



Twinkling The Ivories

December 2009

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The Fall Institute – A Parent's Point of View

I would like to thank all the teachers and of course Kim, for organizing the classes and events for this year's Suzuki Fall Institute. I would especially like to thank the parent volunteers who completed a large number of tasks, without which, the Institute would not have occurred. This is the 13th Institute I have attended with one or another of my children. With school, work and all the other commitments families have this time of year, I like many other parents, ask myself, "Why am I doing this?" "Is the effort to drive over to the school on a weekend and spend a half day of time worth it?" "Can I really afford to volunteer my time manning a table or preparing a snack for the kids when I have a million other things I must do?" "How will this help?" It really is hard to see the gains or benefits over the short term, especially in the early years. I've learned that the rewards for participating in Suzuki Music and for volunteering, like the rewards for parenting, become more apparent after much time.

During the many hours I have sat next to the piano in our "music room", I have had occasion to let my mind wander from what I am supposed to be listening to, to reflect on just what we have gained from attending institutes, group classes and volunteering for the odd event. First of all, the fact that I am in the same room as my child, mostly focusing on the same task for a consistent amount of time on a daily basis sets us apart from many families who while in the same house, rarely engage in such consistent goal-directed joint activity. Learning Music via the Suzuki philosophy focuses on actively fostering a parent-child relationship based on respect and cooperation. Just telling them to "get it done and done well" rarely works. No, it isn't easy or without conflict but that is another topic. Our children get the message this activity is important because we are present during much practicing, spending time with them. We tell our kids lots of things are important but how often do we show them by taking the time?

When we take the time to attend the institutes, group classes and to volunteer, we show them the pursuit of music is important. When we volunteer our own time to do an extra task in addition to practicing and attending, we show them in a powerful way just how important this task is and how important they are. We show them that in fact it is so valuable, that we are willing to do this so other children, not just our own, can participate. **Here is the long term pay off.** They will remember this when they are older and they will thank you for it, not only in their words (yes, they will and they will mean it), but in the deeds they will do for others. By participating and watching you participate, they will get a sense of belonging to this Suzuki community, and learn to do things for others.

After many years of watching kids grow up through concerts and events, I really do know that the spirit of what Dr. Suzuki said: "If you expose a child to music, he gets a beautiful soul" is true. Giving your best effort in practice, sharing accomplishment in performance, doing both in a loving, supportive and fun environment where others share the same value of doing for others all make a difference to so much more than their success in music. It is just one of the benefits of music the Suzuki way. When you think about it, none of this is learned by telling but by doing and so.....thanks again to the teachers, Kim and all the volunteers. It is definitely worth it.

By Lori Demeriez

New to the ESPS Library

If your child is working on book 2, you may want to consider borrowing one of the latest CD additions to the ESPS library. *Hands Separate, Hands Together* breaks down each song, playing it hands together, then right hand and left hand. Hearing each hand separately, and at a slower tempo, will help your children to better learn the pieces. Try playing along with the RH and LH tracks as part of your practice routine.

Each teacher has a copy of the *Hands Separate, Hands Together* CD that you can arrange to borrow. Additionally, we have a limited number of copies available for purchase (\$17 each). Contact Kim Green at 780.488.0548 to do so.

Congratulations to Our Book 7 Graduates!

Two ESPS students have completed the Suzuki Piano repertoire and played their Graduation Recitals this fall.

15-year old Kristin Thordarson entertained friends and family with her performance on October 3. Kristin is a busy grade 11 student who is also very active as a swimmer and diver and rugby player. Her loveable cats keep her company while she practices piano.

Tracie Kikuchi is a 12-year old grade 7 student at Rosslyn Jr. High School. She is a committed ice hockey player and plays goal for her team. She hopes to play in the NHL in the future. She also enjoys art, ping pong, and playing with her dog, Daisy, in addition to playing piano. Friends and family enjoyed her Suzuki graduation recital on November 28.

Flu Etiquette at Lessons

Your teachers ask that out of consideration of other students, their families, and the teachers themselves, if your child has missed school because of flu or flu-like symptoms please do not come to your lesson. The teachers do not have "sick days" or "sick pay," so we must very much avoid getting sick. The teachers thank you for not attending when your child is ill.

An ESPS Student's View of the Honen's Piano Competition

The Honen's Piano Competition was the most amazing thing I have ever seen. It was filled with expression, inspiration, critique and musicality created by the most hardworking musicians from all over the world.

Every time you walked out of the concert doors, you were still in awe by the performances given. It was fun to pick out which performance you liked best, or to endlessly wonder how the performer did certain things.

I encourage people of all ages to go see the Honen's Competition in three year's time.

By Jenna Koller

GREAT PRACTICE IDEAS CONTEST

Thanks to all of you who entered our [Great Practice Ideas Contest](#) at the Fall Institute. We received many fantastic entries, and have a list of really great practice ideas to share with everyone at ESPS. Watch for them to be posted on our website and in coming newsletters in the New Year.

Congratulations to our randomly drawn prize winners:

Emma Branicki

Bryce Cameron

Jane Xi Chen

Andrea Cummins

Nicholas Cummins

Teaghan Haysom

Alex Lee

Stefani Lourenco-Reis

Mae MacDonald

Mira MacMillan

Jessica Mah

Gerry Morita

Hannah Stedall

Lorna Szalacsi

Here's one great practice idea that came from the contest:

"We were having a hard time motivating over the summer, but a friend had a great idea. I expanded on it. My son loves Lego, so we bought a Lego set and he got one step in putting it together every time he practiced. The book on putting these sets together have many steps."

Special thanks to the City of Edmonton and Long and McQuade for their contest prize donations.