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PHILOSOPHY OF TEACHING

In my private lesson studio, students have the opportunity to experience all styles of saxophone, clarinet or flute performance. Once a student gains a certain level of proficiency he or she is encouraged to focus on specific performance disciplines; however, all of my students are required to have a working knowledge of classical, jazz and contemporary performance styles. During lessons for advanced students I compare, contrast, and integrate the technical and musical aspects of these various idioms thus enabling the individual to have a background worthy of a musician (performer and/or educator) working in the twenty-first century. Students who successfully complete their work in my studio will have a diverse repertoire of standard classical and/or jazz literature; will experience a variety of etude and exercise material; will be able to improvise; and will be proficient with chord and scale material. I will select specific material for each individual depending upon their ability, level of experience, and musical goals.

In the classroom, I believe that it is vitally important to involve as many of my students as possible. In smaller class sizes I have had great success with hands-on and interactive learning. I think that student participation is essential for optimizing learning and keeping undergraduates involved. In graduate and upper-level seminars I engage students in critical thinking and challenge them to intelligently question the subject matter at hand. Available teaching technology plays an important role for me in all teaching situations. In large lecture situations I pride myself in the ability to give clear, organized, and comprehensive lectures that allow the students to understand the concepts of the topic at hand and to encourage them to go beyond my lecture to seek out further information on the subject. I believe that using whatever teaching technology is available to me enhances the classroom environment and provides students with the greatest opportunity for understanding and retaining the information presented in the classroom. As an educator, I realize that students learn in different ways, some students are visual, some aural, and others are tactile learners. Using a variety of teaching approaches increases the ways in which I am able to present information to my students.

My philosophy of teaching stems from my numerous and diverse educational experiences. I have had the privilege of attending some of the world's finest music institutions. Consequently, my teaching methods have developed from a conglomeration of the fine educators that have influenced me. In high school I attended two different performing arts academies where I learned the values of patience and hard work, values that are necessary for succeeding in college and in life in general. I further honed my musical performance skills during my undergraduate years under the tutelage of some of the world's most renowned jazz scholars.

During my undergrad I was introduced to the advantages of using music technology. At that time I began to use music technology extensively while teaching in the classroom. In addition, I compose and record my own music. I am fluent in music technology tools of the trade including: Finale, Sibelius, Pro-tools, Digital Performer, and Logic. I am also adept with Microsoft PowerPoint, and video editing software including Final Cut Pro. I utilize all of these tools in the classroom.

At the University of Pittsburgh I have adopted the theories and methodologies of modern ethnomusicology and the research and analysis techniques needed to excel in the field. In both my public school teaching experience and my teaching experience in graduate school I have honed my ability to integrate the use of technology with music performance, theory, composition, and cultural studies. As a result, I have developed a highly successful teaching style that encourages student achievement in my classroom.