



TWINKLING THE IVORIES

April 2019

THE PERILS OF YOUTUBE IN LEARNING SUZUKI REPERTOIRE!

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It may be tempting to turn to YouTube as a way of learning Suzuki repertoire for Book 1 students who are not reading the notes or Book 2 students for whom note-reading is not yet easy. Your teachers recommend that students do not do this.

YouTube videos are not checked for accuracy: a quick look at several Book 1 and 2 songs reveals fingering errors, introductions that we do not use, and many questionable performance issues.

Besides these concerns, we must remember that the Suzuki method is based on listening instead of watching others. Any student who is basing their learning on copycat-watching is not developing fundamental skills. A successful student needs to develop listening skills, and while that involves “finding” notes, that leads to connections between the ear and the fingers, so that the student can hear what is correct instead of merely seeing which finger is moving on which key.

Rather than using YouTube, students should first make sure they are doing enough listening. Put that song on repeat, quietly in the background, every day. Listen to the song at regular volume right before practicing it. A student who has started reading will be able to follow along in the book with a finger while listening to the song at the same time (if the teacher thinks this is appropriate).

I tell my students that not doing enough listening is like walking to Calgary: sure, it is possible to walk there, but why would you do that? Driving or flying is much, much faster. Sure, it is possible to learn the repertoire with little listening, but why would you do that? Listening a lot is a much, much faster way to learn the repertoire. Teachers can usually tell which families are listening a lot to their recordings and which families aren't. You do not need to play the recording at regular volume every day; rather, quiet playing in the background still goes into our brains. Please ask your teacher if you need more information on successful use of the recordings.

Other fundamentals of learning piano besides *listening* include *repetitions*, *small steps*, and *regular practice*. A student may need to repeat something ten or fifty or even a hundred times. The amount of music practiced may need to be just two notes or just one bar or just one line of music. Repeating these steps every day makes a huge difference in learning. Brain research has proven how regular practice makes a huge difference: it is far better to practice every day than to “cram” in the practicing. It's never too late to start good practicing habits.

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THE PERILS OF YOUTUBE, CONTINUED

Suzuki said, "Practice only on the days that you eat." Please ask your teachers about these topics if you need more information: the "practice spots" and assignments for each student and each song will be different.

Even though YouTube is not a good idea for learning the Book 1 and 2 songs, it is often appropriate for students in upper books to use it to learn about different interpretations of advanced repertoire. Bach's music, in particular, can be played many different ways. Even so, YouTube is not how these students should learn the repertoire, but rather, with the CDs and the books.

Happy listening!

Tim Eckert



*ESPS student Austin brought a special friend to the University of Alberta performance of **Carnaval** at the Winspear Centre in early April. They are pictured here as they wait for the musicians to take the stage. Photo by: Melody Yang*

HOW CAN A PARENT HELP? ALTERNATIVES TO YOUTUBE

SPECIAL ADVICE FOR FAMILIES IN VOLUME ONE:

- If your child is a beginner in Volume 1, let your child learn the pieces by ear. Don't show them all the notes of the new piece - show your child the first note and which finger should play it. Your child might struggle to find the second note... that's okay! Encourage them to try different notes until they find the correct one.
- *What if they take weeks to learn a piece by ear?* That's okay! Your child's ability to play by ear will improve throughout Volume 1.
- *What if my child gets frustrated and can't find the notes?* Sing the songs using the Volume 1 Lyric Book. Turn on the recording and dance to the music. Ask him or her to play some pieces that he already knows well. Let your child know that it's okay if it takes time to learn something new.
- If you don't know how to read music, learn when your child is in Volume 1. You don't have to be an expert but figure it out now when the pieces are easier to read.
 - Use the tips you received at the Parent Orientation Class.
 - Ask your teacher for help when you can't figure out the notes.
 - Ask other parents during Group Class to help you.
 - Take the Parent Reading Course offered in June.

YouTube can be a valuable tool for many things - I learned how to get my vacuum cleaner working again by watching a video on YouTube! That said, the best way to help your child in Suzuki piano lessons is to play the recording (A LOT) and to love and encourage your child every step of the way.

Rhonda McEachen

**"A new world begins with a young child." -
Shinichi Suzuki**

ESPS STUDENT PARTICIPATES IN THE CLEMENTI SONATINA PROJECT

While I am an ESPS teacher, I am also a member of ARMTA (Alberta Registered Music Teacher's Association). One of the benefits of membership is that my students can participate in some interesting performance opportunities. The following article was written by my student, Mark, who recently participated in the Clementi Sonatina Project. Rhonda McEachen

On February 3, I got to play with members of the Edmonton Youth Orchestra as part of the Clementi Sonatina Project, led by conductor, Mr. Michael Massey.

Muzio Clementi was a classical composer. Like Beethoven and Mozart, he wrote many piano sonatas and sonatinas. Unlike Beethoven and Mozart, he did not write many piano concertos, larger works for the piano and orchestra. Mr. Michael Massey decided to "help" out Clementi by taking piano accompaniments for the Opus 36 Sonatinas and reworking them for an orchestra.

The Opus 36 Sonatinas are some of Clementi's most popular works. There are 6 Sonatinas each with 3 movements, and four of these movements are featured in Suzuki Piano Book 3! With the help of my teacher, Ms. Rhonda, I learned the 3rd movement of Op.36 no.3.

On the day of the Clementi project, there were 12 students who each got to play one movement from the Opus 36 sonatinas. We each had about 20 minutes to practice with the orchestra, then play a performance for everyone.

The "mini-orchestra" included 4 first violins, 2 second violins, 3 violas, 2 cellos, and 1 bass player. It was the first time I had ever played with string instruments. I was amazed at all the different sounds they could make. I learned how the conductor keeps everybody in time, and how to follow his direction. I discovered that when you play with an orchestra, your "fortes" can be louder, and your "pianos" can be softer!

I really enjoyed the Clementi project. I hope one day to play with an orchestra again.

Mark Rico-Lam

PARENT READING CLASS – LEARN TO READ MUSIC

Are you ready to read music? Sign up for a 4-week course for Suzuki Book 1 & 2 parents! You'll learn how to read notes, rhythms, terms & signs, as well as participating in basic ear training. We'll have fun playing together on multiple pianos just as your children do!

Dates: 4 Saturdays from June 1st – June 22nd, 2019

Time: 2:00 pm – 3:30 pm

Place: Room 4/5, Suzuki Charter School

Fee: \$125 (Includes course material & "Music Note Teacher")

Maximum: 10 participants (so sign up early!)

Minimum: 6 participants

If you are interested in registering for the course, please email Gail Olmstead at golmstead88@gmail.com.

Please mail your cheque to ESPS, 5820-168 Ave Edmonton, T5Y 0K6.

CONGRATULATIONS TO BOOK 7 GRADUATE CHARISSE CHAN!

ESPS congratulates Charisse Chan, who is completing her studies of the Suzuki piano repertoire and will graduate from the Suzuki piano program at a concert on June 2, 2019.

Charisse was born in Calgary and began learning basic music skills through the Kodály Method when she was three years old. She started the Suzuki Piano Method at the age of four. After she and her family moved to Edmonton in 2006, Charisse continued to develop her musical skills at piano lessons with ESPS teacher Eleanor Tsui, music classes at her elementary school, and at group classes with other Suzuki students.

During junior high, Charisse began learning flute through her school's band program and has continued to play in an ensemble throughout high school. Charisse currently attends Harry Ainlay and will be graduating high school this year in addition to graduating Suzuki Piano Volume 7. Outside of music, Charisse enjoys doing calligraphy, cooking, reading, and weight training.

Charisse will perform a variety of music including selections from Mozart, Handel, Chopin, Debussy and Rollin at her concert in **Bryan Hall** at the **Alberta College Conservatory of Music** at **3:00 PM on June 2, 2019**. ESPS families are invited to enjoy this performance.

2018/2019 EVENTS CALENDAR

April 27, 2019 Parent Class at Suzuki Charter School

May 5, 2019 Group Concerts at Suzuki Charter School

1:00 Groups of Gail, Eleanor, Rhonda, Hillary and Ruth

3:00 Groups of Regine, Tim, Alla and Tess

June 2, 2019 Summer Recitals at Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

12:15 Students of Regine

1:15 Students of Ruth

2:30 Students of Tess

3:30 Students of Brad

4:30 Students of Nancy

June 9, 2019 Summer Recitals at Convocation Hall, University of Alberta

12:15 Students of Tim

1:45 Students of Alla

3:15 Students of Gail

4:30 Students of Eleanor

June 9, 2019 Summer Recitals at Calvary Evangelical Lutheran Church

6:00 Students of Rhonda and Hillary

June 23, 2019 Graduation Concerts at Muttart Hall

CONGRATULATIONS MARCH GRADUATES

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

Volume 1

Olivia Arndt
Damon Dickson
Raven Dueck
Imogen Elford
Amy Li
Mia Li

Volume 2

Elliot Kim

Volume 3

Dahlia Smaidi
Jaxon Stecyk
Raya Wolski

Volume 4

Mark Rico-Lam

Volume 5

Weiran Sun

"It is in our power to educate all the children of the world to become a little better as people, a little happier."
— Shinichi Suzuki

Did you know that our website is full of practice pages, great practice ideas, and games and activities that you can use at home?

Look for the "Make Practice Easier" section at

www.edmontonsuzukipiano.ca