

GETTING THE MOST ONLINE

Online music lessons are a great option for music students allowing them to connect with their teachers when they cannot meet in person. Online lessons empower students to continue growing and learning while finding fulfillment in music-making.

What do I need for online music lessons?

Equipment

All you need is a strong internet connection and a device with a working camera and microphone – ideally a computer or tablet, but a phone will work as well. The internet connection is most important. A hardwire (ethernet) connection is ideal, but if not, make sure you are close to your router. Optional equipment may include a USB microphone, webcam, or an audio interface.

Setup

Proper placement of the device helps your teacher see your technique and give you helpful feedback. Your teacher may ask you to place your device at a specific angle to better see your hands. A great way to start is to:

- Place your device directly in front of you (or from the side for piano)
- Ensure your face and both hands are visible
- Distance your device about an arm's length away (certain instruments may need to be farther away from the microphone to avoid distortion)

Preparation

Before your lesson starts, we recommend that you do the following to get the most out of your lesson:

Choose and set up your lesson space. Choose a quiet space in your house free of distractions with a great WiFi connection if you plan to use WiFi (to test this, check both download and upload speeds here (<https://www.speedtest.net/>)). Because of the settings required to best hear your instrument, minimize background noises, including the presence of other family members. Ask other family members to avoid using the internet during your lesson, if possible.

Test your camera and microphone. Make sure that you are well-lit from the front (ideally position yourself so you are facing bright windows).

Prepare your music, note-taking materials, instrument, and other equipment you will need for your lesson. Make sure everything is within reach. If applicable, tune your instrument before your lesson starts.

Charge/plug in your device. Video calls drain the battery very quickly, so make sure you have adequate battery before your lesson starts.

Software and Logging In

Levine Music uses Zoom for lessons, which is a free app you can download onto your device. Follow the prompts to make sure Zoom can access your device's camera and microphone. Prior to your lesson you will receive your teacher's Zoom link. If you log on ahead of time, you will see a screen saying that the host has not started yet, or to wait until the host lets you in.

Zoom allows music teachers and students to adjust the audio settings in order to better hear one another. Please make the adjustments outlined below.

On the Zoom meeting screen, enable your microphone's original sound by doing the following:

- Click the upward arrow next to the microphone icon and select "Audio Settings"
- Uncheck the box that says "Automatically adjust microphone volume"
- Click the "Advanced" button on the lower right
- Check the box that says, "Show in-meeting option to 'Enable Original Sound' from microphone"
- Disable "Suppress persistent background noise" and "Suppress intermittent background noise"
- When you return to the meeting screen, you should see a button in the upper left that says, "Turn Off Original Sound"
- You have successfully enabled original sound, and your teacher will be able to hear your instrument's true sound. To turn it off, click this button once, and it should say "Turn on Original Sound"
- Your teacher can help you adjust your microphone level so that your loudest sounds do not come across distorted

How are online music lessons different than in-person lessons?

Online lessons are extremely effective and work very much like in-person lessons with just a few adjustments. While they generally require more planning time by the teacher, in some ways they have proven superior to in-person lessons. Levine's online music lessons are active and synchronous – meaning that both the student and teacher are live at the same time, actively working through material.

Ways in which online lessons differ include:

- Teachers use more call and response rather than playing together at the same time.
- Teachers may record a teacher duet part ahead of time so that you can practice with it.
- Teachers and students can share their screen and make notes right on the music score.
- Students can warm up immediately before, and practice immediately after, their lesson.
- Students can record their lessons to help with their own practice. This also allows students to observe their own progress!
- Teachers can record small instructional clips of the lesson to help with learning specific things, which can be used in practice during the week, and help make sure that students know exactly what and how to practice.