



Twinkling The Ivories

June 2014

Practical Practice Tips From a Suzuki Parent

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I'm the father of 2 Suzuki kids, with potentially 2 more to follow down the road. My oldest recently completed Book 2 in April. It was definitely a lot of work getting her pieces ready for that day. To a lesser extent and for a shorter duration of time, similar effort was put into prepping my two Suzuki kids for the recent year-end concert. Here are some tips to think about when preparing your child for the big day, or for just a regular day of practicing.

1. Schedule routine practice times. Notice that practicing becomes difficult when coming back from a holiday or a layoff of more than a few days? Practice suffers when a consistent routine is lacking. As many parenting educators will tell us, children respond better when presented with structure and routine. Short regular practice has also shown to be better than infrequent and long practice sessions.

2. Stay positive. When I get negative, so do my kids, usually to the detriment of practice. It aggravates one child who becomes more frustrated, while the other simply shuts down. Using the games or activities that are so often written about in this writing space, forces "tiger" parents (see amy chua.com for reference) like me to take a "child-like" approach to practice, and bring some much needed levity to practice.

3. Practice slowly, potentially at half tempo. Slow deliberate practice contributes to: even playing; greater control; playing with speed; and memorizing pieces. This is particularly useful in any of the medium to fast songs of book 1 or when your child starts hitting songs with runs in books 2 and 3.

4. Practice hands separately. Not only is it essential for working on the melodic aspects of a piece, but each hand has a role and needs to learn its job. Not to mention, it's much easier to learn songs one hand at a time.

5. Spot polish. When a mistake is made, the default approach is to "take a run at it" or just keep going (good to do when performing – not so good for practice). Take time to focus on the small bits as opposed to simply playing the entire piece.

6. Set goals. For example, attending the fall institutes, symposiums, and concerts will enable you to help your child work towards achieving a target. These are excellent goals or "events" to strive for and helps elevate your child's "game".

7. Be flexible and creative. Adapt your approach to your child's learning style. Use a variety of Suzuki tools and activities to accomplish this. "Insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results!" (Albert Einstein).

Ernest Li

Looking to get a little more creative with your summertime practices?

Visit our website for some inventive ideas about practicing over the summer break.

Thank You ESPS Volunteers!

We offer our thanks to all of our ESPS volunteers. Whether giving your time as a driver at the Fall Workshop, serving as an Adjudication Host at the Spring Festival, or writing articles for the newsletter, your help is appreciated. Many hands make work light and a little more fun! More practically, your volunteer help allows us to control costs and keep our ESPS fees low, and our teachers have more time to concentrate on the most important thing – our students. Thank you. Hats off to you all!

Annual General Meeting and Parent Talk – Sept. 24th

Plan to attend our AGM and Parent Talk on September 24, 2014 at 7:30 pm at Suzuki Charter School. Our Parent Talk will feature the wisdom of Eileen Christensen. Eileen is the mother of four children, all of them Suzuki Piano students. She shares her experiences gathered over 16 years of practicing with her children, who are now all adults. Her talk will include anecdotes about the ups and downs of piano practice and practice tips, all mixed together with a bit of humor.

Prior to the Parent Talk, we'll hold our Annual General Meeting. In addition to reporting on our year and presenting our audited financial statements, we'll also be holding elections for membership on our Board of Directors.

We're looking for parents to serve as volunteers on the Board. We are looking for parent representatives who are committed to providing their children a positive musical education and who are interested in helping to shape the future direction of Edmonton Suzuki Piano School. Whether you've been an ESPS member for one year or ten, your perspective is valuable! For more information about joining our Board of Directors, contact Kim Green at 780.488.0548.

2014/2015 Calendar

September 20, 2014 *Parent Orientation Class for Beginner Families*

September 24, 2014 *Annual General Meeting and Parent Talk*

October 25 & 26, 2014 *Fall Workshop at Suzuki Charter School*

November 16, 2014 *Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall*

February 1, 2015 *Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall*

February 8, 22, and March 1, 2015 *Winter Recitals at Suzuki Charter School*

March 8, 2015 *ESPS at the ESO Event*

March 14, 2015 *Spring Festival at Suzuki Charter School*

April 12, 2015 *Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall*

May 2 or 3, 2015 *Groups Concert at Suzuki Charter School*

June 7 & 14, 2015 *June Recitals at Convocation Hall*

June 21, 2015 *Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall*

June 2014
Graduations

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

Volume 1

Benjamin Davie
Eden Deuis
Hannah Fraser
Olivia Guillaume
Marilyn Mayzel
Alex Melvin
Victor Phan
Xavier Rouleau
Dahlia Smaidi
Faith Walker
George Walker
Ethan Zhang
Elliott Zuk

Volume 2

Marlon Beakhouse
Andrea Cummins
Nicholas Cummins
Jethro Flores
Anna Heintzman
Sophia Jewell
IniOluwa Oladunni
Allison Nguyen
Tiffany Phan
Malika Shourie
Ryan Szalacsi
Dan Zhang
Yumin Zheng
Jocelyn Zhou

Volume 3

Sam Heintzman

Volume 4

Bailey Deuis
Terrance Lam

Volume 5

Margaret Huang
Madeline Lietz
Alison Schumacher