



**MONTGOMERY**  
school of music



***Student Handbook***  
**2018**

*Discovering the Musician in You*

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(Scan with your  
smart phone to  
visit our website)





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*Discovering the Musician in You*



**MONTGOMERY**  
school of music

*Discovering the Musician in You*

Going into its seventh year of business, Montgomery School of Music was founded by Brannon and Nagea Littleton with the goal of “inspiring others to a lifetime of self-development through experiencing and appreciating music.”

What started in 2011 in a one room facility, as I Teach Keys, which focused on piano and voice, has now expanded into a nearly 4,000 square-foot facility with 15 staff members offering private lessons in various instruments. With these expanded services came a new name that encompassed the comprehensive programs, Montgomery School of Music (MSoM).

Their newest location features a parent’s relaxation room, a children’s play area with video gaming systems, a reception area for music material and afternoon snack sales, multiple studio rooms with high definition security cameras, and our very own recital hall, which allows MSoM to offer student bands, ensembles and workshops throughout the year. Studio rooms are equipped with quality, Steinway-designed pianos, digital keyboards, computers, and iPads.

One of the most exciting programs at MSoM is their Visiting Artist Recital Series. MSoM wants its students to become well-rounded musicians by exposing them to quality music and musicians. In order to make this happen, college music dept. professors are invited to come perform and talk to MSoM students about their programs. MSoM students learn what steps need to be taken to be accepted into college music programs and learn about the possibility of music scholarships for college.



MSoM is also keenly aware of the influence and critical role teachers play in the developmental process of its students. What makes MSoM so special is its teachers. Hiring teachers who are the right fit for MSoM is one of the most important aspects of how they operate. Instructors who are passionate about people and proper musical growth and development, both personally and for the students, are the top character traits when selecting MSoM employees. MSoM has college-trained instructors in every instrument. Multiple instructors even have master’s degrees in music.

The teachers and staff at MSoM are dedicated to providing quality music education in the River Region - stay tuned to see what’s next!



MSoM is committed to providing quality music education and musical experiences for children and adults. We believe in every person beats the heartbeat of a musician; he or she just needs the right type of guidance and inspiration to discover the musician in themselves.

We fulfill this goal by:

1. Maintaining a facility and environment conducive for musical learning.
2. Ensuring organizational leadership adheres to sound management principles.
3. Hiring teachers whose passion is teaching, and whose credentials and skills have adequately prepared them to help develop musicians of all ages and levels.
4. Offering private lessons in many instruments, including piano, classical guitar, acoustic guitar, electric guitar, bass guitar, ukulele, violin, viola, cello, flute, saxophone, clarinet, and some brass instruments.
5. Developing ensemble activities to encourage musical collaboration among peers.
6. Providing frequent Visiting Artist Recitals throughout the year to inspire children and adults to pursue quality, enriching music.
7. Conducting classes and seminars in music theory, composition, audio-production, and other similar topics.
8. Hosting over 30 annual recital opportunities for students to develop confidence as well as to showcase their progress.
9. Building relationships with college music departments for the benefit of our students.
10. Helping to promote well-rounded students through community outreach efforts such as nursing home performances, and special events.





<p>No registration fees</p> <p>No long-term contracts</p> <p>No recital fees</p> <p>Save 10% on items purchased through MSoM</p> <p>Free student recitals every two months</p> <p>On-site recital hall with professional seating</p> <p>Front desk area for purchasing music materials and afternoon snacks</p> <p>Studio rooms equipped with quality instruments and technology such as Steinway-designed pianos, iPads &amp; computers with up-to-date software and apps, including Piano Maestro.</p>	<p>Visiting Guest Artist Recitals</p> <p>Free studio wi-fi</p> <p>Experienced, quality staff with music degrees and/or related experience</p> <p>A children's play area with toys and video gaming systems</p> <p>A parent's relaxation room</p> <p>Easy to use online booking and rescheduling system</p> <p>Free home access to Piano Maestro and Dust Buster - fun yet powerful musical educational apps</p> <p>Conveniently located off of a major road close to shopping</p>
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**In 2017 alone,  
we hosted...**



*And every one .... free of charge!*



*Brannon Littleton — Director & Piano/Vocal Instructor (since 2011)*

Brannon was born and raised in Alabama. He attended God's Bible School and College, University of Montevallo, and Amridge University and earned degrees in music, religion, and human development. In the past he has served as vocalist, accompanist, composer and church music director. Since 2011, he has devoted his time to building a music school in the Montgomery area.



*Derek Carnley — Guitar Instructor (since 2014)*

Derek has been playing guitar for several years and holds a bachelor's degree in music education in guitar from Faulkner University. While his main instrument is guitar (classical or jazz), he also plays saxophone and percussion and is actively involved in composition work. He also serves as band director and teaching assistant at Faulkner University.



*Elizabeth Clements — Piano Instructor (since 2015)*

Elizabeth has studied piano since age eight and has enjoyed singing in choirs and playing for her church. She holds a BA in psychology and music and a master's degree in administration. She loves working with children and shares a deep passion for helping beginner students build solid piano skills that can last a life time.



*Randall Smith — Piano Instructor (since 2015)*

Randall Smith has lived a life that revolves around music. He became a church pianist in his early teens, leading to a 40 year career as a musician. Along with a BS in Music from Troy University, he has accumulated over 25 years experience teaching piano and music appreciation. He works equally well with beginners and seasoned musicians.



*Shoronda Charles — String Instructor (since 2016)*

Shoronda recalls always having a love for music. Her passion was truly ignited once she was introduced to the violin at the age of 10. Since then, Shoronda has completed a bachelor of arts in music from Alabama State University and a master's in music education from Jackson State University. She teaches violin, viola and cello. She also serves as music teacher in the Montgomery Public School system.



*John Howard — Voice & Drum Instructor (since 2015)*

John comes from a family of singers and musicians. He has a degree from Rowan University (Glassboro, NJ) in Classical Percussion and is currently the Choral Director at Lee High School here in Montgomery. His musical roots and foundation in Gospel Music has allowed him to perform in several venues and also allowed him to expand musically to other musical genres. John loves to help bring out the best in people musically.



*Jim Lambert — Guitar Instructor (since 2016)*

Jim developed a passion for guitar 16 years ago with electric guitar. He holds a music degree from Troy University with an emphasis on Classical guitar. There, he was involved in several programs, including the Troy University Guitar Ensemble, Troy University Studio Rhythm section, and Troy University Collegiate Choir, as well as several solo recitals. Jim also performs with the Park Band as the lead guitarist.



*Jonathan Young — Drums, Bass & Piano Instructor (since 2017)*

Jonathan was raised in Athens, AL where he developed a passion for music at a very early age. He formed his first rock band at age 11 and served as the drummer for his high school jazz band. Jonathan went to Troy University, where he studied piano and played bass in the studio rhythm section. In 2009, he joined the Park Band as the bass player, and after six years in that role, he switched to drums, where he serves now. He is currently continuing his music education at Huntingdon College.



*Melissa Fike — Piano Instructor (since 2016)*

Melissa attended Kennesaw State University where she received her bachelor's degree in piano performance. She started teaching music when she was 17 years old from her home, and her love for music and working with students has constantly grown. She is married to Tommy, a worship pastor, and along with him and their son Forrest, music is an important part of their lives. Sharing that through teaching gives her great joy!



*Robert Hoit — Clarinet & Saxophone Instructor (since 2017)*

Robert received his BM from Oberlin Conservatory and his MM from Rotterdam Conservatory in the Netherlands. He has performed for over 14 years, plays in professional orchestras and served as a university Associate Professor of clarinet. In addition to classical music, Robert has also performed in big bands, combos, and traditional jazz settings.



*Rachel Nozny — Flute Instructor (since 2017)*

Rachel Nozny began playing flute at age 10. Rachel started playing with the Mobile Symphony in 2015. She also performs with the Pensacola Symphony, Northwest Florida Symphony Orchestra, Symphonia Gulf Coast, Macon Symphony and Albany Symphony. Rachel holds a BM in Flute Performance from Mercer University and a MM Flute Performance from the University of Kentucky. She also serves as a professor at Troy University



*Dr. Michael Huff — Trumpet Instructor (since 2017)*

Dr. Michael Huff serves as Associate Professor of Music at Troy University where he teaches trumpet, brass methods and works with the band program. Dr. Huff has earned degrees from the University of Massachusetts at Amherst, the Eastman School of Music and the Catholic University of America. Dr. Huff performs as second trumpet with the Mobile Symphony, fourth trumpet with the Pensacola Symphony and third trumpet with the Meridian Symphony.



*James Terrell— Guitar Instructor (since 2016)*



A native of Montgomery, James teaches guitar, music theory, music history and composition. He holds degrees in music from Columbus State University (B.M. performance, guitar, 2007) and the University of Massachusetts Amherst (M.M. composition, 2011). He has extensive performance experience as a soloist and in chamber ensembles, and his repertoire spans the history of the guitar, from Renaissance to contemporary music. As a composer, he has written concert music for all manner of ensembles and soloists as well as orchestral music.

*Hannah Hendry— Admin Assist. & Piano Instructor (since 2017)*



Hannah has studied piano lessons for the past ten years and currently serves as accompanist at her church. In teaching private lessons to family and friends, she discovered her passion for music education and has made it a life-pursuit. She currently serves as administrative assistant at MSoM and as a student-teacher under Director Littleton's tutelage.

*Kristina Clifton— Administrative Assistant (since 2017)*



Kristina holds a bachelor's in psychology & counseling from Faulkner University. She has a strong musical background in flute and singing, having travelled and performed with Faulkner's University chorus. She helps coordinate student scheduling, special events, and communications between faculty and students.

*Nagea Littleton— Assistant Director and Advisor (since 2011)*



Wife of Director Brannon Littleton and co-owner of MSoM, Nagea is involved with strategic planning, staff expansion and development, special events and marketing advising. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Marketing from ASU and an MBA with concentrations in finance and marketing from AUM. She is currently completing an additional master's degree, in applied economics, from AUM.



There are two options for booking lessons with MSoM:

**Option #1: Per lesson basis**

This option is by far the most flexible choice and is designed for clients with unpredictable schedules or clients who wish to simply take lessons here and there based upon their musical needs. The easiest way to book a lesson for this selection is by visiting our website and using the online scheduler. Clients can also download our Mindbody app and book a session from their phone as well.



**Option #2: Weekly recurring lessons**

This option is what most clients choose. Clients receive a weekly reserved time slot, either 30 minutes or 60 minutes long. It is theirs until they submit a Withdrawal Form a month in advance of the date from which they wish to withdraw. Option two requires enrollment in our monthly autopay program wherein your account is automatically billed tuition at the beginning of each month.

To get started in recurring lessons, an Enrollment Authorization Form must be submitted to the front desk for approval. This form is available online or at the front desk.

**Tuition for 2018**

Session Type	1/2 hr	1 hr
Single Session	\$30.00	\$60.00
Monthly Package of 1 lesson / week (4-week month)	\$120.00	\$240.00

*Please note: the monthly fees are based upon a 4-week month. Throughout the year, some months are longer or shorter, resulting in a prorated amount for those months.*

**Multiple Family Member Discount for recurring lessons**

With the equivalent of two 30-minute slots each week, additional weekly sessions receive a \$10.00 discount per 30-minute session.



**1. Minimum Age for private lessons:**

Piano & Drums — 5 (sometimes 4) and up

Voice — 10 and up

All other instruments — around 7 and up

*\*Occasionally, we might even suggest waiting if a student appears to be not ready for private lessons.*

**2. Missed sessions:**

It is important to understand that when a lesson is booked, you are paying for that block of time. When a make-up lesson is requested, in effect, you have asked the teacher, who has made that time available for you (possibly turning down paying clients who wanted that spot), to now forfeit any pay from that time and to move your lesson to a different date. Thus, we do not offer makeups for sessions missed by clients. When you request a “makeup session” for a scheduled lesson that you missed, you are asking the studio to pay the teacher twice. We wish we could but it is just too costly to do so.

**3. Rescheduling Guidelines:**

Life happens. Thus we want to provide clients with as much flexibility while ensuring the best interests of MSoM are also met. There are three options for rescheduling.

1. ***30 days or more advance notice:*** guaranteed rescheduling or account credit for future use.
2. ***Less than 30-days but a minimum of 24-hours before lesson:*** rescheduling to a different day/time considered, but subject to availability. Rescheduling is not guaranteed and account credit for next month is not provided. If there is no availability, clients can consider Option 3.
3. ***Less than 24-hours:*** There are two options for those who can't make their appointment.
  - Online Lesson with the teacher during the scheduled lesson time.
  - Video submission of your assignments. Video links should be submitted at least an hour before your lesson for the teacher to review during your scheduled session; the front desk should be notified by both email and phone call and the teacher should be emailed as well. Teachers will review your performance and provide feedback and further instruction at the end of your lesson time. Visit [www.montgomeryschoolofmusic.com/Client-Documents.php](http://www.montgomeryschoolofmusic.com/Client-Documents.php) for instructions on setting up online lessons and video submissions.



- Limit one rescheduling per client per month.
- **No rescheduling for same-day-as-lesson cancellations. This would necessitate our having to pay the teachers twice.** We do offer an online option during your lesson time if you can't make it in person.
- In order to have a guaranteed rescheduling or account credit for an upcoming absence, you must notify us at least 30 days in advance.
- Lessons cancelled by MSoM:  
We provide rescheduled lessons or refunds for when we have to cancel a schedule lessons due to teacher absence or if the studio announces that it has closed for the day due to inclement weather.
- 30-day window to attend rescheduled lesson / make-up:  
In the event MSoM grants a rescheduled lesson or make-up, it is provided on the basis of
  - 1) the availability of the instructor and
  - 2) it must be used by the student within 30 days of the missed/cancelled appointment.
- Clients are not permitted to reschedule a session that has already been rescheduled from another time.

Example of "dont's":

- Do not wait til the week of your lesson to tell us that you can't make it *and* expect a guaranteed rescheduling. We will offer you what is available for rescheduling but if you can't make it to any of those options, you will have to forfeit the lesson (or change your plans to make sure you attend).
- Do not call in two weeks before your vacation and expect a rescheduling or refund. In effect, you have asked the teacher, who has made that time available for you (possibly turning down paying clients who wanted that spot), to now forfeit any pay from that time and move your lesson to a different date.
- Do not wait until after the 1st of the month to say, "I can't attend the rest of this month. May I have a refund or a credit on next month's bill?" You either have to take the rescheduled lessons we offer (if any are available) or forfeit those lessons.



#### **4. How to reschedule a lesson:**

- Online: Simply log into your account via our online scheduler to see where you can shift to an available slot. This feature will not function after 24-hours prior to your lesson. Visit our tutorial page <https://www.montgomeryschoolofmusic.com/Client-Documents.php>
- In person: Stop by our front desk to get help on rescheduling to an available alternate slot.

(Only one rescheduling request per month per client. Continual abuse of this policy will result in the client losing any privileges to reschedule.)

#### **5. Emergency Lesson Credit**

Every client is granted one emergency lesson credit every 6 months whereby they can actually cancel the same day and not be penalized. These credits do not accrue and do not roll over into the next period. This credit can be used only for the following reasons:

Same day hospitalization — only applicable for hospitalizations that occur the same day due to sudden accident or illness. Not applicable for someone who has been in the hospital for more than 24-hours prior to the lesson and failed to inform MSoM.

Extreme sudden illness that does two things: prevents attending lessons at MSoM and prevents online lessons or video submission.

Death of a family member

Dire emergencies due to uncontrollable circumstances to include situations as house fire, robbery, and personal involvement in automobile accident. MSoM reserves the right to determine what is an “uncontrollable circumstance.”

Guidelines: The following rules relate to the usage of an emergency lesson credit:

Contact the studio by email AND phone as soon as possible and before the lesson time begins.





If you do not contact the studio before the lesson begins, you forfeit your right to use the emergency lesson credit. Granted, if you were run over by a tractor trailer, stuck in an elevator with no signal, or abducted by aliens, you obviously will not be able to call.

Administration reserves the right to make judgement calls on these rare events.

If abuse of this option is suspected, MSoM reserves the right to either refuse to grant the Emergency Lesson Credit and/or terminate a client's membership without refund for the disputed lesson time.

### **5. Withdrawing from recurring lessons:**

To withdraw from enrollment in the monthly autopay plan and the recurring lessons requires submission of the Withdrawal Form to the front desk by the 1st of the desired last month of payment. For instance if you want the April payment to be your last, you must submit the withdrawal form by April 1st. The official withdrawal form is the only acceptable means of withdrawing. Verbal acknowledgment to staff or an email is not sufficient. This form can be found online at [www.mgmschoolofmusic.com/importantdocuments](http://www.mgmschoolofmusic.com/importantdocuments) or at the front desk.

#### *Emergency Withdrawal*

In the event an emergency has occurred, such as physical trauma or the death of a loved one that requires immediate relocation, MSoM will consider waiver of the 30 day notification. An emergency is not defined by "We are moving next week but just got so busy we forgot to tell you." This is subject to MSoM approval.

#### *Switching Instruments or Teachers*

For clients enrolled in recurring lessons where your future sessions have been reserved in advanced indefinitely at your requested time(s), one must follow the Withdrawal Guidelines for switching to a different instrument or teacher.

- 1). Submit Withdrawal Form 30-days in advance
- 2). Submit Authorization for Enrollment form for desired new instrument or teacher.

### **6. Late payments**

Recurring payments that are more than ten days late will result in termination of lesson enrollment. Clients will be notified by email immediately by our online system if their monthly tuition payment has failed. Many times this is due to expired credit card or a new card number being issued. It is the clients responsibility to update their billing



information in a timely manner. If multiple late payments occur, MSoM reserves the right to remove client from recurring lessons option and place them on a per lesson payment basis. This results in all desired lessons being paid for up front.

### **7. Miscellaneous Guidelines**

- Periodically, MSoM offers short-term classes. Each class will release its own specific guidelines for booking, refunds, cancellations, etc. Participating clients will be responsible for being familiar with those policies when released.
- Unattended students:  
MSoM does not assume responsibility for the welfare of students “dropped” off at the studio. The right to bring legal action against the studio for any injury sustained is waived. It is expected that a guardian or adult be on premises during lesson times.
- Tardiness:  
If you arrive late for your lesson, your session will be reduced by that amount of time.
- Image and Audio Releases:  
Occasionally, the Montgomery School of Music records students in lessons for promotional purposes. All photographs and videoing are used in a professional manner to highlight the student. If you are in objection to this, you must let us know in advance.
- Musical Materials:  
Many music materials for lessons can be purchased at the MSoM front desk. No illegally photocopied material is permissible.

*“If music be the food of  
love, play on.”*

William Shakespeare



Too often music students are left to fend for themselves in between lessons. Unfortunately, the real progress takes place during non-lesson days. Every adult student and parent of a musical student desires success, but many times lack the structure for positive development. Discipline and dedication are a part of the musical journey, and there are steps that can be taken to ensure success. Here are some tips:



- Establish a set time for you or your child to practice on a daily basis
- Practice at a time and a place with least distractions
- Build a lifestyle of listening to all types of music. It's a language. How do you expect to "speak" the language of music if you don't listen to it and engage with it?
- If you are the parent of a child taking lessons, nothing spurs their sense of musical identity more than to see your enthusiasm about music. Create family time around the rehearsal moments. Have your child (or children) perform regularly for family and friends.
- If you are the parent/guardian of a musical student, don't shy away from the lessons. Sit in on the sessions and learn the material along with your child so as to ensure you can help reinforce concepts at home.
- Encourage a lifestyle of singing. Playing an instrument shouldn't be the mere copying of musical symbols on a page - music should emerge from within. If a child has never been exposed to the wonderful world of singing and internalizing music, then he or she is missing out on a critical developmental building block in music.
- Keep a practice log and establish a reward system for yourself and/or your child when milestones are achieved. (e.g. Practicing 15 minutes a day for 30 days straight)
- Attend concerts and music events on a regular basis.



How do I contact the studio?

*By phone: After 3:00 pm. Monday-Friday. Please leave a voicemail outside of this time.*

*By email: This is the best way. [info@mgmschoolofmusic.com](mailto:info@mgmschoolofmusic.com). We typically respond to messages in less than 24 hours.*

Where can I get an instrument?

*While we do not sell or rent instruments ourselves, we at times keep links on our website to common types of instruments. We also can give you local recommendations for purchasing an instrument.*

What is the cost of student recitals?

*They are free. Unbeknownst to many music teachers, charging entrance fees for recitals is only legal if and when you own all the copy rights to the songs being performed.*

Where do I purchase books?

*Most of our common music materials can be purchased at the front desk. We do not pass on the 10% sales tax to our customers.*

How do I contact my teacher?

*By email. Ask your teacher or the front desk for their email.*

What happens when the studio cancels on me?

*We will either arrange a reschedule or a credit to your account.*

How will I be notified of a last minute cancellation?

*We attempt to use a three tier system: text, phone call, and email. If it is a major studio wide cancellation, we will post the change on social media as well.*

Why can't I cancel on the same day of my lesson?

*As much as we would like to offer this level of flexibility, it simply isn't economically possible as we would have to pay our teachers twice. Thus, we offer as much options as possible to accommodate life as we know it. (See our section on Rescheduling.)*



How long does it take to become proficient in an instrument?

*There are many factors affect the answer to this question. To put it simply, one should not measure the time commitment in months, but in years. A good rule of thumb is five years and an hour per day of practice to reach amateur status and 10 years and two hrs per day to reach a semi professional level.*

How do I pay for lessons?

*All lesson fees are processed via our secure online scheduler. Recurring lessons are processed automatically at the beginning of each month.*

Are there any contracts involved?

*For any of our private lessons, there is only a month to month commitment. Occasional classes do require full commitment for the length of the series.*

Do you charge registration fees?

*No. We never have. For the most part, registration fees are just another gimmick to make extra money off of clients.*

Can I drop my child off for lessons?

*We strongly discourage this practice. 1) You really should be in the lessons as much as possible to learn what is being taught. 2). We have no one available to watch your child after the lessons and thus can't be held responsible for their well-being. 3). As has happened in the past, parents have been detained in traffic long past our closing time and staff members have had to wait until the parents returned in order to close down.*

Are parents allowed to sit in on lessons?

*By all means, yes!*

What do I do if I want to switch teachers or instruments while enrolled in recurring lessons?

*Submit a Withdrawal Form 30 days in advance. Then, submit an Authorization for Enrollment Form for request teacher/instrument.*

Do you teach adults?

*Yes! A large portion of our student body is comprised of adult learners, including retirees.*