

Jeremy Woolhouse – Teaching



What and who are taught

"Each student responds differently,so it's an ongoing process about me learning from the student about how they need to learn."



Jeremy's speciality is teaching jazz and improvisation to students of some experience (jazz or classical) however, he happily works with beginners through to professionals of all ages. Beginners usually start with a broad education in fundamentals and a variety of musical styles. Areas taught include jazz interpretation, improvisation, composition, jazz harmony and theory and ensemble playing. Elements of all of these are usually part of each student's program. By constant interaction with the student, the lessons are delivered at an appropriate pace. This begins from the first lesson:

"... initially, I ask my students what they have done - to get some idea of where they are up to. Then we look at where they want to get to. Once that is established, we can figure out how to get there Some students don't know where they want to go, which is cool too - it'll become apparent once they start working and listening, but I think it's important to discuss goals, and get them [the students,] to think about it. If they have goals, I want to make sure we're working in the direction that will get us there."



Approach and Structure

"I'm interested in giving my students the tools and motivation to explore their own musicality, and their own learning."



Jeremy's teaching is based on holistic principles. Play, creativity, poise and discipline are integrated with the structure. Technical work and theory are essential, but integrated to keep it relevant, often approached through the pieces. A good technique gives you the freedom to play what you hear - from the point of reading or inventing music, being able to perceive it clearly, then translating that to the keyboard, ensuring there are no interference's with execution (e.g. tension patterns), then listening back to know how successful it was.

Lessons have a structure which build a knowledge of the fundamental principles of music. Within this structure, lessons vary according to the individual. One of Jeremy's strengths is a high level of interaction with the student, identifying what each needs, and discerning how to address that need. It is an organic process, teacher and student learning from each other.

"There isn't a pre-existent exercise or explanation to give every student and address every problem ... these solutions can be formulated at the time a problem arises. It is important to have a means whereby the student can reach their goal. There are specific things you can do to overcome any obstacle or deficiency. When the student knows this, they'll be inspired to practice and instigate their own learning"

This framework is learnt through a deep understanding of the musical fundamentals. Students learn why the music is written the way it is, not just how to play it. They are taught how the instrument works so they can deal with technical difficulties themselves.



Lessons

"[The student] may have gained some insight into music, or may just have continued to work on where he is at that point, which will eventually lead him to his goals. I am satisfied with a lesson when the student leaves knowing what to do, believes they can do it, and can't wait to!"

Lessons are friendly, not intimidating; discipline is encouraged, but not forced.

Usually, we work with one or two main concepts in a lesson to ensure a depth of understanding - quality, not quantity. Very quickly a customised practice regime is established. This will include specific tasks to practice. There is continual feedback required from the student, ensuring they understand the lessons. Children's pieces are changed regularly, every second lesson or so; mature students keep working at one concept or piece until really mastered. In this way the student will pace their own learning.





"I encourage students to select some of their repertoire. [They] needn't necessarily, (and it's not always appropriate) ... If students choose half the music, they get to do the tunes they want to play, and then I'll choose half to ensure they are getting challenged in the areas which need developing."

Students work towards an informal concert at the end of each term. Most students are self motivated, but occasionally entering into exams is recommended (this may also help to structure practice). Currently ANZCA is used.

"Some students will have particular things to work towards, some I will have to give them things to work towards I don't think it's necessarily valuable to compare or assess by standards other than their own (e.g. putting a letter grade on their progress). The important thing is that the students are improving, and enjoying it."

About Jeremy

"There is more to music than right notes, more fun than just being able to play the piece at the end."



Jeremy Woolhouse has maintained a private teaching studio since 1999. A performance graduate of the VCA Improvisation (see [full biography](#)), he has accrued significant experience in jazz genres and regularly performs as a soloist and with various [ensembles](#). He teaches out of an enthusiasm for sharing the learning experience and enjoys guiding students on their particular journey. The fantastic passion Jeremy has for music infects his students, leaving them inspired to pursue their own musical inclinations.

Jeremy is commended for a casual, but efficient manner; open-minded and understanding, yet tactfully insistent! His dynamic approach keeps lessons fun, and always involve creativity. His versatility as a player and teacher is evident through the flexibility of approaches employed when working with students.

"I don't think I was ever a gifted student. I had to work really hard at everything. This gives me perspective though, for teaching, a whole lot of tools and approaches to overcoming difficulties. And an empathetic understanding of the students frustrations!"

Jeremy has experience working with children's programs and adult education. He is currently training as a teacher of the Alexander Technique, a complimentary study as it deals with identifying and eliminating habitual tension patterns in action. Jeremy is a fully accredited member of the Victorian Music Teachers Association, the Victorian Institute of Teaching and the Australian Music Teachers Register.



Location

Jeremy's home studio is in Glen Iris, in the South Eastern Suburbs of Melbourne (Melways reference 60 D8).

Access via public transport:

- 3 minutes walk to Burwood Train Station;
- 5 minutes to Bus at High St Rd, Ashburton;
- 8 minutes to Tram no 75 Toorak Rd Burwood.

Jeremy is happy to accommodate requests or receive constructive criticism on his teaching philosophies. He will also recommend students to other teachers if this is deemed appropriate.

Contact

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