

Phil Graves

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Teaching Info

I have been teaching music for over thirty years... from home, in different schools (mainstream, private, special needs) and now solely from Dove Studio. Most of my pupils are local children, although I also teach adults. I began teaching in 1993 – full-time from 1995 when I finished my music degree... I studied piano and guitar, and specialized in composition & ‘music in education’. I have played (either piano/keyboards, guitar or bass) in many different bands over the last 50 years... punk, alternative, rock, jazz, pop, big band, salsa, latin; original and cover ‘function’ bands. My passion has always been songwriting and I am a ‘persistent’ songwriter <https://soundcloud.com/phil-dovestudio-biz/sets>

I work in tandem with the school’s term calendar. I bill you half-termly, which can be paid in a variety of ways. I organise a concert every year for the pupils to perform in ... always an enjoyable day. Although some pupils do perform solo at the concert, they generally perform together in small groups/bands, and in the summer term, leading up to the concert, work together in preparation. This period of group work is not only fun & stimulating for the pupils but also an important element of their musical education. Lessons are currently £21 for a half-hour lesson. The school terms are between 12 & 14 weeks each (usually Spring 12, Summer 13 & Autumn 14).

Although lessons are instrument centred they also incorporate general music skills and activities (all pupils tend to play drums in their groups for instance). I try to provide a mix of the positive aspects of ‘conventional’ music teaching with the more modern joys of teaching music... improvising & soloing, understanding chords/harmony and how ‘it all works!’, jazz/modern styles, recording & use of music technology, songwriting (many pupils have developed their own song-writing here – see <http://soundcloud.com/yojimusic> and <http://www.ambereloise.com/> - Yogi & Amber were pupils for many years. I encourage pupils to sing songs and teach them to accompany themselves on their instrument. I provide a notebook in which I list work set for the week. I also provide 90% of the books & materials pupils’ use, **lending them out...** rather than you buying many books that might only be used for a few months. If a book has a more long-term use I will get it and sell it on to you.

Concerts and exams are very useful as goals to work towards... to help focus the mind. Concerts are of course the more ‘natural’ of the two and the most fun perhaps... but exams are very useful too, and a good challenge. I enter pupils for a variety of exam types, varying between; classical piano, jazz (i.e. modern styles) piano, piano duet, electric guitar, bass guitar & acoustic guitar. Also music theory grades.

Bear in mind though that piano and guitar students tend to enter the exam scene a little later than other instrumentalists (more notes to play at once!). I also think it is nice, in general, to have some time to breathe before contemplating an exam, as well as time in-between them. Once the pupils start the exam ladder then sitting one exam per year is the norm. Concerts, however, are compulsory from the start!

As you may or may not be aware of, in one aspect I (and others!) work oppositely to what is routinely the case in much conventional music teaching (i.e. starting with 400 year old music and gradually working through to the 21st Century – many pupils never make it!). I start with music that inspires the pupil **now**, whatever that is, and go from there.

My lessons cater for what a pupil bring to me musically **that day**, not focusing on what they perhaps they 'should' have done that week (according to their notebook). This is very important in keeping, what is a very long musical road, fresh & pertinent. That's not say I don't nag where appropriate!

I provide all necessary books and materials which then appear later on your bill, as will any examination fees. However, as mentioned, most books I will lend you from my large and growing library. Please bring along to our initial meeting any books you already have and I will make use them of them.

'Virtual Bands' Once a pupil has established themselves with their instrument I try if possible to timetable them alongside other similar pupils. This enables small groups of pupils to occasionally, but fairly regularly, get together and share their lesson time working as a band. Members will work on the same materials individually (often songs) that then feed into their group work – it's fun, stimulating and generally a good thing all round. We either record a CD or produce a music video in the autumn term for Xmas publication! See...

Audio <http://soundcloud.com/pupils-at-dove-studio>

YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UChrsiVBxPnMM5HEQwMMtlwg>

And all groups perform in the summer concert. I try and mix guitarists, pianists, keyboardists, singers & drummers – i.e. make up bands.

CONDITIONS

If a pupil can't make lesson please give me as much notice as possible. We can rearrange it but lesson does generally need to be **within the same working week** (i.e. before following week's lesson). If a lesson is missed without any prior warning it will be charged for and probably not rescheduled. I'm always keen to honour all lessons and generally always find an alternative time.

I will only enter pupils for exams that I see as appropriate.

Each term is a set amount of weeks and I do really need to stick to a set number of lessons per term (Autumn 14, Spring 12, Summer 13 is the norm).

I don't require any particular notice when you want to cease lessons, although usually this happens between terms... my assumption being we are making a termly commitment to each other. However, alterations to this assumption can apply!