcome to text me any question you have about the music you are playing.

Daily practice is very important for violin progress. The most important days to practice are the day after your lesson, and the day before your lesson. Please remember 15 minutes a day is much better than cramming an hour practice right before the lesson. I have found that “practice calendars” are helpful for students of all ages.

SLOW PRACTICE is always very important! Slow practice allows you to hear intonation, manage the bow, and improve your sound quality. Slow practice allows you to listen to the intonation, and immediately fix your notes. Always practice your songs slow before playing them fast. The tempos on the CDs can be extremely fast, and I do not want my students playing them so fast. I only want to hear my students playing tempos where they sound good and are in control. Slower and in control is exponentially better than fast and sloppy. As a violinist, you are expected to always be listening and adjusting. Please don’t wait for me to tell you the note is out of tune. Listen and adjust. Listen and adjust. Always!

Younger students under 10 years old need daily practice with help of the parent who brings them to the lessons, and cannot be expected to practice by themselves. Parents should therefore plan to watch all lessons and take notes, so they can help with practice during the week. If a parent cannot bring them and a grandparent or nanny needs to, please communicate with me so we can make this arrangement work.

The “Suzuki Triangle” is an equilateral triangle with Parent, Teacher, and Student equally working together. In addition, I expect the parent or parents who bring the student to their lesson to actively take notes unless I am taking notes. It becomes a wasted lesson if the parent is not paying attention and not involved with the lesson. If for some reason the “practicing parent” cannot come to the lesson, then I expect whomever comes in their place to be watching and taking notes for the parent who cannot be there. Please inform me ahead of time if the “practicing parent” cannot come to the lesson and let me know who will be bringing them. Progress is best when the parent who mainly comes to the lessons, stays as constant as possible.

Children need encouragement and incentives for good daily/weekly-monthly practice. The rule in my house was I could not go outside and play until I had done my practicing. I also used to get a piece of candy after practice, which was a more useful “carrot” in the 80’s My parents enforced the rule and I understood their expectations of me. Today this may translate to no TV/ video games/ iPad until practicing has been started and finished. Children thrive when they understand and know the daily practice expectations. Do not expect that your child is going to want to practice. Playing the violin requires a commitment daily practice, period.

Practicing too late in the day can be very challenging for young students. Right after school and after a snack is a perfect time to devote the energy to a good practice. Break up the practice into 2 separate sessions if concentrating for the entire practice is difficult. Please make the effort to not practice with your child too late in the evening. Violin practicing needs to be prioritized and not left until right before bedtime.

Parents and students please make sure your cellphone is turned to SILENT, as beeps and vibrations are disruptive. Additionally, if siblings are brought to the lesson, make sure they are quiet, respectful, and occupied during the duration of the lesson.

**HOME STUDIO POLICIES**

Parents: Please make sure that students and siblings under 10 years old are well mannered, respectful and calm while in my home. I do not tolerate running around and yelling and screaming in my living room. I expect parents to parent their children, and not to rely on me to get them to behave. If children are not paying attention and not being respectful, I reserve the right to stop the lesson early. I am a violin teacher and not a paid babysitter.

**VIOLIN PURCHASES & RENTALS**

If you are just starting the violin and have no experience PLEASE DO NOT BUY OR RENT your first violin without consulting a teacher. I can not reiterate this enough. There are MANY horrible and junky violins out there on Craigslist, Ebay, Offer Up etc. Violin is hard enough to start in general- please minimize the learning curve and get a violin that will HELP and not HURT the process. I have seen violins come to me which are only good for firewood or for putting on the wall, and I am not kidding! The rule is that you get what you pay for.  A full size violin outfit for $300 is probably not a good idea. The Violin Shop has GREAT violin rentals. Please call the shop directly for more information.

For me as a teacher, please do not get a violin rental from Alan’s Music in La Mesa. They are a band and sheet music store, and do not have the knowledge for violin set up and quality. Likewise, any music store that has saxophones, clarinets and trumpets on the walls is not going to be a good place to get a violin.