

Dusty Strings

MUSIC STORE, SCHOOL & REPAIR SHOP

SEATTLE, WA

**HOW TO HIRE ROCK STAR TEACHERS
FOR YOUR LESSON PROGRAM**

Jonathan Shue
Education Director

HOW TO HIRE ROCK STAR TEACHERS FOR YOUR LESSON PROGRAM



Why have a lesson program?



What is a rock star teacher?



Where can I find a great teacher?



What are industry best practices?



How to be a rock star teacher



WHY HAVE A MUSIC LESSON PROGRAM?

Increase product sales

Promote your brand

Attract respected names

Add legitimacy

Build community



SALES THROUGH COMMUNITY

Welcome new customers

Encourage investment

Invite diverse customers

Empower beginners

Create life-long learners

Nurture future customers



ROCK STAR TEACHER

TEACHING ARTIST

“A teaching artist (artist educator) is a practicing professional artist with the complementary skills and sensibilities of an educator, who engages people in learning experiences in, through, and about the arts.”

ERIC BOOTH, author of *The Music Teaching Artist's Bible: Becoming a Virtuoso Educator*



MUSICIAN

- Experienced and knowledgeable
- Devoted to their craft
- Regularly gigs, records, tours
- Self-produced work
- Known by other musicians
- Paid to play music



TEACHER

- Called to teach
- Specialties
- Pedagogy / philosophy
- Adaptable to different learning styles
- Recommended by other teachers
- Paid to teach



Teaching Artist



ORGANIZER

- Community-minded
- Recitals and special events
- Schools and organizations
- Idea person
- Self-starter
- Commutes everywhere!



MANAGER

- Independent Contractor
- Maintains busy schedule
- Books and promotes themselves
- Pays for all their own tools and materials
- Their own accountant
- Their own personal assistant!





WHERE CAN YOU FIND ROCK STAR TEACHERS?

Things to consider before you hire:

- ✓ School business model
- ✓ Financial investment
- ✓ Instruments
- ✓ Educational values
- ✓ Different age groups of students
- ✓ Scheduling
- ✓ Lesson rates
- ✓ Promotion
- ✓ Partnership





WHERE CAN YOU FIND ROCK STAR TEACHERS?

- Word-of-mouth
- Call for teachers on website
- Festivals, camps, and retreats
- Contra dances and Irish sessions
- Local music scene
- Touring artists
- Artist agencies
- Cultural organizations
- Retail sales staff
- Genre-specific music websites/magazines
- Local schools, colleges, and universities
- Local symphony orchestra players

INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES: STORE

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Federal, state, and municipal laws
- Form W9 / Form 1099
- Independent Contractor Agreement
- Background Check
- School policies

WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- Adequate teaching space
- Essentials – whiteboard, markers, boombox, piano/keyboard
- Match students with appropriate teachers
- Relationship between staff and teachers
- Promotion

INDUSTRY BEST PRACTICES: TEACHER

ADMINISTRATIVE

- Independent Contractor
- Sole proprietor, LLC, or S-Corp
- Professionally licensed / certified
- Provides their own instrument and materials
- Has other contracts

WORKING RELATIONSHIP

- Professional, prompt, prepared, communicative
- Track individual students' progress
- Well-organized handouts and syllabi, use of technology
- Recommend products and instruments in your store
- Enthusiastic about music, learning, and your store!

BE A GOOD HOST

- Beautiful learning spaces
- Feedback loop
- Student evaluations
- Quarterly teacher meetings
- Space for recitals and events
- Private space for downtime
- Staff meetings, parties



“Music does not come naturally to everyone and the same teaching style won’t work for each student. A good teacher can skillfully try different methods until they find one that works for the student.”

- Alex Sturbaum, singer-songwriter and accordion, bodhran, and bouzouki teacher

“A great music teacher is able to see and hear where the student is and can show them the next steps down the road. They can help the student learn how to make the instrument sound good and develop repertoire while discovering their own voice.”

– Grant Dermody, recording artist and harmonica teacher

“Dusty Strings has not only supported my creative practice but also steps forward when I need support, and steps back when I need creative freedom to explore. The inclusive and caring environment has been an asset not only to my teaching but to the school and store, as well.”

– Debby Boland Watt, vocalist, composer, and voice teacher

“Each student has strengths and weaknesses. Encourage their strengths while gently addressing their weaknesses so they become a more balanced musician. Use positive reinforcement – the student needs to know what they’re doing *right* more than what they’re doing wrong.”

– Barry Pollack, solo performer and music teacher

“A great music teacher needs more than just experience on the instrument. You need patience, a sense of humor, and a good memory that harkens back to when you were a beginner.”

- Carol Martin, bluegrass mandolin teacher and workshop presenter

“I learned from experienced players who passed on their insights because to do so was part of who they were. Musicians are recipients of a gift, and as bearers of that gift, it should be both our responsibility and our joy to share and pass it on.”

– Steve James, American blues musician

“Be funny! One of my students, who is now a jazz bassist, told me his favorite moment was when I said the guitar neck looks like a chef’s hat. For some reason, he said, it always makes him laugh.”

– Tai Shan, singer-songwriter, film and television composer, and voice and guitar teacher

“The most important thing is to always remember you’re teaching a person, not an instrument.”

- Harper Tasche, composer and harp teacher

“Find out what excites the student and who they are and teach to that.”

- Audrey Goodman, singer-songwriter and piano teacher

“You must be able to answer students’ questions, guide them in an organized and enjoyable fashion, and inspire them. We all remember our good, inspiring teachers. Strive to be one of them!”

– Mark Hanson, GRAMMY® winning fingerstyle guitarist and workshop presenter

“People who come for lessons and workshops with me are often musically very inexperienced. So, a big part of my job is to help them find a song or tune they love and to understand why it touches them.”

– Cathy Britell, symphony clarinetist and Autoharp Hall of Fame-r

“There’s a difference between a great player or singer and a great teacher. It’s the difference between being art-focused and being learner-focused.”

– Sue Thompson, bluegrass and roots-Americana vocalist and teacher

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