



TWINKLING THE IVORIES

September 2018

READY, GO! IT'S A NEW YEAR AT ESPS

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The Edmonton Suzuki Piano School provides musical development to students, parents, and teachers following the Suzuki Method. We seek to create a learning community which embraces excellence and nurtures the human spirit.

Welcome (back) to another great year at Edmonton Suzuki Piano School! Since 1975, ESPS and its enthusiastic group of teachers have worked to offer individual and group lessons to students, impactful special events, performance opportunities for students, and education that we hope inspires and motivates students, parents and teachers. Thank you for being a part of our Suzuki piano community!

When you register with ESPS, parents demonstrate a commitment to ESPS principles: daily practice, attendance at group classes, and participation in special events like the Fall Workshop and at recitals. We know that this is a significant commitment, and we thank you for making it on behalf of your child. Read on to discover what's in store for the coming year!

SUMMER PRACTICE CHALLENGE

Attention Students: It's not too late to complete your **Summer Practice Challenge!** Now that September has arrived, it's time to finish up any remaining items on your checklist and show your teacher all the fun tasks that you completed over the summer break.

Teachers will award a special souvenir to each student who participates, and those students will also be entered in a draw to win some great prizes! The deadline to submit your **Summer Practice Challenge** is Friday, September 14th.

The prize draw will take place at our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday September 26, 2018.

2018/2019 EVENTS CALENDAR

September 22, 2018 Parent Workshop for Parents of Beginners at Suzuki Charter School

September 26, 2018 Annual General Meeting at Suzuki Charter School

October 20-21, 2018 Fall Workshop at Suzuki Charter School

November 15-16, 2018 Fundraising Casino at Casino Edmonton

November 25, 2018 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

January 20, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

February 3, 10, and 24, 2019 Winter Recitals at PCL/Bryan Hall

March 16, 2019 Spring Festival at Suzuki Charter School

March 17, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

May 5, 2019 Group Concerts at Suzuki Charter School

June 2 and 9, 2019 Summer Recitals at Convocation Hall

June 23, 2019 Graduation Concert at Muttart Hall

IT'S TIME TO TUNE, SOON!

Q: What's the difference between a piano and a fish?

A: You can tune a piano, but you can't tuna fish!



As fall approaches, it's time to schedule a visit with a piano tuner for annual maintenance. With that in mind, we spoke to Jim Dundass, a Sherwood Park-based piano tuner and technician, to learn more about his profession and why it's important to regularly tune and maintain a piano.

How long have you been a piano tuner/technician?

54 years and counting. I began training in 1964.

As a child, did you learn to play the piano?

Yes. If I wanted to play hockey, I also had to learn to play piano! I struggled with sight reading because my older siblings had played, and I had already memorized all of the pieces listening to them. I achieved grade 8 in Royal Conservatory.

How did you learn the job?

My uncle worked for the Heintzman store in Calgary. He was a real character and I was with him at work one day. He realized that I had a real ear for the work, and I became an apprentice. I later spent time training in the Heintzman factory in Ontario. Eventually, I came to Edmonton and set up my business here.

In general, how often should our Suzuki families have their pianos tuned and serviced?

Ideally, once a year. Generally speaking, after the heat comes on in the fall and there have been 5 or 6 weeks of dry weather – that's the time to tune. Over winter, if there is prolonged, severe cold, a piano sometimes will go out of tune with the dry weather. Extreme weather can sometimes mean that a piano needs tuning again in the spring. Ideally, the humidity in a home should be at 35 – 45% to maintain ideal conditions for a piano.

Why is it important for a piano to be regularly serviced?

If you don't have good tone, ear training can go out the window. There can be a substantial difference in tone on an untuned piano. Tuning and maintenance also ensures a piano remains in playing shape and identifies problems before they become too severe.

A teacher in the Lloydminster area knew one of her teen students was struggling on a poorly maintained piano and asked me to tune it. I did quite a bit of work on it and went on my way. After practicing on it that night, the student called in a panic, because nothing sounded the same. She was convinced there was a problem. She was so upset, and I listened to her play over the phone. It sounded fine to me, but she could not be convinced. Well, a month went by, and I received a note in the mail. She apologized and thanked me for the work. She'd practiced for so long on that piano that was in poor condition that she'd had to retrain her ear.

What is your advice for families that need to find a piano tuner?

If someone doesn't know a good tuner, speak with your piano teacher and find out who works on theirs. That's a great reference for a good tuner.

TAKING NOTES AT LESSONS

"If you're not sure what to write down, then – at the beginning of the next lesson – be sure to ask your teacher when it is most useful for you to ask questions during the lesson.

As you develop your ability to take accurate, reliable notes, those notes will help give you the confidence and conviction you need when you and your children practice together."

Edmund Sprunger

Helping Parents Practice: Ideas for Making it Easier

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GROUP CLASSES: STARTING SOON!

Group classes are a core component of the Suzuki program, and they are offered to the students at Edmonton Suzuki Piano School to achieve many far-reaching goals. Some of the most important are based in these categories:

- Social – Friendship/Fellowship
- Listening/Musicality
- Ensemble Playing
- Pre-Reading Activities
- Basic Music Theory
- Repertoire Enhancement
- Performance Opportunities

Obviously, the routes to achieving these goals vary from teacher to teacher and depend on the age and ability of the students. For example, music theory or ensemble playing look much different in beginner or advanced groups!

Sometimes, it can seem like a group of students is not very cohesive and is just too different to learn effectively. But it is important to remember that there are many ways to learn, and multiple goals for each class.

“Let’s remember what Suzuki said, that “Children learn from one another.” An older student can play a piece that a younger student doesn’t know, inspiring him or her. A younger student may fearlessly participate in a creativity exercise, showing a more reserved older student that it’s not hard to try something new. Cognitive skills used in reading may be similar for a book 2 student as for a book 3 student, so it can make sense for such students to be in the same group. An older student can learn about being a mentor to younger students, offering encouragement, and demonstrating how to break a challenge into small enough steps, the same way that he or she learned these skills from the teacher. And a younger student can learn about perseverance from an older student.

Every child brings their own unique skills and personality to groups, and we as teachers and parents can celebrate that. And when we notice skills and good behaviour, and beautiful tone and good bows and smiles in performances, and sharing and moments of kindness, and do not focus on where someone is in the repertoire, the students also learn to accept each other without labelling. When a student helps another student with a footstool, or compliments another on their solo performance, or helps the teacher by picking up game pieces, these are also important parts of group class.”

Tim Eckert, Twinkling the Ivories, April 2017

Group classes will begin shortly in most studios, and parents will be notified of their student’s schedule no later than mid-September. Contact Kim at 780.488.0548 if you haven’t been notified of your group placement and need more information.



ESPS students perform at the 2018 Group Concerts in May.

COMING SOON AT ESPS!

PARENT ORIENTATION WORKSHOP

Saturday, September 22, 2018

9:30 – 12:30 at Suzuki Charter School (Room 4/5) – enter through parking lot doors as the main doors will be closed.

This three-hour workshop for parents of beginner students introduces participants to the Suzuki approach and offers ideas for establishing a successful practicing environment at home. Participants will receive tried and true tips from the workshop leader, meet other beginner parents, and share questions and ideas as everyone begins their Suzuki journey. Bring all your questions and be ready to learn!

Families who are new to our program are required to attend this workshop, and families looking for refresher class can also attend. Families will receive a copy of *Nurtured by Love* by Shinichi Suzuki and an ESPS orientation workbook.

Parents should register to attend this session with their individual lesson teacher.

Note: Families who attended the spring session do not need to register for this workshop.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Wednesday, September 26, 2018

7:30 PM at Suzuki Charter School – enter through parking lot doors as the main doors will be closed.

Please plan to attend our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday September 26th at 7:30 PM. We'll present our Annual Report, financial statements, and update society members about plans for the coming school term. Additionally, we'll hold elections for positions on our Board of Directors.

Are you interested in getting involved with Edmonton Suzuki Piano School?

Well, we need you! ESPS is looking for parent volunteers to contribute their voice to the governance of our society. Whether you have been an ESPS parent for one year or 10, your perspective is valuable, and helps shape the programming we offer to students and families. Previous Board experience is not necessary to get involved at ESPS – rather, we're looking for parents who want to make a commitment to furthering the goals of our society. If you'd like more information about joining our Board, please contact Kim for more information at 780.488.0548.

FALL WORKSHOP

October 20 & 21, 2018

Suzuki Charter School

Edmonton's biggest annual Suzuki piano event offers ESPS students master classes with guest teachers Nicole Wilton, Lana Ramsay, and Nena LaMarre, an enrichment class featuring percussion instructor Zach Smith, a motivating parent education session with Suzuki Teacher Trainer Nicole Wilton, and student performances at daily Honours Concerts. This value packed program is available to ESPS members for a low registration fee of only \$30 per student! Watch for registration information and forms at your teacher's studio.

Parents who have smiling faces have children who have smiling faces.

-Shinichi Suzuki

HELP WANTED:

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ESPS CASINO

November 15 & 16, 2018

Casino Edmonton - 7055 Argyll Road

As a charity, ESPS relies on its fundraising casino as a main source of revenue, allowing us to keep registration fees low. Every 2 years, ESPS takes its turn to provide volunteer staffing at Casino Edmonton on Argyll Road. In exchange for 2 days of work by about 40 volunteers, ESPS receives a cheque for approximately \$75,000. That's a lot of money, and it goes a long way towards subsidizing concert hall rentals, costs for group classes, teacher training, and piano equipment and maintenance,

Working as a casino volunteer is a bigger time commitment for volunteers than some of our special events jobs. That's why a casino shift counts as your volunteer commitment for two years. Essentially, ESPS casino volunteers receive a free pass from volunteering every second year.

The dates for ESPS' next casino are Thursday November 15 and Friday November 16, 2018 and we're looking for volunteers to work at a variety of jobs in daytime or evening shifts. No experience is necessary to volunteer – a paid casino advisor is on hand to walk you through every aspect of the job. We'll buy you a meal at the casino restaurant, and you'll have a chance to meet and work with other ESPS parents.

Some of you have already signed up to volunteer, and we thank you! If you haven't volunteered yet this year, please take the time to consider whether you might be available for this very important event. To sign up to volunteer or for more information about the casino fundraiser, please contact Kim at 780.488.0548 or by email at kgreen@edmontonsuzukipiano.ca.