

Where Does Your Tuition Money Go?

By Pam Asberry

Each student at *Asberry School of Music* is scheduled to receive 34 lessons per academic year. In addition, I offer a wide variety of activities and performance opportunities. For ease in billing and budgeting, **tuition is prorated equally over 10 months and pays not for individual lessons but for all activities that occur throughout the year.** You can rest assured that your monthly tuition payment covers much more than the actual one-on-one time I spend with your child at lessons each week.

Piano teaching is my passion and my full-time career. I earned my Master of Music degree in Piano Performance and Piano Pedagogy from Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and have been teaching piano privately since 1979. I keep up my own practice, perform regularly, and am a frequent adjudicator, writer and speaker. In part, your monthly tuition pays for my knowledge, experience and expertise.

But there's so much more. **Statistics show that for every hour enrolled in piano lessons, you are actually investing at least two hours of the teacher's time.** I spend countless hours on behalf of my students outside of lessons, including but not limited to such things as:

- Planning curriculum and acquiring music for each student.
- Scheduling lessons, planning students' repertoire, communicating with parents (emails, phone calls, text messages, studio newsletter, studio website, Facebook page), planning and physically preparing for recitals and festivals, adjudicating area festivals, attending local and state music meetings and seminars.
- Attending meetings, workshops and conventions to continually improve my teaching skills.
- Performing organizational tasks involved with planning festivals, recitals, competitions, auditions, and other performance events.
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- Belonging to and volunteering many hours to music organizations: Gwinnett County Music Teachers Association, Decatur Music Teachers Association, Georgia Music Teachers Association, Music Teachers National Association, and the National Federation of Music Clubs. Teachers must be active members of these groups for their students to participate in the festivals, competitions, and auditions.

So what exactly does your monthly tuition pay for?

- My time spent with your student in lessons, performance classes and rehearsals, as well as time spent at recitals, festivals, and competitions.
- My time spent on behalf of my students outside of lessons, as detailed above.

- Business expenses such as recital expenses, gifts and awards, certificates, repairs and maintenance of the piano(s) and studio, software, incentive programs and prizes, professional membership dues and journals, teacher expenses incurred in festivals and competitions, materials, postage, and normal operating expenses any small business incurs (i.e. telephone, internet, electricity, copies, etc.)
- Property taxes, self-employment taxes, health insurance, business insurance, retirement; since I am self-employed, I have no company to assist with these and do not have the benefit of sick days, paid vacations, disability insurance, etc.
- Continuing education such as conferences, conventions and workshops to help keep me current on methods and techniques of teaching and playing, attendance at concerts and other musical events that cost money to attend.
- Going to the music store or purchasing music online, incurring travel expenses or shipping charges that are not passed on to the student when billing for books.

Study upon study has demonstrated the impact musical training has on brain development and academic success as well as emotional and behavioral growth, not to mention the sheer joy music making itself brings. The investment you are making in music lessons today will provide lasting benefits throughout your child's lifetime and is one of the best investments you can make in your child's future. Now that you have seen the big picture, I trust you will consider your tuition dollars money well spent. Many thanks for placing your confidence in your child's piano education with me!