



Teaching Philosophy

How lessons work at Brad Jefford Music, and what I am actually trying to do.

What Music Is For

Music and the creative arts matter for how a person grows emotionally and how they learn to communicate. They also sharpen how someone thinks through a problem. In a world this digital, the social, hands-on side of playing music matters more than it ever has.

The line I keep coming back to is this. Most instruction teaches you to play music. What I teach is how to be a musician. Playing music is following instructions. Being a musician is having conversations.

What We Aim For

Make music fun and social. That is the role music actually plays in people's lives, and lessons should reflect it.

Keep creativity as the driving force. Not only when writing something new, but also when studying the music of the artists you love.

Use technology where it helps. Recording, apps, backing tracks, and notation software are worth using when they make it easier to play music with and for other people. When they start pulling focus away from playing, they go.

Practice improvising and solving problems. This is where students learn to express themselves, and the problem solving carries well past the instrument.

Give students real say in their own learning, along with the responsibility that comes with it. That is the part that turns into growth.

The Role of the Teacher

A teacher has to keep relating to the mind of the learner. That gets harder the longer you play, because remembering what it felt like to not know something takes real effort. A few things keep me honest about it.

I keep working as a musician. I play with the Newfoundland Symphony Orchestra, at Spirit of Newfoundland, and with the Brad Jefford Trio. Playing keeps the material real, and it means the performance stories that come up in your lesson happened recently, not twenty years ago.

I studied how people learn, not just how to play. My Master of Music from Memorial is in Performance and Pedagogy, finished in 2024, and my first degree there was in Music Education. How people learn is its own subject, worth studying on purpose.

I teach beginners every week. The studio runs from first-time students through advanced players, and the beginners are the best teachers a teacher gets. They ask the questions that expose whatever you have quietly started taking for granted.

The approach adapts to the student. An eight year old and an eighty year old are not doing the same thing, and two beginners the same age often are not either. Lessons get built around where you actually are and what you actually want out of playing.

The Role of the Student

You set the direction. Lessons are built around what you are interested in and what you want to get out of playing. All music has technical problems in it that the musician has to solve, and the ones worth solving are the ones attached to music you care about.

Learn music you actually want to play. Bring me what you love and I will study it and teach you the skills that music asks for. I will also suggest pieces that work on whatever I can see needs work.

We find how you learn. Everybody learns differently, and because lessons are one on one we can experiment. Listening, reading, playing by feel, talking it through, working alone, playing with others. We try things until we land on what works for you.

Questions about lessons? Email bradjeffordmusic@gmail.com or call 709-693-4120.