

TAKIN' CARE OF BUSINESS

Planning Your (Dream) Studio

BY BETH GIGANTE KLINGENSTEIN

Gone are the years when the independent studio consisted of a piano and two chairs. The possibilities for a 21st-century studio are much more exciting and all encompassing. Whether you're just starting out or already on your way, you might find these suggestions for creating a home studio useful.

Studio space

In most cases, independent teachers work in their homes. You need to consider certain items before renting or purchasing a home, condo, or apartment.

- ◆ Be sure you are in compliance with all zoning laws and homeowner association rules.
- ◆ As soon as you can afford it, have your studio space separate from all other living areas.
- ◆ An entrance that leads directly to the studio helps keep your family life separate from your professional life. The best entrance is one where parents can watch their children enter your home and one that does not have dangerous steps or icy slopes.
- ◆ A long driveway allows for adequate parking, drop-off, and pick-up without distressing the neighbors or violating zoning laws.

Studio equipment

Creating the ideal studio can take years of planning and a great deal of money. A teacher just starting out can establish a functional studio with bare essentials, yet develop a long-range plan to build toward the ideal.

Prior to any technology purchase, it's important to decide what you wish to do with it. For instance, how will you use a video camera? Do you want to create digital movies of your recitals for the Internet or just videotape recitals to show within the studio? Which software should you purchase first? Which should follow and in what order?

If you hesitate to use technology, know that it's not as daunting as it may seem. If you choose not to enter the world of computers and MIDI keyboards, workstations can still be used with tape recorders, CD players, workbooks, and videos. Such workstations are a wonderful way to supplement teaching time.

Technology—Some Basic Guidelines

- ◆ Plan for the future as you purchase technology related items.
- ◆ Be sure your computer(s) can run the software you purchase.
- ◆ Develop a software library that covers a well-balanced curriculum. Include software on world music, music history, composers, aural and rhythm skills, and music theory at all levels. Use a balance of tutorial and drill programs, and include programs for composition, notation, and sequencing.
- ◆ Be sure that all computers, MIDI keyboards, and speakers function well together, and that you have the proper cables and jacks to operate all technology as a single unit.
- ◆ If you set up multiple workstations, be sure you have planned a system for listening to one or all of the stations simultaneously.

Year 1

- ◆ Acoustic piano
- ◆ Telephone answering machine
- ◆ Ledger for records
- ◆ Metronome
- ◆ Tape recorder
- ◆ CD player
- ◆ Small library of music, educational tapes, and CDs (You may find bargains at local music teacher organization sales.)
- ◆ Student workstation area with tapes, CDs, and theory workbooks

Years 2-5

- ◆ Student workstation area with computer, MIDI keyboard, and speakers
- ◆ Headset for workstation
- ◆ Starting library of theory, history, notation, sequencing, and aural skills software
- ◆ Bookkeeping software
- ◆ Video recorder
- ◆ Television to show educational videos
- ◆ Expand library of music, CDs, and educational videos
- ◆ Small library of books on music-related topics

Years 6-10

- ◆ Digital/MIDI keyboard(s) and speakers
- ◆ Additional computers for student workstations
- ◆ Expand library of music software
- ◆ Expand library of music and CDs
- ◆ Expand library of music-related books

Years 11-20

- ◆ Second acoustic piano
- ◆ Collection of ethnic and rhythm instruments
- ◆ Continued expansion of all libraries and workstations
- ◆ Organized storage space for expanding libraries

Years 21 +

- ◆ Expand and remodel studio space, if needed
- ◆ Add a waiting room
- ◆ Add a separate workstation room
- ◆ Upgrade acoustic pianos, if necessary III

Beth Gigante Klingenstein is nationally known for her work on business policies for the independent music teacher. The author of *A Business Guide for the Music Teacher*, she taught as an independent music teacher for 28 years. Klingenstein is presently on the music faculty of Valley City State University (North Dakota) and is the Founding Director of the VCSU Community School of the Arts.