



## Plant a Seed Music School Programs Overview

Instruction is offered in piano/keyboards, all styles of guitar, bass (upright and electric), folk strings, drums and percussion, and music recording and production. Presently, classes are mostly online, but in person sessions can happen on the sun deck (weather permitting), appropriately distanced. Unfortunately, classes cannot be offered inside the beautiful music studio at this time. Online classes are available statewide. The school is located in beautiful residential Turnagain in Anchorage, Alaska. Interested families are encouraged to visit [www.nicholaspetumenosmusic.com](http://www.nicholaspetumenosmusic.com) and specifically [www.nicholaspetumenosmusic.com/plantaseed](http://www.nicholaspetumenosmusic.com/plantaseed) to read more about the founder and the school's philosophy.

### **The 2020 Music Lesson**

Plant A Seed Music School offers a lesson track that is based on combining instruction on an instrument with instruction in desktop recording and audio/video editing. This curriculum is especially compatible with remote online learning. GarageBand, Logic, Protools, iMovie and Premier Pro are just a few of the platforms covered. Students develop proficiency on an instrument while also learning to create media they can share on YouTube and social media. Instrumental instruction is essentially as described below under "traditional" music lesson.

A typical "2020 Music Lesson" assignment is for the student to practice along with a play-along track created by the instructor. When ready, the student records their part, replacing the instructor's track. As students advance, they progress to record video and audio of themselves simultaneously and learn to synchronize video and audio to create a final product. Collaborating on recording projects remotely with other students is an option as students become more adept.

This contemporary approach was developed through the teaching of college classes online as a result of the pandemic, but music education was headed in this direction regardless. It has been my experience over the last two decades that most children, adolescents and teens are eager to create something that sounds like what they like to listen to. Learning to create something that sounds fairly "radio ready" on their home computer (which is actually surprisingly easy to accomplish) is a great way to pique their interest in the longer-ranging discipline of becoming virtuosic as an instrumentalist. I

have lost count of the number of times that a student enrolled in my studio as a pianist or guitarist has had their lagging interest rescued by the potential to record themselves, integrate their instrument with electronic music, and create a product that is less “ephemeral” than daily practice. This often results in a renewed enthusiasm for their instrument.

To put it in music history terms, J.S. Bach did not eschew the new contraption called a piano-forte. Rather, he composed the Well-Tempered Clavier to explore its potential. In the last few decades, software developers have created visual representations of sound that surpass the five-line staff in nuance and descriptive power. While traditional music literacy will always offer a rich heritage and an excellent foundation, and I will always teach it, one could make a sound argument that literacy in one or two DAWs (digital audio workstations) will be more important than being able to read the staff, within the decade. Of course, fluency in both is the best-case scenario! That is why Plant A Seed Music School offers the 2020 music lesson in addition to a traditional music lesson format.

### **Traditional Music Lesson**

Musical repertoire is at the center of the Plant A Seed curriculum. Everything a student needs to learn is in the pieces of music they wish to play. The instructor and the student collaborate to choose music to guide the lessons. The level of challenge of the pieces selected will need to correspond to the level of ability of the student, but an appropriate excerpt can almost always be found, even if the piece in its entirety is too ambitious.

Through the repertoire, all musical fundamentals are addressed. Technique, rhythm, harmony (theory), sight reading, phrasing, dynamics, improvisation, etc., are taught in the context of learning to play. Exercises and methodologies can be applied to help the student to overcome any obstacles that arise, but generally speaking, the objective is to approach the music as directly as possible. Any conceptual teaching that occurs or practice discipline that is prescribed is in direct service of the music, nothing is wasted. The “music at the center” approach is equally valid for a four-year-old beginner playing their first few songs at the piano as it is for the high-school senior matriculating to an excellent college music program, with designs of becoming a professional.

A portion of the first two to three sessions of the semester will be used to set specific and realistic goals, based on the student’s present level of experience and unique interests. Grading is based on consistent attendance of sessions and the mastery of repertoire. A specific tally of points per lesson and per performance piece will be lined out depending on the number of teaching weeks in the semester and the number and magnitude of pieces assigned.

## **Culminating Online “Recital” Portfolio**

Students who have recording capability at home (or can acquire and develop recording capability during the semester) will have the option of contributing an audio or video recording to a “virtual” recital that can be shared with friends, family and other students. The sharing of the semester’s work fosters a sense of community within the school and can be allotted points towards the student’s final semester grade.