



Twinkling The Ivories

June 2009

Riding the Suzuki Bicycle

"Life is like riding a bicycle. To keep your balance you must keep moving." --Albert Einstein

As we wrap another school year, it is time to reflect on what is working well, and what can be improved. I have been reflecting on the motivation and progress of students who regularly come to group classes, the Fall Institute, concerts, etc. The teachers design these events as a core part of the Suzuki method. Learning in a group was recognized by Suzuki himself decades ago as a motivating factor. The Suzuki program is a key part of a successful learning environment.

I would say that there is a definite link between group attendance and having reading skills: the ones who come regularly and do the theory games have a much easier time of reading. And as for older students who already read music, there are other benefits: like the younger ones, they come in smiling when they see their piano friends, ready to play a fun ensemble piece, ready to share jokes and music, ready for a new musical adventure.

"In group lessons, we play games like music bingo to help us learn how to read notes and rhythms. We get to hear and play other repertoire, including jazz and blues. In group, you learn to work as a team and we make new friends." – Sam and Yuri Kohan

To me, the Suzuki program is much like the momentum one needs to ride a bicycle. If one moves too slowly on a bicycle, one falls off. This is like the circle of motivation and practice in music: The students who practice learn the music and are thus motivated to keep learning and keep practicing. The Suzuki program is designed to keep this circle moving, to keep the bicycle wheel going forward. Yes, it takes effort, as do most worthwhile things in life. The Suzuki program of concerts, group classes, graduations, and special events (the Fall Institute, Spring Festival, and other special events – watch for one on September 19th) all help the students to keep moving.

With the Suzuki program, the students see others struggling with the same things they are, and they hear others succeeding, too. They can see ahead to the repertoire they will be learning, look back to see how far they have come, and they can celebrate their successes and efforts. Pianos cannot be moved easily, so the groups and concerts give families the chance to come together to make music. It is different from individual practice which usually happens as a more solitary activity at home.

Yes, it takes time to put air in the tires so your bicycle can move. But some bicycle maintenance takes less time than falling off the bike and recovering. It takes less time to attend the Suzuki program to keep up momentum than it takes to fix a lack of momentum and motivation from not practicing, not attending groups, etc. As Edmund Sprunger said, attending groups solves so many problems!

–by Tim Eckert

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CALENDAR

2009-2010

Annual General Meeting *September 19, 2009*

Fall Graduation *October 4, 2009*

Fall Institute *November 6-8, 2009*

Winter Graduation *January 24, 2010*

Winter Recitals *February 7, 2010*

February 21, 2010

Spring Graduation *March 21, 2010*

Spring Festival *April 17, 2010*

Group Concert *May 16, 2010*

Summer Graduation *June 13, 2010*

Summer Recitals *June 6, 2010*

June 20, 2010

May 2009 Graduations

Congratulations to the following students for their hard work and well-deserved graduations:

Volume 1

Sadie Bowling

Karli Cameron

Jane Chen

Bailey Deuis

Lauren Embree

Julianna Graham

Kendra Lee

Kaining Lin

Ksenia Pankratyeva

Thaddaeus Truong

Braxton Wong

Volume 2

Guo Chen

Sophie Jackson

Terrance Lam

Erin Paetsch

Alison Schumacher

Volume 3

Weronika Chlebek

David Gutenberg

Selma Hammad

Daphne Ma

Jessica Mah

Andreana Salouk

Colin Zhou

Volume 4

Aaron Schmidt

Volume 6

Ondra Chan

Volume 7

Vance Weir

Thank You to all ESPS Volunteers

As we wrap up another successful term, we'd like to thank all of you who helped to make our special events such a success this year. Giving your time at the Fall Institute, Spring Festival, Group Concert, and all of our graduation ceremonies helps ESPS to reduce costs and gives the teachers more time to concentrate on the most important thing – the students.

And for those of you who volunteered at our recent casino, we offer our many thanks, too. It is not easy to work a long shift, often late into the night, and we appreciate your commitment. The casino is our only fundraiser, and the money raised helps to fund our programming.

Finally, we offer a special thank you to the ESPS Board of Directors, who has given our society a bright new vision and focus for the future.

Hats off to you all!