

Private Study: Violin Syllabus

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Objectives

Mr. Chou's violin instruction is carefully designed to train students to develop a more profound understanding of the instrument in all aspects. The violin is considered among the most difficult and competitive western instruments. Performing the instrument in public with a professional quality requires a thorough combination of very high level of technical accomplishment, persuasive musical expression, and a thorough mastery of musical styles and traditions. Mr. Chou seeks to provide the resources to help students develop their own way to practice and master the instrument, in order to become the best performing musicians and educators they can be. Weekly private lessons, periodic performances, music festivals, and competitions will all lend to a more thorough understanding of the instrument.

Materials

1. Solo literature, etudes, scale study books may be obtained from: Sharmusic.com or 1-800-248-SHAR. There are also many fine mail order companies on the internet that you may order music from. Music may also be obtained for free from <http://imslp.org> ; however, be aware that not all repertoire may be found there, and that caution must be exercised concerning the specific editions available.
2. A notebook or digital audio or video recording device (*brought to each lesson*) will be needed in which to keep track of:
 - weekly assignments
 - observations on recordings you listen to, recitals and concerts you attend, and, most importantly, your own practice
 - questions you have that may be forgotten during a busy week
 - instructor's suggestions

3. You are expected to maintain your instrument in a playing condition that facilitates technical study and encourages good music making (sound post adjustment at least twice a year, pegs that fit and are adjusted properly, bow re-hair once a year, and changing all strings when warranted, before they are false). Mr. Chou will provide instruction on these matters.

Requirements and Guidelines

a. Attendance

Regular attendance in weekly lessons is required. If a lesson must be missed, due to serious illness or other pressing matters, Mr. Chou shall be notified 24 hours in advance. There will be no make-up lessons offered for lessons missed by students for any reason except when a doctor's note is provided for illness during the lesson time period. Absence due to religious holidays must be reported to Mr. Chou prior to the event for make up lessons.

All lessons canceled by the instructor due to his performance activities out of town will be made up by arrangement during the same month. Attendance policy stated above applies to make-up lessons.

b. Lessons and Practice

Mastering the performance technique of the violin can only be achieved by dedicated and persevering study, sustained by a sincere commitment to the instrument and its large repertoire. However, recognizing that every person's vision for how they wish to use their violin skills is different, practice time should be proportional to those desires.

c. Studio Class Recital

A studio class recital will happen usually twice a year, as an opportunity for students to perform the repertoire they are working on in front of their fellow students, parents, friends, etc. Mr. Chou believes in the philosophy that, "Those who teach must play, and those who play must teach". While improving your performance technique and trying out your new pieces in front of live audience, the occasional recital also provides you the invaluable opportunity to learn the wide range of violin music repertoire and practice your public teaching skills (with respectful and mature comments under the supervision of the instructor) to help your fellow students.

d. Injury

Occasionally, string players will acquire physical injuries like tendonitis or carpal tunnel syndrome. Mr. Chou has met a few young violinists who have injured themselves, and although these injuries *can be* playing-related, violin playing *may not have been* responsible for their onset at all. (For example, repetitive motion including excessive use of computer keyboards could easily injure one's wrist.) Whatever the cause may have been, however, **it is important for the student to inform the instructor that s/he has ever been injured, or if s/he develops any aches and pains that persist.** Playing-related injuries are extremely rare; however, Mr. Chou is convinced, through study, that proper technique and set-up can help avoid injuries all together. It will always be Mr. Chou's first priority to make sure that the violin is never a source of physical problems, and will work with the student to avoid such issues.

e. Solo Repertoire Load

The invaluable repertoire for the violin spanning from the Baroque period to Contemporary times is extremely full; to cover the majority of it can be a lifetime project. However, Mr. Chou will work together with the student to find a balance of repertoire that piques the student's own personal taste as well as the staples of western classical violin literature.