



## *HeartSong Music Center*

*Unlock the music within!*

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# *Studio Handbook*

## **Table of Contents**

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Lesson Information .....	2
What I Provide.....	2
Youth Students and Adult Students .....	2
What I Expect From You Regarding Lessons .....	3
Group Voice Classes, Semi-Private and Private Lessons .....	3
Supplies and Equipment List .....	4
Recitals and Other Performances.....	5
Competitions and Festivals .....	6
Scheduling.....	7
Studio Policies .....	8
Attendance Policy .....	8
Lesson Swap Policy .....	8
Financial Policy .....	9
Termination .....	9
Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy .....	9
Privacy Statement .....	10
Photo/Video Release .....	10
Agreement to terms: .....	10
Student Agreement .....	11

## *Lesson Information*

### *What I Provide*

❖ These are to be returned to me in good condition upon request.

- Music for practice and performance
- Method books for piano students
- Sight-reading or theory books (as needed) ❖
- Vocal exercises, vocal method books, workbooks, handouts, music theory worksheets or flash cards (as needed), and other instructional materials ❖
- Book / CD of rhythm drills for beginning students (as needed) ❖
- Weekly lesson recordings (I set up a Dropbox folder for each student to access these at home)
- Practice logbook/ weekly lesson assignment sheets (these may be in paper or digital format)
- Use of training software/ apps in the studio (as needed) – includes ear training, music theory, note reading, and sight reading
- Use of music library, reference materials, and music CD's at the studio ❖
- Formal and informal performance opportunities such as masterclasses, concerts, and recitals
- Recognition, encouragement, and other incentives.
- One recording of the end-of-term major recital. These may be in digital or DVD format. You may order extra copies at cost to share with family, etc.

The **Registration/Materials Fee (amounts listed below)**, is in addition to the tuition for each term and covers the items listed above. This fee also helps pay for hall rental for performance events, other events like studio recitals and student parties, piano tuning, office needs and printing, professional membership dues, refreshments and equipment for special events, incentives and awards, software and apps, accompaniment tracks for lessons and home rehearsal, and partial fees for guest clinicians and accompanists.

**Beginner lesson fees: \$80**

**Private voice lesson fees: \$100**

**Voice AND piano combo: \$125 (additional \$25 for piano books).**

**This fee does not cover** the costs of metronomes, home piano/keyboard and other equipment, any music that is not part of the designed curriculum (i.e. requested pop songs), or non-studio events such as NATS auditions or the AFMC and AMTA festivals (see the Competitions and Festivals section).

From these fees, I try to purchase 1-2 music books a year for each student that are appropriate to the student's vocal development level and interests, in a variety of styles to help meet our instructional goals. Parents/students may be asked to purchase additional solo music books to meet copyright restrictions and instructional needs. I will have a suggested music list with purchase links on the website for your convenience.

### *Youth Students and Adult Students*

Outside of a lesson, the parent speaks for their child student. As a guideline, I consider a student with a driver's license an adult for non-financial matters, and expect them to be mature and responsible. When such a student is also paying for their lessons with me, I consider them an adult student for financial matters also.

## *What I Expect From You Regarding Lessons*

### **All students**

- At my home studio, please park along the curb near the empty lot or in the grassy area to the left of the drive, so as to leave the driveway clear.
- Please silence cell phone (or put on Do Not Disturb mode) and put away to minimize distractions.
- Go to the bathroom before your lesson if at all possible. This saves valuable lesson time.
- No eating / gum / candy. Please **DO** have a water bottle with you for all lessons. Sing hydrated!
- Please be on time, and call or text if you're running late. This also applies to virtual lessons.
- At my home studio, if you're early, please wait until your lesson time to come in. If you hear that I'm finishing another lesson, you may knock and then let yourself in quietly. For virtual lessons, I will let you in at your lesson time from the waiting room on Zoom, or I will initiate the video call.
- **Voice students should do at least some vocal warm-up before their lesson if at all possible.**
- Please download regularly used accompaniment tracks to your device to minimize load time.

### **Parents:**

- Know what your child's lesson assignment is, help them with positive reinforcement, encourage and help them stick to regular practice, and sign their practice log before their next lesson.
- With my permission, you and your other family members may stay at my home studio during the lesson (in the next room). Reading materials, crayons and coloring books are available for your use.
- If you drop your child off for a lesson, you may not leave anyone else at my studio without my permission beforehand. We are not a baby-sitting service! Please be on time to pick up your child at the end of the lesson.

## *Student's Agreement*

When I accept a new student, we both sign a document that says that I will do my best to provide caring, professional instruction and that the student will be cooperative and respectful in lessons, do any homework assigned between lessons, practice regularly and update their practice log, and have all their necessary materials with them and ready to go for lessons. (This agreement is on the last page of this handbook, along with a studio policy agreement signature page.)

## *Group Voice Classes, Semi-Private and Private Lessons*

Group voice classes (when offered) will be structured similarly to private voice lessons and consist of:

- Physical and vocal warm-ups, vocal technique exercises, introduction to reading musical notation, music theory, sight-reading, and ear training, and learning performance skills.
- Learning group songs.
- Choosing and learning songs for individual performance.
- Semi-private lessons are available for an additional fee, which will give the student weekly one-on-one time with the instructor in addition to the group class time.
- Behavioral expectations will be very high. We will have fun learning and making music together. Bullying of any form will not be tolerated. A student who is uncooperative, misbehaves, or who mistreats others will be given a warning, and the behavior discussed with a parent. If the behavior problem continues, the student may be dismissed without a refund (the full semester tuition will still be due).

## *A Typical Voice Lesson*

- Warm-ups and vocal exercises for technique (15-20 minutes)
- Musicianship skills: theory, sight reading, ear training, pitch drills, and/or rhythm drills (10-15 minutes). These may be computer-assisted, and for younger students may include workbook or worksheets (which may need to be completed at home)
- Learning song literature (working on songs you're singing)
- Developing expressive singing and performance skills

## *A Typical Piano Lesson*

- Exercises from method books suited to the student's skill – drills to strengthen finger coordination and agility and then scales and other patterns, plus 2-4 pages of the lesson book.
- The rest of the time we'll spend working on additional literature from supplemental books or sheet music solos that the student will really enjoy playing.
- Musicianship skills: sight-reading, ear training, pitch drills, and/or rhythm drills (10-15 minutes) - may include worksheets, theory workbook, or flash cards

## *Supplies and Equipment List*

### **All voice students**

- A full-length mirror at home (you can get a wall or over-the-door type for \$15-\$25).
- A music stand - especially for all voice students! (Decently sturdy ones run \$30-40 on Amazon)
- **Heavy-duty three-ring binder; 1.5-2 inches in size**
- A tote bag for binder & music books
- A package or two of **sturdy index / page tabs** for labeling music in your binder.
- Some students like to have a **3-ring pencil pouch** in the folder to hold pencils, highlighters, etc.
- **A pencil in your binder at all times and water bottle for every lesson!**
- For online/virtual lessons, the student will need a minimum of:
  - two devices (smartphone and tablet, two tablets, tablet and computer, etc.) One device for the lesson video call and one to play accompaniment or demo tracks.
  - A Bluetooth speaker (or external computer speakers) to play accompaniment tracks during lessons and home practice. The speaker(s) should have enough volume to hear the music well and sing over it at full voice.
  - Earbuds with microphone (bare minimum) or a USB microphone. I recommend the Blue Yeti or Blue Snowball, which can be purchased on Amazon for around \$100 or less.
- Access to a piano or keyboard (highly recommended for voice students, required for piano students)
- Somewhere you can practice that is free of distractions
- A regular practice schedule - work with your family to find the best time

## *Supplies and Equipment List, continued*

### **Piano students only**

- A metronome - A traditional or digital one is preferred, and runs about \$25. Phone apps are also an option, though the volume of these isn't as loud as a traditional metronome (use with Bluetooth speaker or headphones).
- A bench or chair that can be adjusted to the proper height while you're playing.
- If you use a keyboard instead of a piano, it should have:
  - at least five octaves, more is better (most have 66 keys, compared to the 88 of a true piano)
  - full-sized, touch-sensitive, touch-responsive, or weighted keys to feel more like a true piano
  - a pedal (usually as a plug-in accessory)
- Digital pianos are a great option and are frequently more suitable than keyboards. If you do have an acoustic piano, it should be well-tuned with good keys. Tuning should be done a minimum of once a year. If you do not have a piano tuner, I highly recommend my tuner, Brandon Robertson.

Email: [tuner@robertsonpianotuning.com](mailto:tuner@robertsonpianotuning.com) Website: <https://www.robertsonpianotuning.com>

Phone: (205) 693-9963

### *Recitals and Other Performances*

I request that all my students participate in both formal and informal performances to gain valuable performance skills, and for the learning experience that doing so provides. We generally do at least three to five performances per year, and I will inform you of the dates as far in advance as possible. Informal events include performance workshops, studio classes, studio cookout, singing at local retirement/nursing homes, local restaurants, farmer's markets, or shopping malls and going Christmas caroling. Our formal recitals are usually at the end of the semester (December or February and mid-May (usually Mother's Day evening)). We typically hold a dress rehearsal with the accompanist sometime the week before the recital date. If you are unable to attend a recital, it should be only for a true emergency (see Page 5).

I hire a professional pianist to accompany my students for recitals and other performances. **The studio underwrites a major portion of this cost, and I ask students to contribute an additional \$20-25 each toward the accompanist's fee for each recital. Students who drop out of the performance after one week before the program will be required to reimburse the studio for their portion of the accompanist's fee.**

I usually hire a professional videographer for our more formal recitals, who will record the student performances and professionally edit them into a high-quality DVD or digital recording that will last for many years. This recording will be a permanent record of the student's performance progress. To help cover the videographer's fee, each student's family will be required to purchase one copy (\$25).

Our Winter and Spring student recitals and our festival/competition dress rehearsal recitals take place in the beautiful and historic chapel of South Highland Presbyterian Church in downtown Birmingham: 2035 Highland Avenue South. We usually have a nice reception afterward, with families contributing finger foods. **These events may be affected by the COVID-19 pandemic - we will make every effort to have performances and competitions/auditions, but some may be virtual this year.**

## *Recitals and Other Performances*

For all recital attendees:

- Please, NO flash photography during performances. It is highly distracting to the performer.
- Be on time (early!) and stay until the end. Recitals are a valuable learning experience and students and their families should stay and watch ALL performers.
- Appropriate performance etiquette is expected. (turn off phones, remove crying children, etc.)

### **Advice for students:**

- Student performers, this is a chance to really dress up. Teen/adult students may wear semi-formal to formal wear. Younger students may wear party dresses or fancy holiday-type dresses. Boys and young men should wear slacks and a dress shirt / tie, or a suit if they have one. Many local thrift stores and consignment boutiques offer a nice selection of reasonably priced special occasion wear.
- As we perform in a church, ladies semi-formal and formal recital dresses/gowns should be very modest in skirt length and amount of skin showing. (No midriff cutouts, excessive cleavage, etc.)
- I highly recommend that you try on and practice in the clothes that you'll wear while performing at least once to make sure they are comfortable. Female students who are going to wear heels should definitely do this! Piano students can have difficulty working the pedal in heels – and voice students may have trouble with their posture and balance in heels, which can dramatically alter breath support. Low/moderate block heels are best.
- Remember proper performance etiquette, such as bowing to audience applause, and to acknowledge your accompanist.
- Don't wear perfumes or other scented products that can affect other performers' allergies.
- Hair should be styled away from the face and especially out of the eyes.

## *Competitions and Festivals*

I provide several opportunities for students to attend competitions and solo festivals where they can receive valuable written feedback from someone other than me, hone their performance skills, and may even be able to win prizes and/or scholarship money in the process! Several of my former students have received sizable vocal scholarships and other awards.

### **Alabama Federation of Music Clubs (AFMC) Solo Festival (piano and/or voice)**

The Alabama Federation of Music Clubs holds this festival each spring, where a student in voice, piano, or other instrument can perform two memorized pieces, one of which must be from a required list. Each piece is judged and scored on its own merits. Voice students may perform in either art song (classical) or Broadway categories, or both. This festival is usually held at one of the local colleges in Birmingham. The combined entry and accompanist's fee is usually about \$45-60 per category.

- The memorization deadline for the performance pieces is several weeks before the competition.
- Voice and piano events usually take place on different dates.
- Arrive 20 minutes before your scheduled performance time.
- Parents are normally not allowed in the judging/performance room.
- When things are going smoothly, you can be in and out in less than an hour.
- The judging sheets are available from me after the festival.

## *Competitions and Festivals, continued*

### **Alabama Music Teachers Association (AMTA) Auditions (piano and voice)**

These auditions are for voice or piano students through high school age and are usually held in April of each year. They are composed of a Performance component and a Theory component (scales, arpeggios, intervals, cadences, etc.). Divisions are determined by the student's age. Singers will perform 2-3 classical pieces from memory of contrasting styles. The entry deadline is generally two to three weeks before the audition date. Entry fee will be about \$20, plus accompanist fee. A Ratings scale of: (O) Outstanding, (E) Excellent, (G) Good, and (N) Needs Improvement is used. State winners in each age division are invited to perform one selection on the winners' recital at the state AMTA conference in June, and receive a t-shirt and nice plaque.

### **National Association of Teachers of Singing (NATS) Student Auditions (voice)**

Voice students of high-school age or older may also participate in district and regional NATS competitions in art song (classical) and/or musical theatre categories. Students perform two to four selections from memory, depending on age and experience level. Registration fees are \$10 per category entered, plus accompanist's fee for each (\$30-50). Students perform in a closed audition room for two judges, and the top singers in each category advance to the final round, which is public. The auditions are held in mid-February and location varies. This is also a wonderful opportunity to hear many other fine singers from all over the state, so I *strongly* encourage all entrants to stay for the finals concert.

### **Other Competitions**

There are several other competitions for more advanced singers, especially in the classical music category. These competitions offer the student a chance to win awards and recognition, and often scholarship or prize money as well. Please inquire if you are interested.

**Due to COVID-19, many festival /audition/ competition events may be virtual for 2020-21.**

## *Scheduling*

The lesson schedule for the school year is usually finalized by mid-late August. I will prepare a master schedule which is posted online. Students who have studied at the studio the longest, have abided by the studio policies, and paid tuition in a timely manner will receive scheduling preference; however, it is not always possible to grant everyone's time requests due to the complexity of scheduling demands. **Upon registering, students reserve a spot in the teaching schedule for the entire school year. Students will be considered to be enrolling for both semesters unless notice is given in writing by December 1<sup>st</sup> that a student will not be continuing for the spring term. Please see "Termination" below. Emergency exceptions to this policy (i.e. job loss, major illness) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis. Short-term lessons are also available at a higher per-lesson rate.**

## **Calendar**

The official studio calendar will be on the website, and can be accessed upon login. I update this calendar often with studio events, performance opportunities, and other items. Please check it frequently! I will also send a list of events that you can add to your family or smartphone calendar.

# *Studio Policies*

Please read over the next two sections carefully to avoid any misunderstandings. Parents and adult students will be asked to sign a policy agreement page stating that they have received, read, and understood all lesson and financial policies. Failure to sign and return the lesson policy agreement to terms page does not exempt you from these policies. By starting lessons, this means that you have read and accepted ALL studio policies.

## *Attendance Policy*

### **Instructor Unavailability**

If I have to miss a student's lesson for any reason, I will give you as much advance notice as I can and will re-schedule your lesson or schedule a make-up lesson at a mutually convenient time. This includes sickness, performances, family or professional obligations, etc. Makeup lessons may be virtual.

### **Excused Absences and Make-Up Lessons**

If you cannot be at a lesson, please let me know ASAP. At the teacher's discretion and with advance notification (generally 24 hours), missed lessons due to severe illness, death in the family, unavoidable traffic emergencies (e.g. car breaks down en route to in-person lesson), etc. may be rescheduled, or made-up at the end of the term (maximum 2 per term). I *may* offer make-up lessons one Saturday a month if my schedule permits. For inclement weather, we will do a virtual lesson when possible.

- No make-up lessons will be offered for non-emergency cancellations, "no shows", or last-minute cancellations. The teaching schedule is not flexible and does not allow for rescheduling other than "lesson swaps" (see below). Please be on time for both in-person and virtual lessons.
- Please do NOT attend lessons when you are ill and highly contagious. If you are unable to sing but not ill / contagious (ie voice issues / allergies) we can work on other musical concepts.
- If you CAN sing but are still contagious or under quarantine, we can do a virtual lesson.
- Please use the *Lesson Swap Policy* whenever possible when you need to miss a regular lesson.
- Non-emergency cancellations such as birthday parties, school trips, family vacations, extracurricular activities, etc., last-minute cancellations (without 24 hours notice), and "no shows" will be charged the full lesson fee for the unused time reserved for the student.
- My standard limit is two make-up lessons per student per term.

## *Lesson Swap Policy*

In the event you need to switch lesson times due to personal scheduling conflicts, it may be possible to swap lesson times with another student. With the permission of each responsible party, I will distribute the teaching schedule with contact information for each student. It is the *student's (or parents')* responsibility, not the teacher's, to make these temporary schedule changes with another student / parent if an alternative lesson time is available. Both parties need to contact me to confirm the swap and this should happen AT LEAST 24 hours before the lesson.

### **Missed Lessons**

There are no refunds or discounts for missed lessons. All lessons must be paid for in advance.



## *Financial Policy*

### **Fees and Payment**

For the Spring and Fall terms, there's a registration/materials fee in addition to tuition that's non-refundable. This fee schedule and items covered are listed under "What I Provide" on Page 2.

Tuition (the instruction fee) for the regular term (Spring/Fall) is for a term of 15 weeks. Students who register late may either need to make fewer monthly installments for a larger amount, or may be prorated for the number of lessons left in the term. **Tuition installments are due by 5 pm either on the 1st or 15th, depending on the payment plan you choose. It is your responsibility to pay on time. All lessons must be prepaid or on auto-billing – no exceptions! Electronic payment is preferred.** You may pay via automated monthly billing, through Venmo or Paypal, through a link in an email invoice, or directly through a secure portal on the website.

**Please refer to the separate fee schedule on the last page of this handbook for tuition charges, installment plans and payment due dates.** I offer a discount if tuition is paid in its entirety at the beginning of the term, or you may choose a convenient payment plan of either 4 or 5 automated monthly installments, depending on lesson type.

If I have not received your payment by the due date, there is a \$15 late fee. **Due to past problems, this policy will be strictly enforced.** If there are extenuating circumstances that will cause your payment to be late, please let me know about it well **ahead of time**. No one likes not receiving a paycheck when it is expected! If late payments happen frequently, I will terminate our agreement. ***Please pay on time!***

**Referral Program discount:** for each new student you refer who signs up for lessons and completes the term, you will receive a \$50 discount off the price of the last month's tuition for that term.

### *Termination*

Just causes include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Late or missing payments
- Repeated tardies, no-shows, or lack of cooperation/misbehavior in lessons
- Failure to honor the student's agreement or any other studio policies

**If a student stops coming to lessons during a term or I terminate our agreement for a just cause as noted above, the unpaid tuition for the remainder of the term is still due. Due to past problems, this policy will be enforced by legal means if necessary, including late fees and court costs. Again, emergency exceptions to this policy (i.e. job loss, major illness) will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.**

### *Notice of Non-Discriminatory Policy*

HeartSong Music Center admits program participants, volunteers, and staff of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law to all the rights, privileges, programs, and activities generally accorded or made available to program participants, volunteers, and staff. We do not discriminate on the basis of race, color, gender, religion, national or ethnic origin, or any other status protected by federal, state, or local law in administration of its educational, admission, and financial policies.

HeartSong Music Center expects each participant to have the ability to learn well within an age- and developmentally-appropriate group setting. HeartSong Music Center reserves the right to ask a participating student to leave a class, workshop, or camp if they are disruptive or cannot participate in an acceptable manner. Please inform us of any relative developmental or learning issues.

### *Privacy Statement*

HeartSong Music Center values your privacy. You may opt-in to share your contact information for purposes of a lesson swap, but we will never share your sensitive personal information with other parties for any other reason.

### *Photo/Video Release*

HeartSong Music Center may take photos, audio and video recordings in lessons, classes, and performances which may be used for promotional purposes, including social media and website. We are conscious of the need to protect your family's privacy, especially for minor students, and will use such material responsibly. If you have a need to opt out for safety or security reasons, please discuss this with Mrs. Batey.

### *Agreement to terms:*

By signing below, I hereby give permission for the Student listed below to attend and participate in voice lessons or other events with HeartSong Music Center/ Heather Batey Studio. I have read and agree to abide by the policies in this Handbook. **Failure to sign and return the lesson policy agreement contract page does not exempt you from these policies. By starting lessons, this means that you have read and accepted ALL studio policies.** I further agree to hold harmless and release from liability HeartSong Music Center, Heather Batey, or any other representative thereof for any action, claim, or damage that may arise as a result from the Student's participation in voice lessons or other related events. I hereby give permission for any authorized representative or sponsor of HeartSong Music Center to obtain service of and/or advice from an available physician or other medical personnel for the Student in case of illness or injury, including any necessary transportation for such emergency care. I hereby agree to assume all responsibility for costs associated with such medical care. I agree that any audio, photo, or video material recorded by the studio may be used for promotional purposes unless I specifically opt out for reasons of safety and security. By signing below, I give permission for HeartSong Music Center to deduct tuition installments from my credit or debit card each month on the billing date I have chosen, unless another payment method is specified/ provided.

Student Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Agreed and consented to by:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Responsible Party



## HeartSong Music Center

*Unlock the music within!*

*Heather Batey, owner & instructor*

*heartsongmusiccenter@gmail.com*

*(205) 358-7344 (studio line) or (205) 718-4688 (cell)*

*www.heatherbatey.com*

### ***Student Agreement***

As my student, I truly want to you to succeed in reaching your musical goals.  
To help with this, I ask you to do the following as best as you can:

1. Use a regular practice schedule that works for you (and your family).
2. Practice *at least* 30 minutes a day, four times per week. More is better.
3. When you practice, start with the assigned warm-up and technique exercises.
4. Practice your lesson assignments thoughtfully - don't just sing or play through your songs.  
Suggestions include: working on breathing and vocal technique exercises, counting rhythms, working on individual sections, going slowly rather than full speed, singing on solfege syllables, or "la" instead of the words, practicing foreign texts, saying the lyrics without singing them, working with a metronome, or playing hands alone for piano.
5. Voice students: practice in front of a full-length mirror.
6. Listen to and practice with your lesson recordings. It's also helpful to record/listen to your practice.
7. Work toward the goal(s) given in the assigned homework.
8. Set short and long-term goals for yourself and check your progress periodically.
9. After each practice, update your practice log with the time spent, what you worked on, etc.
10. Bring all of your music, your updated practice log, and other lesson materials (flash cards, method books, workbooks, etc.) to *\*EVERY\** lesson.
11. Be fully present and cooperative in lessons, abide by studio policies, and be open to constructive criticism when needed.

**As a student of Heather Batey, I promise to her that I will do the above.**

Student Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

*In return, I promise to you that I will do my best to provide caring, professional musical instruction and help you grow to be the best musician you can be.*

Heather M. Batey \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_