

I've been working with Michael for nearly a year-and-a-half. Having taken lessons throughout my life (including a vocal performance major in college), I can say with confidence that he is one of the best vocal teachers I've had the pleasure to work under.

For starters, I never EVER used to practice. Even though I love music and love singing, I would always wait until the day of my lesson to cram in as much as I could before heading off hoping to trick my teacher into thinking I'd managed to put some real time in. Michael is the only teacher whose approach has actually gotten me to practice on a regular basis and make me accountable ! That in itself is a miracle...

*Secondly, I've had a sort of love/hate, on again/off again relationship with music my whole life. Most of my teachers used a limited 30-min. session approach which doesn't leave any time for talking things out. I really needed a teacher who could double as a 'music therapist', and Michael is the only teacher I've ever worked with who's been able (and willing!) to take on that role. That's invaluable. He has been compassionate to my experience every step of the way, willing to hear me out and guide me through my own moments of fear and frustration, with absolute kindness and support, and best of all, no bull****.*

Last, Michael isn't just giving me singing lessons—we're working on theory, composition, piano, and even percussion. Plus, he is also developing my potential bandleading skills. it's always been my dream to lead a band that performs some of my originals, and I'm sure that when I get there, he will be able to help me with the planning, recording, producing, and marketing. I know his skills are sound because they stem from his own personal bandleading experience, and there's nothing like a successful musician to teach you the tricks of the trade !

People look at me like I'm crazy when I tell them I drive an hour each way from San Jose to his Berkeley studio just for my lessons, but let me tell you, Michael is well worth it !

—Jerusha Simon (vocalist/songwriter/pianist)