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# Studio Policy

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REGINA'S MUSIC STUDIO



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*1132 Mission Street, Suite A, South Pasadena, CA 91030*

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# Introduction

## *How We Got Started*

Regina's Music Studio was established as a mobile music school in 2012 when the owner, Regina Ngo, saw that there was a lack of music schools in the San Gabriel Valley who genuinely cared about offering music lessons that combined the right balance of nurture, discipline, and top-quality music instruction. With only an old car and a big dream, Regina began with just three students from all over the greater Los Angeles area.

When the number of students grew, Regina opened her first location in South Pasadena in 2014 to accommodate the demand for the top-notch education she offered. When the number of students grew *even more*, Regina hired her best friend from USC, Andrea Choi, to assist her in meeting the teaching demand.

Today, that number has grown to over sixty families from local areas such as San Marino, South Pasadena, La Cañada, and more. Regina's Music Studio continues to offer the best quality of music education possible for students of all ages and walks of life. Our students have continually ranked and placed at the top of competitions, festivals, and the prestigious ABRSM examinations.

Thank you for choosing Regina's Music Studio as your music school.

## *Why We're Different*

Regina's Music Studio's primary goal is to establish a culture of appreciation for music of all genres. We believe that children are the future of tomorrow, and numerous studies have proven that music education at an early age greatly enhances growth in the brain and impacts empathy skills and love for education and the arts.

All of our instructors are rigorously trained in award-winning institutions and universities, and they *specialize* in their instruments—that means that we employ instructors who majored in their instrument and/or completed demanding pedagogical courses.

We are all about quality over quantity—which means we never take more students than our teachers can give 100% of their effort and commitment to. Even if this means we have a waiting list, we never want to compromise the quality of instruction given to every student we have.

Regina's Music Studio believes in positive reinforcement—this means that we offer an *incentive program* for students to earn music money to redeem for prizes, gift cards, and more. We also integrate the usage of technology into lessons and daily practice, making practice more fun and less of a struggle at home.

## Chapter One

# What We Offer

Regina's Music Studio offers top-notch quality music education to its students. Because our clientele comes from all walks of life, we tailor all lessons to each individual student. All of the lessons we offer are private, which means all of our students get the one-on-one attention they deserve.

We are highly committed to providing students with as many opportunities to learn, develop, and grow as musicians. Our main goal is to create a fun lesson plan while still maintaining a disciplined learning environment. Beginning in 2017, we will offer free studio master classes once per month, bring in guest artists to work with students, provide feedback to our students's practice sessions through a unique iPad practice application, and much more. Our instructors are all tech-savvy, and often times will answer practice questions via iMessage or texting. We are here for you, even after your lesson time is over.

Currently, we are committed to perfecting our piano program, and offer piano lessons exclusively. We understand that there are many other wonderful instruments, but piano is usually the first instrument that all musicians start with because of its steady pitch (to develop ears) and its ease in providing a well-rounded education in music theory (i.e.: note reading in both treble and bass clefs, understanding of pitch and rhythm, etc.) We do have many students learn other instruments later on, especially those who are in fourth grade and higher, and they almost always have an easier time making the transition or addition of another instrument because of their grounded knowledge in the piano.

### *Learning Programs*

Programs we offer include private piano, music theory, music history, and duet/trio/two piano ensemble (coming soon.) Lessons are scheduled typically once or twice per week, depending on the student's age, capability, and goals.

### Private Piano Instruction

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Students are usually paired up with one or two different piano instructors depending on the frequency of lessons, scheduling availability, and at the director's discretion on what is best for the student during assessment. Lessons occur in thirty, forty five, and sixty minute sessions, and students meet either once or twice per week. In addition to the private piano instruction time slot, students are also welcome to join studio master classes when available.

## Duet and Trio Ensemble (coming soon)

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If students have siblings or parents who are interested in making music together, we will be offering duet sessions in the future. In addition, if single students wish to be paired up with another student of similar levels/ranges, the director can find a duet partner suitable for the student so that both students can begin making music together. Private lessons can occasionally be lonely, and we highly encourage those who are able to play as often with one another as possible. Regina's Music Studio is currently working on teaming up with local strings programs to create duos and trios for the piano and violin/cello. We will also offer two piano ensemble in the future, where students can play together on two pianos at the same time.

## Theory Lessons

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One on one theory lessons are available for students who wish to further their piano basics understanding. Standard chord progressions, major/minor keys, Roman numeral analysis, cadences, and more are addressed in lessons. We also offer pre-theory lessons for younger students who wish to have better ear training skills, note reading skills, and more. Please ask our front desk for more information.

## Music History Lessons

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For the older student who is interested in learning beyond notes and rhythm, Regina's Music Studio offers one on one music history lessons. Delve into the historical background of each unique composer from every era, and learn about the origins of your favorite classical music composer. Ms. Regina personally teaches these music history lessons and enjoys passing down her unique knowledge of classical music received from the best professors in the Musicology Department at The University of Southern California.

## *Incentive Program*

The incentive program is designed for students ages 13 and under, but can be applied towards students of older ages who practice better when given an incentive to work towards.

Students can earn Music Money during their music lesson for completing tasks, such as fixing practice errors, completing improvisation time, exceptional work or progress, and more. Music Money is awarded by your student's instructor and can be redeemed in-studio for prizes. All Music Money earned is kept at the front desk in an envelope, so that your child does not lose their Music Money. Music Money can be saved up to redeem for larger prizes. The cost of Music Money and prizes is included in your yearly registration fee.

In order to earn Music Money at home, students are required to keep practice logs, which can be written in a journal or kept online through our iPad practice app. Students must detail what they have practiced and fixed in their practice session, and parents must sign off on their practice logs, or have their practice session recorded on the iPad application for the student's music instructor to watch. Please note that the student cannot earn Music Money unless the parents is present during the practice session to confirm that quality practice has been done.

### *Accelerated Learning Program (ALP)*

At Regina's Music Studio, we are committed to placing every child on the appropriate learning pace. We have designed our Accelerated Learning Program (ALP) to fit this purpose for our music students who learn faster and desire to progress quicker in their music studies.

ALP is a RMS-exclusive elite program for our students who desire to compete and/or play in competitions and festivals throughout Southern California. ALP students meet for lessons twice per week for either 45-minute or 60-minute lesson durations with one or two instructors, and are given unique opportunities to perform in master classes given by performers and professors from renowned universities in Southern California. Students in ALP are also eligible to apply for the Royal Board Examinations put together by the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music (ABRSM) and the Music Development Program put together by the Royal Conservatory of Music (RCM).

Because RMS is also part of the California Association of Professional Music Teachers (CAPMT) through the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), students who are a part of ALP can also participate in exclusive festivals and competitions available only to students who have MTNA-certified instructors. Students also have a chance to advance to national-leveled competitions if they desire to do so.

All students are considered for ALP strictly through teacher recommendation.

### *Testing Programs (Part of ALP)*

#### *ABRSM*

ABRSM is a unique examination administered by the Associated Board of Royal Schools of Music headquartered in London. The exam is taken by music students all over the world and is internationally recognized. ABRSM is available in its Pasadena, CA testing location bi-annually, and students train very rigorously for this prestigious examination. RMS has

produced top-scoring students for the past five years, and its students have been invited to play at the Annual High-Scorer's Concert every year since its inception.

### *RCM*

Beginning in 2017, Regina's Music Studio is pleased to offer examinations through The Music Development Program (MDP) administered by the Royal Conservatory of Music headquartered in Canada. RMS is in the process of becoming a MDP-certified school. In the past year, RCM launched its United States debut and has been internationally recognized by pedagogues and teachers from all over the world. RCM is available three times per year (Spring, Summer, and Winter) and train in technique, repertoire, ear training, theory and musicianship, and music history.

## Chapter Two

# Our Facilities

Beginning in 2017, Regina's Music Studio will be located at its brand new commercial space conveniently located in downtown South Pasadena. The space is a historical building located on the second floor on Fremont Avenue and Mission Street. Ample parking is available in our parking lot with the driveway entrance located on Hope Street. Its central location allows you to drop off your child and run errands down at Trader Joe's, grab a cup of coffee at Two Kids Coffee, or simply relax with us upstairs with your laptop to get some work done.

Regina's Music Studio's space was exclusively built for us, which means we designed the rooms with your comfort and care in mind. Our waiting room is readily equipped with couches, tables, and WiFi for your convenience. We also have a selection of music books and RMS branded tote bags for sale at our front desk, and a large music library ready for instructors to copy that can be used to supplement your child's music education at no additional cost to you. We are working to make the waiting room as kid-friendly as possible, and are adding puzzles, games, books, and more every day.

RMS's facilities also feature a practice room for recording sessions, a lesson room equipped with a baby grand piano, and an office equipped with a state-of-the-art grand piano and a conservatory-level upright piano. All rooms have chairs for parents to sit and quietly observe lessons, and all rooms have pens, markers, sticky notes, and Washi tape ready to brighten your child's learning process. We also have tambourines, music blocks, and more, available to make music-learning fun for our younger students. We believe in offering the very best to our students, and are working to add instruments to our facilities every moment we can.

## Chapter Three

# Student & Parent Responsibilities

### *Student Responsibilities*

In order for music lessons to be as effective as possible, please follow these guidelines provided. We want your musical experience to be a POSITIVE one!

- **Show up to lessons on time with *all* materials.** This includes lesson books, supplementary sheet music, theory homework (completed), and an iPad if your instructor assigns iPad games as part of homework. A tote bag dedicated for these items is encouraged.
- **Practice frequently.** Like homework, sports, and other skills, daily practice is required to enforce good habits and to break bad ones. It is nearly impossible for students to progress at a “normal” rate without daily practice. We ask students to integrate practice time into their daily schedules (i.e.: after homework, before dinner, etc.) To facilitate the progress, we require students to sign onto our unique iPad practice application that allows instructors to monitor student practice at home. Instructors can leave comments on practice logs as necessary. To find out more about how to practice, please consult the “How to Practice Anything” article on our website.
- **Have an instrument at home.** In order to practice daily, students must have a well-maintained acoustic piano at home. Pianos should be tuned twice a year. Electronic instruments are not acceptable, as they can greatly hinder the progress of the student’s foundation in hand position, arm weight, and other technique. To purchase a piano, please visit *The Piano Warehouse* in Van Nuys; they offer an unbeatable price exclusively to RMS students and will tune and deliver the piano for free. There are also various places to rent pianos.
- **Participate in the student recitals.** We put on recitals *twice* a year to give students a goal to work towards, and students are required to attend and participate in both. Learning to perform is a critical aspect of learning the art of music making, and the learning experience would be incomplete without recitals.
  - **Note:** Photographs and video taken of students at RMS recitals, lessons, events may be used in our website or social media pages. By enrolling into RMS, you are consenting for us to use any photos taken.

## *Parent Responsibilities*

Students can't do it without you—see what you can do to help your child succeed!

- **Practice with your child.** Parental supervision may be required for younger students at the instructor's discretion. In most cases, having a supportive parent to work with the student as a team greatly improves practice results. Posing practice suggestions as, "Hmm, this measure is tough. How should we solve it?" rather than, "Do this measure again; you played it incorrectly" can be much more effective. To find out more about how to practice, please consult the "How to Practice Anything" article on our website.
- **Communicate with your instructor.** It is our responsibility to provide your child with the best music education possible, so the more information we have about your child's strengths and needs, the better we can perform. If you are confused about homework, concerned about anything happening with your child's progress, or if you have any other questions, send us an email. We usually get back to our families within twenty four hours, if not sooner.
- **Bring your child to lessons on time.** Lessons will always end at its scheduled time, and we don't want your child to miss out on anything! Make sure that they're able to be here five minutes earlier than their scheduled lesson time.
- **Note:** Regina's Music Studio is allowed to terminate lessons at any time for reasons including, but not limited to: unpaid tuition, an excess amount of absences/unprepared lessons, lack of interest.

## Chapter Four

# Steps for Success at Home

See below for a list of steps to success for practicing at home and taping a video lesson (adapted from *The Centre for Musical Minds*, a MDP-recognized school in Frisco, Texas.)

### *Four Steps to a Successful Practice Session*

- If the student is a beginner (less than six months of training), have a parent present to help with practice sessions. As long as you still have to remind your child to brush their teeth, you'll probably have to monitor their practice sessions to ensure quality practice.
- Aim for five to six days of practice every week. Consistency is key, even if it is only for fifteen minutes! Make sure you practice right after your lesson and the day following — retention will be 90%.
- Quality is better than quantity: skip the timers and aim for goal-setting. Rather than expecting x minutes of practice, aim to fix x number of mistakes in your music. Try to play each mistake three times in a row flawlessly. Be sure to practice in small sections — this means you do *not* have to “play through” and entire piece every time you practice, which can be deeply frustrating when repeating the same errors over and over again. Determine what you will fix *prior* to beginning your practice sessions.
- Have fun! Look at practicing as an opportunity to grow and get better every day. Maybe you'll even get out of doing chores if you practice. The possibilities are endless!

\*For further reading: [www.takelessons.com/blog/kids-piano-practice](http://www.takelessons.com/blog/kids-piano-practice),  
[www.rmslearning.me/how-to-practice-anything/](http://www.rmslearning.me/how-to-practice-anything/)

### *Two Steps to a Successful Video Lesson*

In the event that you cannot make your scheduled lesson time and cannot find a student to swap lesson times with, you may feel free to take a video lesson. Students with lessons on Monday holidays will also be able to utilize the video lesson option to receive feedback for that week. Please note that video lessons need a minimum of 24 hours advanced notice for the teacher to adequately plan and implement. If you do not have the video or audio link shared with the teacher 24 hours in advance, we cannot guarantee this option.

- Take an image of your most recent assignment sheet, and email it to your teacher. Then, record yourself playing those pieces (with warm up included.) Video is preferred, but you may need to have a YouTube account to set up to upload (and set up to private.) If that doesn't work, you can either upload your video through our iPad application (Practicia), or you can take an audio recording and email it to your teacher. If you have a video link,

please send the URL in an email directly to your teacher. See below for advice on how to record:

- Music should be thoroughly prepared; aim for a maximum of three takes per piece. Try to play through the whole piece without stopping; it is easy to get stuck and obsess over the first section of a piece when recording.
- What angle do you want the video at? Some options:
  - To the right of the piano, aligned with keys, at eye level with pianist
  - At either end of the keyboard with camera close to the keys
  - Aerial view from above the keys
  - View from further away to see the entire piano
- Try to make your recording *look* good. Here are some tips:
  - Use a tripod, iPad stand, a music stand
  - Landscape orientation: important!
  - Lighting: make sure that your video is properly lit; dim lighting can result in grainy video
  - Make sure to give a few seconds of stillness before you start and after you finish
- Try to make your recording *sound* good. Here are some tips:
  - Generally, the closer the microphones, the better the sound
  - Give a few seconds of silence before you start and after you finish for fade-in/out
- During your regularly scheduled lesson, your teacher will then listen or watch your recording and use the remaining part of your lesson time to record instructions for the following week. By the end of your regularly scheduled lesson, your teacher will email you her video/instructions for the next week. Voilà!

## Chapter Five

# Tuition and Scheduling

### *What Does my Tuition Cover?*

Tuition includes your child's individualized plan for their course of study, recital preparation, repertoire planning, incentive prizes, Music Money, and supplementary sheet music. It covers your child's time slot for scheduled lessons in your instructor's calendar. It also covers studio membership fees to allow for students to participate in festivals, competitions, and examinations. Please note that if your child chooses to participate in ALP-related activities, there may be additional fees to be paid to those organizations. By registering at Regina's Music Studio, you are agreeing to abide by the guidelines and rules presented in this handbook as well as given by your instructor and the principal of RMS.

### *Pricing for 2017*

Tuition for the Spring and Fall 2017 sessions are as follows:

- 30 minute sessions: \$768 (or two checks written at \$384 each)  
*Early bird rate: \$729.60*
- 45 minute sessions: \$1,088 (or two checks written at \$544 each)  
*Early bird rate: \$1,033.60*
- 60 minute sessions: \$1,408 (or two checks written at \$704 each)  
*Early bird rate: \$1,337.60*

*\*Early bird rate deadline for Spring 2017 is January 14, 2017. The Early bird rate deadline for Fall 2017 is July 22, 2017.*

*\*\*If paying in installments, the first payment for Spring 2017 will be deposited by February 3, 2017 and the second payment will be deposited April 8, 2017. The first payment for Fall 2017 will be deposited by August 18, 2017 and the second payment will be deposited October 7, 2017.*

Tuition for the Summer 2017 session is as follows:

- 30 minute sessions: \$288
- 45 minute sessions: \$408
- 60 minute sessions: \$528

There is also an additional \$40 yearly registration fee, or a \$20 prorated fee if joining past July 31, 2017. Please note that if you are registering for lessons twice per week, the tuition cost is the same amount multiplied by two.

## *How is Tuition Billed?*

Tuition is billed on a semesterly basis and payment must be submitted to Regina's Music Studio prior to the start of instruction. Tuition can either be paid in full immediately or in two equal installments during the semester (with the exception of the summer session.) If tuition is paid in full prior to the beginning of the Spring/Fall semesters by a deadline set by the office, students are eligible to receive our Early Bird rate, which includes a 5% discount. Please note this discount does not apply to the summer session or to tuition paid in installments. Tuition is pro-rated for students starting mid-session. Acceptable forms of payment include cash or check (made payable to "Regina's Music Studio".)

A \$20 fee is charged for all late payments, and a \$25 charge will be assessed for all returned checks. Refunds or credits are not given, even if students discontinue mid-semester. Please notify the studio immediately if you plan to discontinue. A 30-day notice is requested from students who wish to discontinue.

## *Scheduling, Swap Lists, Video Lessons?*

Your paid tuition reserves the time slot in your instructor's calendar. This means that your lesson day and time will always be the same unless you ask to change your slot for the following semester. Try to pick a lesson slot that you feel comfortable making to consistently each week.

To help accommodate an occasional unavoidable change in schedule, RMS offers a swap list option. Students can choose to swap lesson times with another student in the event that they cannot make their normal scheduled lesson time. Most parents receive only a few requests a year from someone who'd like to switch lesson times. The most up-to-date swap list is accessible on our website at [www.rmslearning.me](http://www.rmslearning.me). Please let us know if you do not want to be included in the list. Because we cannot create extra teaching time, we do not grant makeup lessons for any reason. Payment is still due regardless of whether the student shows up for their lesson or not.

If you are unable to swap with another student, you may feel free to take advantage of our video lesson option. To learn more, please see Chapter Four in the studio handbook.

## Chapter Five

# Schedule for 2017

### *Spring 2017*

- Semester Start Date: Sunday, February 5, 2017
- Semester End Date: Saturday, June 10, 2017
- Recital Date: Sunday, June 11, 2017
- Studio Closed:
  - Monday, February 20 (Presidents Day)
  - March 26 to April 8 (Spring Break—no lessons billed for these weeks)
  - Monday, May 29 (Memorial Day)  
\*Students with lessons scheduled on Presidents Day and Memorial Day will record themselves playing through set repertoire as assigned by the instructor. Instructor will send feedback and corrections for the student for the next lesson. See “Two Steps to a Successful Video Lesson” in Chapter Four for more information.

### *Summer 2017*

- Semester Start Date: Sunday, July 2, 2017
- Semester End Date: Saturday, August 12, 2017
- Studio Closed:
  - Tuesday, July 4 (Independence Day)  
\*Students with lessons scheduled on Independence Day will record themselves playing through set repertoire as assigned by the instructor. Instructor will send feedback and corrections for the student for the next lesson. See “Two Steps to a Successful Video Lesson” in Chapter Four for more information.

### *Fall 2017*

- Semester Start Date: Sunday, August 20, 2017
- Semester End Date: Saturday, December 16, 2017
- Recital Date: Sunday, December 17, 2017
- Studio Closed:
  - Monday, September 4 (Labor Day)
  - November 20 to November 28 (Thanksgiving Break—no lessons billed for this week)  
\*Students with lessons scheduled on Labor Day will record themselves playing through set repertoire as assigned by the instructor. Instructor will send feedback and corrections for the student for the next lesson. See “Two Steps to a Successful Video Lesson” in Chapter Four for more information.