



## Saxophone Study with Gerard Weber

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### **DESCRIPTION:**

This syllabus is intended to be flexible for students of all ages and levels of experience, from early beginners to experienced musicians. Students will acquire proper technique and skills required for saxophone playing and build upon this strong foundation through practice and performance.

### Goals:

The most important goal to keep in mind is to play the saxophone and make the learning process fulfilling and enjoyable. We want to push ourselves to the best of our abilities while having fun along the way.

Students will learn fundamental concepts of music theory and music history.

Music theory is essential for understanding the language of music so that we may read, write, and speak it proficiently. Music history supplements theory by revealing to us the origins of our favourite music today. Our music today has been historically shaped by musicians of the past. Historical knowledge enriches our understanding of music and connections we form when we share music with others.

### Benefits:

Private lessons are highly beneficial for a number of reasons. In the band classroom, music teachers do not have enough time to give the individual attention students need on their specific instruments. As a result, students develop poor playing habits that can hinder their progress and discourage them from continuing musical study. A private instructor ensures a strong foundation for technique by eliminating bad habits and giving students the instruction they need to be successful. Private instruction nurtures the musical thinking process, which complements critical thinking skills, creativity, confidence in oneself, and leadership skills. Students will progress at a much faster rate with private lessons and gain more opportunities to perform on their instrument in and outside the music classroom.

### Studio Policy and Rates:

Lesson rates as of January 2021 are \$50/hour, \$40/45 minutes and \$30/half-hour.

**Lessons must be paid in advance (cash, cheque, or E-transfer) for a minimum of one month at the first lesson of each month.** I am able to issue receipts if requested.

Missed Lessons:

Lessons missed by the student without 24-hour notice will be considered paid for except in cases of serious illness or family emergencies. Lessons missed by the teacher will be discussed between the teacher and parents and rescheduled at a time that is convenient for the family and the teacher.

Please plan to show up five minutes early to each lesson. Proper set up and clean up takes time out of the lessons, and punctuality ensures that lesson time is used efficiently. If I am running late, I will make sure that the student receives the full scheduled lesson time.

Studio Performances/Master Classes:

Weber Studio performances/master classes will be held twice a year: one in winter before Christmas holidays, and one in spring before school is finished in June. This is an opportunity for students to perform in front of a supportive audience and demonstrate the hard work that they have put into preparing music throughout the year. For master classes, I will bring in a guest clinician to listen to each student interested in performing and work one-on-one with the student in front of an audience for 15-20 minutes. This is a great opportunity for students to hear advice from different people and perspectives and for parents to witness the learning process firsthand. Student participation is strongly encouraged but not mandatory.

**OBJECTIVES:**

Development and progress in lessons is achieved through practice. "Practice makes perfect," but only through "perfect practice" will we come anywhere close to perfection. Focused practice with clear goals in mind will help students make progress outside of lessons. Those who apply goal-oriented practice methods achieve more in one hour than those who practice aimlessly for four hours. Students will learn practice techniques to help them make the most of their practice time and achieve results. Practice time amounts will be recommended based on student experience and level. Practice journals may be used to keep track of practice goals.

In addition to proper saxophone technique, students will develop musicality, including the independence to make musical decisions on their own. Musicality involves a blend of knowledge, technique, and intuition. Exploring and developing musicality greatly enriches the music-making process, keeping the activity of music fun and fulfilling.

Music Festival:

Students are encouraged to perform in their local music festival, which is organized and funded by the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association. Music Festival provides a venue for learning musicians to share music with others and receive feedback from other professional musicians. Students will also have a chance to collaborate with a pianist and enjoy the experience of working with another musician. I am happy to recommend piano accompanists for Music Festival participation and attend rehearsals with the accompanists free of charge. For more information on the Saskatchewan Music Festival Association and local Music Festivals, visit

<http://www.smfa.ca/>

## **MATERIALS:**

Students must come prepared to play in lessons with a saxophone in good playing condition. Saxophones, like any machine such as a car or a bicycle, require routine maintenance for optimal performance. Leaks (caused by pads that do not seal completely) are a major source of frustration for saxophonists and make the instrument difficult to play. Instruments in need of maintenance can be taken to Musicraft Instrument Repair (owned and operated by Kevin Junk) in Saskatoon or St. John's Music. I recommend having a saxophone serviced at least once a year by a certified repair technician.

Saxophones can be rented from St. John's Music (licensed Yamaha retailer), Long & McQuade, or Musicraft. If you are interested in purchasing a saxophone, please contact me beforehand – I would be happy to provide advice when searching for a new or used saxophone. Seek brands such as Selmer Paris, Yamaha, and Yanigasawa for high-quality instruments. Recommended models include:

\*Yamaha YAS-26 or YAS-23 (preferred standard student model from Yamaha)  
Accent AS710L (student model – consider purchasing a Yamaha mouthpiece)  
Selmer Paris Series II, Series III, Reference 54, Axos (professional models)  
Yamaha YAS-82Z 'Custom Z,' YAS-875EX 'Custom EX,' YAS-62 (professional models)  
Yanigasawa A-WO20 (professional alto model)

### Mouthpieces and Reeds, and Cleaning Supplies:

Two of the most significant pieces of equipment that affect saxophone tone are the mouthpiece and the reed. Students are encouraged to purchase intermediate or professional-level mouthpieces. A professional level mouthpiece can make a poor-quality saxophone produce a reasonably good tone. Professional mouthpieces (if cared for properly) last many years and present students with the best opportunity for success. Recommended mouthpieces include:

Yamaha 4C (standard student mouthpiece)  
Selmer C\*, Soloist, Concept, S90/180 (professional mouthpiece)  
Vandoren A5, A17 (professional mouthpiece)  
Meyer 6, 6\*, 7 (jazz mouthpiece)  
Otto Link 6, 6\*, 7 (metal or hard rubber - jazz mouthpiece)

The saxophone reed is the most important piece of equipment for sound production. Students are recommended to purchase high-quality saxophone reeds from brand names such as Vandoren and Rico/D'Addario. Poor reeds are the cause of bad habits that can take years to eliminate. Most often young saxophonists are given reeds that are too soft to play on and never move up to harder reeds. High-quality reeds last much longer and provide students with the best chance for good tone production.

Reed strengths vary from brand to brand. For example, a Vandoren reed of strength 3 will generally play the same as a Rico Royal reed strength 3½ ('strength' refers to the thickness/stiffness of the reed – the higher the strength, the stiffer the cane of the reed). Students should avoid playing on reeds below a strength of 2½.

Recommended brands are (in ranked order):

Vandoren (traditional or V12: blue box reeds are available for individual purchase)

Rico Reserve

Rico Royal

Juno (made by Vandoren)

Reeds are exceptionally delicate and must be taken care of properly. Proper reed care will be addressed early on in lessons.

Different reed strengths will be recommended based on age and experience. For first-year beginners, I recommend 2½ strength reeds by either Rico or Juno.

Other materials required for saxophone study are a neck strap, body cleaning swab, and cork grease (I recommend purchasing a Yamaha cleaning kit, which contains all necessary cleaning supplies). These materials are provided when renting a saxophone from music stores such as St. John's Music or Long & McQuade. Proper cleaning and maintenance are necessary to ensure that the saxophone remains in good playing condition. Methods for proper saxophone care will be addressed in lessons.

#### Music:

Students in elementary school will have band method books that we will work through in lessons. Additionally, students may be required to purchase music for lessons, depending on grade and skill level.

Students interested in performing in Music Festival will need to purchase sheet music for the selections they wish to perform. Music Festival rules state that performers must perform from an original score of the music (this includes the saxophonist and the accompanist) and provide a second copy for the adjudicators to read from (both score and individual part). I will make sure to have a second copy for students to borrow for performances.