

# What are the differences between taking guitar lessons at a Music Conservatory versus a Music Store?

---

## Where to go to take Guitar Lessons?

When looking for a music instructor for guitar, the two most popular choices that are available today are the music store and the music conservatory. As most people are aware of, a music store is a place that focuses on selling musical instruments, accessories, books, etc. Many music stores also offer music lessons as part of their services as well. A music conservatory is a place where the main focus is the study of music. Some conservatories may sell sheet music and some supplies, but the primary activity is the instruction of music. What does this mean for the guitar student?



### Music Store

Taking lessons from a music store as compared to a music conservatory can often be a different experience. Although well meaning in its intentions, a music store is usually geared towards the beginning student, with hopes that the student will progress and purchase more instruments and supplies over a long period of time. This is not a negative observation; it is a good business move for the music store. Most of the music teachers that are hired in a music store seem to be younger musicians/teachers that are in college, or are just focusing on playing in a band. Many of these teachers are well intentioned, but just seem to lack the education and experience that more experienced teachers usually possess. Their focus is to usually show the students their favorite songs, and to generally have fun playing guitar. The teacher rarely seems to have any kind of curriculum or goals for the student. This is a fine situation for the student who just wants to “dabble” with the guitar and pick up a few pointers.

### Music Conservatory

A music conservatory, on the other hand, is usually made up of a group of individuals who are dedicated to teaching the art of music to its students. These are teachers who have college degrees in music, often times Master’s degrees; and many years of serious teaching experience. Teachers in a conservatory, because of the many years of serious music study, are well equipped to develop a strong curriculum and goals for the student. Their many years of teaching all levels of students has given them the experience to know which techniques and concepts work with whatever kind of student is at hand. These teachers are usually performers as well, and have many experiences outside of the teaching studio. This really helps to bring into focus what types of things that are needed to be learned to be successful in the “real” world. So what does this have to do with learning the guitar?

## What Does This Mean For The Guitar Student?

### Learn correctly, right from the start

music store and a music conservatory are two different types of places to learn guitar. When learning guitar in a music conservatory, you can avoid some of the pitfalls that are often associated with learning in a music store. Because the main focus of learning guitar in a music store is simply learning songs; after a while the student's progress will eventually become stagnant because the student will not know what to do next, or how to get to that next level. When learning in a conservatory, the student will be able to learn from an expert teacher, who will have a strong curriculum that has been proven over time. The student will learn properly from the beginning, and be taught to use the correct technique, enabling them to play with ease and develop a better facility at the instrument.

### Develop Musicianship Skills

The student will be trained in the various areas of music that are crucial to developing as a musician such as: technique, reading, theory, ear training, form, etc. Because the student becomes trained as a musician, not just a guitarist, he/she will be able to play any kind of music that they desire. The student, like those who study at the music store, will also be able to learn many of their favorite songs; this is what makes music the most fun! In the conservatory, however, the student will understand what elements are used in the songs that they are learning, which greatly enhances their understanding of the music that they are playing. This enables the student to write their own music, if they desire. As the student progresses, they will learn more challenging repertoire; both in the genre that they have chosen, as well as a variety of styles such as jazz, classical, fingerstyle, blues and rock solo improvisation, etc.



### Prepare for more advanced levels, in any style

Over time, the student will move into more advanced reading, theory, technical exercises, and develop an expansive knowledge of the fretboard. Whatever style of music that the student chooses to study, they will have a very firm understanding of what elements make up the music that they are interested in. If the student continues long term, and decides to study music in a university, they can rest assured that studying in the conservatory will have prepared them well for the college atmosphere, and will be more than ready for their college audition.

AT SOUTHWEST CONSERVATORY, we recruit only teachers who are dedicated to the art of teaching, and who not only have a wealth of experience working with students of all levels, but are also active performers. Our teachers are well educated with university degrees, and work closely with each student, developing the curriculum that will help them become the best musician they can be.

# Southwest Conservatory Guitar Teachers

---

**NEAL ADAMS IS A TEACHING AND PERFORMING GUITARIST** who encourages students to have fun and work hard. He is a graduate of the Berklee College of Music in Boston, Massachusetts where he received a Bachelor of Music in Jazz Composition and studied the guitar in classes, workshops, and performances with many great musicians including Trumpeter, composer Greg Hopkins and guitarist Mark White. In his tenure there he received the, "Berklee Achievement Scholarship," and a scholarship from, "The Friends of Jazz." More recently he has been working as a freelance performer and has performed in a variety of musical settings and styles such as jazz trio, soul, funk, rhythm and blues band, and musical theatre. He currently leads the "Neal Adams Trio Plus" performing standard jazz and original music in and around the Orange and Los Angeles Counties.

**AS AN EDUCATOR**, Mr. Adams has instructed many beginning to advanced students and enjoys helping them to achieve their musical goals whether it's starting a rock band, playing solo guitar, or preparing for a university audition. In 2011, Mr. Adams had students who performed with the Jazz High School Honor Band (SCSBOA) as well as accepted to the North Texas University Music Program. He enjoys helping students to discover how they can perform and appreciate the music they like as well as other styles of music. He has been teaching for Southwest Conservatory of Music since 2007.

**DUANE BROBERG HAS A MASTER'S DEGREE IN JAZZ STUDIES** from the University of California, Irvine as well as a Bachelor's of Science in Music Education from Florida International University. While attending pursuing his degrees, he has performed with many notable musicians such as Arturo Sandoval, Eddie Daniels, Kevin Mahogany, Kei Akagi, Charles Owens, and others. Since graduating college he has also performed with many other respected musicians in South Florida, New York, and Los Angeles such as Ira Sullivan, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Turk Mouro, Adam Nussbaum, Tania, Joe Bagg, Matt Otto, and many others. He has also recorded several jazz CDs under the Tritone Record label, as well as performed on various rock CDs with different bands such as Bricqmen, and The Noise Majestic.

**AS AN EDUCATOR**, Mr. Broberg has been teaching music since 1990 and has taught students at all levels and abilities. He enjoys teaching music in several different styles such as: jazz, blues, rock, acoustic, metal, country, classical, R&B, and others as well. Helping the student gain a strong foundation in the fundamentals of music, as well as having fun learning the style of music that the student is most interested in is his main philosophy in teaching. He has prepared many of his students for various kinds of performances in and around the community. Several of his students have gone on to study in performing arts high school programs and music colleges as well. He has been teaching for Southwest Conservatory of Music since 2002.

Experience the difference by setting up a free introductory lesson. Call 714-964-3410 to request a free preview lesson.