

Brianne Borden

8 Lawrence Ave Apt. 3
Potsdam, NY 13676

(585) 469-9405
bordenbl@potsdam.edu

Teaching Philosophy

Teaching music is a multifaceted task that involves teaching others to play instruments, play rhythms correctly, place pitches properly, fine tune each note, conceptualize beautiful sounds, and deal with a multitude of physical factors. For this reason, I take an approach to teaching that addresses the student as a whole person. I aim to offer an education that supports students' goals while addressing their uniqueness in who they are as individuals. As a strong advocate for wellness for musicians, I understand that this art goes beyond the fundamentals of learning techniques and repertoire, and I also have a passion for teaching students to develop healthy habits in mind and body while becoming complete musicians.

I have been fortunate to have professors and mentors with expansive knowledge of pedagogy. They have instilled in me a strong foundation of pedagogical knowledge, and I aim to do the same for my students. I honor the importance of traditional pedagogy, while allowing my curiosity (as well as my students') to introduce me to pedagogical techniques being developed and implemented today. I value the significance of being a constant learner, a quality I hope to impart to my students. I display these habits by asking questions throughout each lesson and encourage them to come to conclusions on their own or find the ways that they learn best so they are able to continue their learning journey outside of my office.

As a teacher, I work to find a balance between acknowledging the individuality of every student, while keeping a high standard of excellence and consistent goals. I expect each of my students to work towards strong fundamentals, versatility, knowledge of the instrument and its history, healthy habits for longevity of performing, and consistent growth as a musician and contributor to society. With each student, I cater to how they respond to instruction so they can best reach these goals. Aside from the standard learning styles, I recognize that each student comes with their own unique story. I am fortunate to have diverse students in the realms of socioeconomic status, race, neurodiversity, gender, disabilities, and other histories and identities. I work to keep myself aware of these factors and seek understanding and learning to the best of my ability, while also acknowledging that my experience will never mirror theirs. I know that no two students will learn the same way, and I truly enjoy individualizing instruction to ensure that each student is equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary to develop. As somebody who is enthusiastic about the physical and mental wellbeing of musicians, I implement parts of my trainings and knowledge in the subject to create healthy practices for my students while they maintain the rigorous practice and schedule that being a musician requires.

It is important to me that my students participate in multiple musical outlets. While private instruction is essential, chamber music, large ensembles, and involvement in non-classical genres are imperative to developing a musician. Through these experiences, students learn significant interpersonal and musical skills. They are required to effectively communicate, collaborate and work as a team, and be willing to step up as leaders. Chamber music allows for developing the ability to match sounds and focus on intonation and rhythm. Large ensemble playing reinforces many of these skills, while giving students access to musical knowledge and interpretation of a conductor, along with other instrumentalists in the group. Lastly, performing in non-classical genres creates a versatile musician.

It helps to prepare students for multiple types of musical environments, fully preparing them to be successful.

Most of all, I hope to create an atmosphere of reciprocated trust and respect with my students so they are ambitious in setting objectives, and we can work together to be held accountable in achieving those goals. I aim to be not only a teacher, but also a mentor, on the path to support my students and work for their success in any field they choose to pursue. I believe that teaching is a partnership between mentor and mentee and that lessons should feel like a safe space to ask questions, be vulnerable, and be honest. My trauma-informed trainings have inspired to me to minimize any power dynamics within my teaching, while still working to maintain clear boundaries. I find that when students feel safe to be honest and open with me, they feel less shame and ultimately learn quicker even when external factors don't allow them to spend as much time on the material as they would like. I believe that compassion does not need to substitute holding high standards, but in fact supports it. When my students know how much I care for them, they feel inspired to work hard and reach for the potential that I see within them.