

Melanie Harper

SUZUKI HARP STUDIO

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HARP STUDIO POLICIES

Effective January 2019

Welcome to my studio! The harp is an incredible instrument. I have played for over 15 years and graduated from the University of Utah with a degree in Harp Performance. I love performing, but teaching the harp is one of my greatest joys. I enjoy watching each student learn and progress—not only in music, but in every aspect of their lives. I believe it is important to create opportunities for my students to stretch themselves and experience new things. As such, I am constantly trying to improve my teaching and my studio, which is why there are sometimes changes in my teaching methods and studio organization. Please take the time to read and understand my current studio policies. I am always happy to answer any questions you may have, and texting or email is usually the best way to reach me.

STUDIO ETIQUETTE

A specific time period has been reserved exclusively for each student. Please arrive on time with your music, assignment sheet, and any other relevant materials. Lessons will begin and end on time, and students who are late will have what remains of their lesson time. Please put away electronic devices and cell phones during lesson time. Please don't bring beverages, candy or gum into the studio.

Make sure you wash your hands before your lesson, and be sure your FINGERNAILS are trimmed at least twice a week. It's impossible for students with long fingernails to use correct technique on the harp. Students who trim their nails just before their lesson will have practiced with incorrect technique. Students are expected to respect studio instruments, equipment, and music, and will be responsible for replacing damaged items. Students are also expected to show respect for the instructor and other students in the studio.

As a reminder, texting or email is the best way to reach me. I prefer not to answer the phone during lessons so if you must reach me during lesson hours, please send a quick text or leave a message on my phone. I will send information frequently about studio events and other information from the harp community so please check your email often.

INSTRUMENT

Your whole harp should be kept in tune and maintained in good condition. It is very difficult to enjoy playing on an out-of-tune instrument. The more often you tune your harp, the easier it will be to keep it in tune. Please make sure the harp is located in a safe, well-lit area of the house. Have an appropriate bench, music stand, metronome and music all kept next to the harp, ready to use. A student is much more likely to practice if the harp is already set up and ready for them. Also, take precautions to keep little children away from the harp to prevent damage.

Make sure that you replace all strings as quickly as possible, and be certain you are replacing it with the correct string. Even if you never use some strings in your current pieces, it will damage your harp to leave them off for more than a short period of time. Also replace false or hairy strings as they affect the sound of your instrument. Pedals harps should be regulated every 2 years.

PRACTICING

Daily practice is essential for musical progress. If harp lessons are treated like an academic subject, students will improve and advance and enjoy it more in the long run. Students are encouraged to keep a practice record on their weekly assignment sheets and to work toward musical goals rather than simply counting minutes. The study of music is rewarding and enjoyable, but it is also work! Students are encouraged to practice at least 5 days a week. Remember "You get out of it what you put into it." Unprepared lessons cost the same as prepared ones, and while they are still beneficial, their value is substantially compromised.

The parent's role in practicing is at times just as important as the student's. I have noticed in my studio that students with committed and involved parents make much more effective, lasting progress. Very young students (8 and under) need a parent present in the room helping them practice correctly and efficiently. Young students (ages 8 to about 12) do not need a parent in the room all the time but they need someone to check their progress each day and periodically make sure they are practicing things correctly. Teenage students should know how to practice on their own however they may need help finding time to practice and finding the motivation to practice consistently and effectively.

It is a rare child who enjoys the work of practicing all of the time. Be consistent, persistent, and cheerful. Constant attention must be given to accurate notes, proper fingering, correct posture, and the production of a beautiful tone. Schedule a practice time with your child and stick to it!

PRACTICING GUIDELINES

SUZUKI BOOK 1: 30 minutes each day

SUZUKI BOOK 2: 45 minutes each day

SUZUKI BOOK 3: 1 hour each day

SUZUKI BOOK 4 and above: 1 hour or more each day

The above practicing guidelines are a minimum. Additional practicing will result in greater progress. During busy times of the year sometimes students feel like they don't have the time to practice. Please help them schedule more wisely and remember that keeping practice consistent each day is more important than finding larger periods of time to practice that may be more infrequent.

LISTENING

Listening to the Suzuki CD's is absolutely necessary to the success of your child. I cannot make up for the learning that you miss when you fail to listen. At the very least, spend as much time listening as you do practicing. Students who listen, review, and practice consistently move quickly through the literature. Many students do not take advantage of this incredible learning tool. I have noticed over the years that the students who listen to their CD once a week learn faster than those who never listen and students who listen everyday learn exponentially faster. Time spent listening should be in addition to each student's daily practice and just as parents need to help their child practice, they need to help make sure that listening takes place. Find a time each day for listening – this could be while the student is getting ready for the day, in the car, before bed, etc. It is preferable if listening can be done at the same time each day so it becomes a daily habit. Each student should be listening for at least 30 minutes to 2 hours a day. Remember that this is passive listening – you can be doing other activities while listening.

GROUP LESSONS

Students will come to a 60 minute group lesson once every month, generally the last week of the month. There will be no private lessons the week of group lessons. Attendance at group lessons is mandatory and you will occasionally need to bring your harp to your group lessons. Group lessons are a vital part of your child's progress. Make group lessons a priority. Do not schedule other activities at this time, come late, or leave early.

During group lessons students learn skills that are much more difficult if not impossible to teach individually. During group lessons we learn history and theory – enabling each student to be a well-rounded musician. We have master classes and play together as ensembles. Other skills we learn include rhythm training, playing expressively and performing. One of the most important things in making music is making it as a group. Students of other instruments play together in groups all the time (band and orchestra), and getting together to play and learn is an important part of a musical education. Plus, group lessons are fun!

PERFORMANCES

Various performing opportunities will arise during the year. These are valuable and important opportunities and are highly encouraged for all my students.

AHS-Utah Harp Festival at BYU* - usually the 2nd Saturday in May

Harp Ensemble Concert** - usually in October or November

Christmas Concert - either a solo studio concert, or an ensemble concert

*Additional participation fee for Festival **Additional participation fees may apply

The Solo Recital in the spring is a great opportunity to perform one of the pieces being prepared for the AHS-Utah Harp Festival in May. The Harp Ensemble Concert in the Fall will rotate in scale between area, regional, and Celebration ensemble concerts. These events will help build each student's confidence in their ability to perform well in front of an audience as well as teach them to prepare and polish a piece of music. Please make sure each student can take advantage of these opportunities. I also encourage and prepare my students to play at other events such as church, family parties, school events, solo recitals, festivals, etc.

INSTITUTES & WORKSHOPS

The Utah Suzuki Harp Institute is held every two years at Utah State University in Logan. Institute is a great opportunity for students to receive different musical experiences than can be given in the studio. Students have the opportunity to study with other instructors, develop relationships with other harpists, study additional musical subjects and make enormous progress by spending a week focusing just on the harp. Institute is a place where many students get inspired to work harder at their instrument and remember how much fun it can be to study the harp. In addition to Institute, there are many other fantastic harp conferences, institutes, and workshops offered each summer throughout the United States. Please let me know if you would like more details.

TUITION AND FEES

Tuition is figured on a monthly basis as follows:

30-minute lessons \$100/month

45-minute lessons \$120/month

60-minute lessons \$140/month

Monthly tuition payments are due on or before the 1st lesson of each month. You will be charged a late fee of \$15.00 if you pay your tuition after the 10th of the month. Returned check fees are \$30.00. Payments may be made through venmo (@melanieharper17), check, or cash. A small increase in tuition may be expected each January. Tuition is based on enrollment, not attendance, and reserves your student's exclusive lesson time and studio benefits throughout the harp year whether he/she attends lessons or not. If you know of a conflict ahead of time, or are sick, please let me know as soon as possible. While I sympathize with an occasional illness or scheduling conflict, my schedule is full and I will not always be able to accommodate and make time for a makeup lesson.

MEMBERSHIPS

All of my student families are required to be members of the Suzuki Association of Utah (SAU). Being a member of the SAU allows you to participate in concerts, workshops, and Institute. This annual membership fee is in addition to the tuition for lessons. The membership fee for SAU is \$30/year per family.

SIGNATURES

I, hereby state that I have read, understand, and will abide by all studio policies as outlined in the current studio policy document.

Parent: _____

Date: _____

Student: _____

Date: _____

Student: _____

Date: _____

Student: _____

Date: _____