



# Twinkling The Ivories

January 2015

## Notes from the Fall Workshop - Parent Talk with Nicole Wilton

Recently, I had the pleasure of attending a frank and honest Suzuki parent talk by Nicole Wilton. For me, the most important message in her talk is that the ultimate goal of Suzuki parenting is to foster independence, not just in piano, but in life. I was reminded that the many benefits to playing piano: *discipline, delayed gratification, fine motor skills, and focused attention for long periods of time*, all have application in other aspects of life.

Ms. Wilton suggested that our actions as parents will likely foster two kinds of children – the contingent child or the independent child. The contingent child is dependent on others in determining how they feel about themselves; while the independent child is able to make self-guided decisions. Ms. Wilton discussed the important role parents have in developing a supportive environment to achieve the latter.

Achieving this goal may be a challenging process, and requires Suzuki parents to evolve their practice approach over time. As kids really cannot decide for themselves at an early age, parents will need to make decisions for their kids about playing the piano. Parents should balance pushing their kids to play while remaining empathetic towards their feelings. A nurturing and loving environment has to be offered; yet discipline is required, hopefully using creative Suzuki methods for practice. Care with praise and criticism should be exercised, as it is essential to be specific about what is working and what isn't.

As kids get older (9-12 years), parents need to start working towards independence. Parents should back off physically and emotionally and gradually exercise less control over practice. By giving children more responsibilities over time, this will enable them to be more self-directed in their practice.

Overall, I was again reminded of how important our attitude is, and the need to keep in mind the "big picture" of what we are striving to achieve. It was a relief to hear that even Ms. Wilton has struggled with being a compassionate piano parent. I believe few of us are seeking to foster a concert pianist; rather, as parents, we are seeking to equip our children with important life skills. Conscious parenting will create independence. In my household of four kids, independence can't come soon enough!

Ernest Li

**HELP WANTED: Volunteers are still needed for our ESPS casino on January 23 and 24, 2015!**

Most importantly, we need a volunteer Banker on Friday January 23, 2015 in the daytime. Prior experience is not necessary and a paid advisor provides guidance throughout the shift. For more information, or to volunteer for any shift, please contact Kim at 780.488.0548.

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### Contact ESPS

Phone 780.488.0548  
Fax 780.488.0538

## Learning Through Listening: Tips

At our Annual General Meeting and Parent Talk in September, Suzuki mom and grandmother Eileen Christensen shared with us some of her tried and true ideas for ensuring success at practice time. Here are some of her best tips for listening:

- Play the music quietly. You should just barely be able to hear it. Children have sensitive ears and quiet music does not interfere with conversation and daily activity. Listen as much as possible and turn the music off only when necessary.
- Listen to the recording of the book your child is working on but also play the higher level books. If you have children playing at different levels, listening to all the books will benefit them all. Children working at the higher level will retain previous pieces and children in a lower book will benefit from listening to the pieces they will eventually be playing.
- Play the Suzuki repertoire a lot but also remember to listen to other good music.
- Listen in the car. Children today spend a lot of time in the car. You have a captive audience; take advantage of it.



*"Listening until we remember is not enough. We must listen until we cannot forget."*

Shinichi Suzuki

## Winter Recital Schedule

**February 1, 2015** Graduation Ceremony at Muttart Hall

**February 8, 2015** Winter Recitals at Suzuki Charter School

12:00 Students of Alla Rekhson

1:45 Students of Melanie Bodnar and Rhonda McEachen

3:00 Students of Tess Brown

4:00 Students of Ruth Johnson

**February 22, 2015** Winter Recitals at Suzuki Charter School

12:30 Students of Gail Olmstead

1:15 Students of Ken Zeller

2:30 Students of Eleanor Tsui

4:00 Students of Nancy Thornhill

**March 1, 2015** Winter Recitals at Suzuki Charter School

1:30 Students of Tim Eckert

3:00 Students of Joyce Sipsas and Regine Maier

## Register for the Spring Festival!

Plan to attend our annual Spring Festival on Saturday March 14<sup>th</sup>, where students prepare a piece, polish it to the highest level, and perform it in class for an adjudicator, parents, and other students.

Guest teachers Renee Werenka and Glen Montgomery will evaluate the performances and provide written comments, which typically include suggestions for further study, practice tips, and encouragement.

The registration fee for ESPS members is \$20 (non-members \$40) and the deadline for registration is February 12, 2015. See your teacher for a registration form or for more information. See you at the Festival!

## ESPS at the ESO Event

On March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2015, the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra presents its Sunday showcase, "Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto." The ESO promises a lively afternoon:

*"John Estacio's Bootlegger's Tarantella, with its infectious melodies and sonorities, has become a popular ESO "party piece". Rutter's inventive Suite Antique careens from neo-baroque to jazz, while Grieg's suite from Peer Gynt will make you want to hum along. And no one should miss the opportunity to hear Pavel Kolesnikov (2012 Honens Prize Laureate) conquer the Mount Everest of piano concerti."*

ESPS is coordinating discounted group purchasing for this kid-friendly afternoon concert and we'd love to see ESPS members enjoying this special opportunity to attend an ESO concert together.

Tickets can be purchased at three different price levels - \$29.95, \$38.45, or \$56.00. This event is not chaperoned, so children must be accompanied by an adult in order to attend. A minimum of two tickets must be purchased for the event.

Order forms will be available from your teacher this month, and must be returned by February 5, 2015 in order to confirm seats at this special price.