

Your Family

Music Lessons... Where Do You Start?

As a school music teacher I am often asked by families how to find a good private music teacher. I encourage families to ask prospective teachers a few questions to ensure a perfect match for their family.

"What is your music background?"

Formal education is important. A Bachelor of Music is typically a 3-4 year university degree where music was studied almost exclusively. Some teachers may have even a Master of Music (2-3 years beyond the bachelor degree) or Ph.D (3-6 years beyond a Masters). Some teachers have a diploma in music from a recognized college. These are all great indicators of a strong musician and teacher.

"Can we check two references?"

Quality studios or teachers will quickly provide these to you upon request. You can get a feel for what other parents/students are saying and thinking. Be sure to find out how long they have been with the teacher and if they are happy with their lessons. A police background check is also a must.

"Is this your full-time or part-time career and for how long have you been teaching?" Full time musicians/teachers may have more training specific to music education. Part time

music teachers may be just as devoted.

"Do you have recitals for your students throughout the year?" It is important for students to have the opportunity to showcase their skills. A solid music studio should have performance opportunities throughout the year.

"Could we sit through a recital or schedule an interview/trial lesson?"

Any quality teacher would love for a potential student and their family to either sit through a recital or meet face to face prior to beginning formal lessons so that both parties are clear on the expectations. If you are able to sit through a performance by the teacher or a recital of their students, you could then ask other parents about the teacher, studio policies and anything else you feel is important.

"May I sit through the lessons?"

Parents should *always* be granted access to sit in on any or all of the lessons whether they are in your home or in a studio. *Never* accept a teacher who will not allow it. It is for the safety and peace of mind for all parties involved.

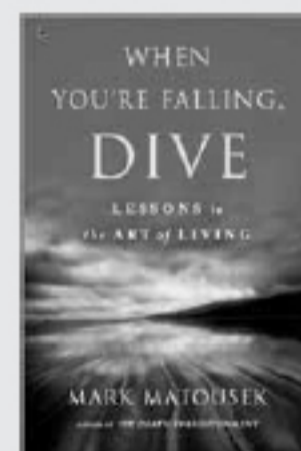
Asking the right questions of a prospective music teacher gets your

professional relationship off to a good start. Music can be one of the most rewarding after school and lifetime investments if you take the time to find the right music teacher.

Shelley Steele-Gittel M.A., B.Music, ARCT, Cochrane

Lessons in the Art of Living

"How do you live?" This is the question from his deeply depressed sister that prompted author Mark Matousek to undertake the writing of *When You're Falling,*



Dive (Bloomsbury). For more than 10-years, Matousek sought lessons in the art of living to help him unravel "how does a person survive his own life?"

In this book he dives right into the exploration of how a person prevails in the face of challenges and disasters. How do we keep going following some great loss, disappointment or stroke of bad luck? Through true life stories of people he met, parables and poetry, he presents lessons that help us see where authentic strength comes from. If you are facing some challenging times and need some hope and inspiration, this book is well-worth picking up.

Book of the Month

