

ARE LESSONS AND MUSIC SCHOOL REALLY WORTH IT?

(An article by **Mike Walsh** - well respected player and teacher)

YES!!!!

This might be one of the biggest and most influential questions for beginners and intermediate level players to have to answer in taking that next step to music success. If you say no to this question, you will have slowed down the rate at which your musicianship, technical ability and musical goals will have flourished. Because this question is asked so frequently, I decided to take the time to write this article. Hopefully, I can help you realize the importance of music education so you can get more of what you want out of your guitar playing and music goals.

The problem with this type of question is that people never see **THEMSELVES** as a **WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT**. I hear a lot of would-be musicians (beginners and players that dream of making it) scoff at the idea of spending \$30 for a lesson, \$1500 (52 weeks) a year, to help them excel at the very thing they love to do, play music. Other players only take lessons for a short while because they do not see the whole picture of progress and how they fit in it long term. By taking lessons you start off on the right path to success. At the same time, you are sending yourself a message that you are willing to do whatever it takes to be the best you can.

The most undeniable fact about lessons and music school is that you will learn **MORE** much **FASTER** than if you tried to do it on your own. Your teachers pass on information that took them years, even decades to learn. Add to this your music textbooks, which took multiple writers and editors years to come up with and organize for you. Even if you were to figure out a few things from online tabs and some theory books, your application of those ideas is still based off of **ZERO EXPERIENCE** with that information. Your teacher helps tie together every loose end of the concept/skill/technique for you in seconds, instead of months, years, or maybe **NEVER** if you were on your own. The fact that you can get **ANSWERS** to your questions **IN SECONDS** is worth every dime you spend on furthering your music education.

REASONS YOU PROGRESS FASTER WITH LESSONS AND MUSIC EDUCATION:

- Answered in seconds, where you might have no clue where to start looking for the answer.
- Answered in seconds, where you might learn the **WRONG THING** when you think you did finally find it.
- Answered in seconds, where you might have to buy and read tons of books and still **NEVER** find it.

- Answered in seconds, where you might receive the **WRONG INFO** from other friends, online tabs etc. that were also self-taught and came to the wrong conclusion in their search.
- Corrected in seconds, where the many years of self taught playing has engrained horrible techniques that has now **CAPPED OFF** your physical playing **POTENTIAL** to higher level techniques.

What about all of the questions that you do not even think to ask, but your teacher makes you aware of and answers for you? These types of answers are worth ten times more than what you paid for that day's lesson. For those of you out there who think that the money is not worth it, would you spend \$1000 to get enough knowledge, inspiration, mentoring, motivation and experienced guidance to come closer to meeting and fulfilling a dream? \$1000 is not even as much as some of you will spend on video games, CDs, DVDs, and concert tickets this year. Yet taking at least a year of lessons to help ramp up your bell curve of knowledge and playing ability is too much? What about \$2000 for the opportunity to play at a respectable life long level? What about \$3000 to play at a semi pro level? A big part of getting results is making sure that you have a knowledgeable teacher. Not every teacher can give you what you need. You must make sure you spend time to find the right person for you. There is a great article by Tom Hess on this topic called *Choosing a Teacher*, which I recommend you read before hunting for your new teacher. When you have found the right teacher, it's up to you to put in the right amount of time and effort to get the results you want.

Have you ever noticed the rapid growth of playing ability and talent since the 60's and 70's? Take note of how many guitarists today can play what only a select few could do in '78 (Van Halen's *Eruption Solo*). As time passes on, novices learn the same things (in less time) that the Masters spent decades to create and perfect. This evolution happens because your foundation is much greater than the players of old. You build off of what other players have done in the past, and in return you have the tools to venture off on your own much more quickly and easily. It could take a lifetime to invent a product, and only minutes to copy it from that point on. Once the formula and blue print has been figured out, the rest of the world can pick up on it in far less time and move on to harder, more challenging endeavors. All of these tools are made available and honed through music education.

Now if you were handed the very first electric guitar built by Les Paul, do you think you could write *Eruption* in 3 years? **NO WAY !!!** Yet, there are many gung-ho beginners that can play *Eruption* after an intense and dedicated 3 years of lessons. What seemed like the impossible in '78 is now possible for most dedicated 3 year players!! That's the incredible reality for today's music students!!

Let's take a look at these high caliber players who have had lessons, formal schooling or both.

Virtuosos such as Steve Vai, Joe Satriani, John Petrucci, Kirk Hammett, Marty Friedman, Paul Gilbert, Michael Angelo, George Bellas, and Tom Hess all have had music guidance and help along the way. It's important to note that even the most

famous players like Kirk Hammett and Steve Vai were taking lessons after becoming successful. Their learning and skills were still developing even after they were famous and wrote great songs and solos.

My one regret musically is that I stopped lessons as a beginner. I finally realized my mistake and enrolled in college as a music education major. If I would have stuck with lessons I know that I could have learned a lot more, and more quickly. There are many things that I continue to learn everyday. All of this knowledge gets passed on to my students during their lessons, and some of them are at a semi-pro level at only 15-16 years old! They have such a huge advantage over where I was at their age. The fact is that I am only 1 of thousands of great teachers that are creating the new virtuosos of tomorrow. So, are **YOU** going to be **LEARNING** from them?

There is **ONLY** one stock that will always go up and up and give back big returns when you keep putting in time, money, care and passion into it, and that's **YOU!!**

INVEST in the best stock on the planet, **YOU!**

Mike Walsh

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