



the
catoctin |
school of music



Newsletter

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Nylon vs. Steel vs. Electric

The world of guitar is full of options. Not only in styles of music where guitar can be found, but in the wide range of guitars available to anyone wanting to learn or expand their collection. This can lead to problems deciding what guitar to start on or what to purchase next. To help decide what kind of guitar you should buy here are a few pointers to help guide your way.

1. Nylon or Classical guitars

- This type of guitar is always what I recommend for new students. Nylon strings are easy to push down, they are smaller and are easier to handle, they come in many different sizes, and have a good starting price at about \$300. They will often come with a gig bag and other essentials to help get a new student started.

For more advanced players getting into the classical guitar is a great way to push yourself to improve technique and musicality. While many classical guitars can be found very cheap there are many high value luthiers such as David Pace, Kenny Hill, or Greg Smallman (many more). Classical guitars made by these luthiers will add great value to a collection.

2. **Steel String acoustic guitar-** This is the second type of guitar I recommend for new students. Although hundreds of hits are written with this type of guitar they are

notoriously difficult for beginners to play. The steel strings cut into the finger tips and the bodies are usually large making them hard to handle. However, it is not impossible to learn on them. Often if the guitar is a decent size and good quality most students will progress with only a little more difficulty than on nylon string guitars.

I try to get my advanced classical students to play on steel string guitar. Playing classical repertoire on steel strings strengthens the hands and provides another perspective hearing the music. The steel strings have more sustain making it

possible to hear voices that might fade away on the nylon strings. It also takes a lot of work to try to warm the tone of the steel strings making it great practice for the right hand.

3. **Electric Guitars-** I try to keep new students away from electric guitars at first. Electric guitars are more expensive because they require an amplifier. They also require a more advanced technique because students need to have a light touch with their left hand and the right-hand plectrum technique is more difficult to learn for beginners.

When it's appropriate I will introduce new students to the electric guitar. Making sure what they buy is a quality guitar and amp. You can have a great guitar but with a poor amp you are just wasting money. Quality brands of electric guitars are Fender, Gib-



Classical guitar

Acoustic guitar

Congrats!

Bethany Shears received First Class Honors on her RCM Level 8 Practical Exam!

son, Ibanez, and Epiphone.

4. **Collectors and Gigging musicians-** Be careful! Myself and many friends have got way too far ahead in their collections ending up with more gear than they will ever need and wasting a lot of money. Before making a purchase do your research. Ask yourself, What purpose will this serve? Will this instrument go up in value? Am I going to play it as much as I think I am? Do I have room for proper storage and care?

These are questions that every musician should ask themselves before making a purchase. You can end up wasting a lot of money rushing to acquire your next guitar or piece of gear. Remember instruments need to be maintained. The investment you make is only as good as the care you put into the instrument. For collectors, I strongly suggest taking your time and doing research especially when making a large investment on a vintage instrument. There are many good knockoffs of vintage instruments that can fool you if you are not careful.

2017 Beginner Group Guitar Class

Welcome Guitarists! We hope that you will join us this Winter for our fast, fun, and intense Beginner Group Guitar class starting Monday, 1/16/2017. Over the past 10+ years, we have helped hundreds of terrific aspiring guitarists and musicians get started with our beginner class.

Guitarists in this class will learn the fundamentals of guitar playing; how to play chords, melodies and simple songs in only 8 weeks! The fantastic Mr. Wayne will be your guide throughout the course of the class and will help you progress, as you learn to play the guitar in a comfortable group setting. So, pick up your guitar (or ask us about renting one) and come on by and get started. Feel free to invite and bring some musical friends w/ you!

Where: The Catoctin School of Music, Unit 4

Class times: Monday evenings from 8:05 - 8:55pm

Class dates: 1/16, 1/23, 1/30, 2/06, 2/13, 2/20, 2/27 and 3/06

Need a guitar?: Rent one from us for \$40.00 + security deposit. (Guitar and case included)

Cost: \$175.00 This includes all materials (except your guitar...although we do have rentals available), eight (50 minute) classes, access to an instructor/Wayne via email during the week between group classes, our video lessons files, years of experience and success teaching hundreds of students how to play jazz, rock, Christian, country and other types and many other types and styles of music. To Sign Up: Please connect with our office manager, Drew Holcomb: StudioManager@thecatocinschoolofmusic.com.

Get the New Year started with a Practice Challenge!!

Catoctin School of Music enthusiastically encourages students to participate in our 100 and 365 Days of Practice programs—what a great way to start a new year and kick the winter blues!

100 Days of practice is just what it sounds like—practicing 100 days in a row with no breaks or skipped days.

This challenge is geared toward helping students progress in their lessons through daily practice—there are some cool rewards for successfully completing the challenge, not the least of which is a great feeling of accomplishment! If you're interested in participating in our practice program, talk to your instructor and they can get you started!