

Yuan Piano News

2018 Fall/Winter



Year End Student Recital

Congratulations to all who performed successfully at the recital on December 9th

Every performance everyone always shows me something different from the usual self. Your hard work and progress is obvious to everyone. Every performing experience is a nutrient to life. I hope that this nutrient will help you all to grow stronger, and that it will also help you all down the road in the future.

(See p. 3 for more about the Year End Student Recital...)

The key to learning is to continuously try and challenge yourself.
—Clare Yuan



Congrats to Emily for challenging herself learning a new movement of a sonata in 6 weeks!



Congrats to Chloe for challenging herself to learn a new piece in two weeks!



Congrats to Daniel for a new level of his successful performance of the concerto!

Dreams Come True

Congratulations to all who passed the audition to play with orchestra at Chan Centre on May 26th 2019

To play with an orchestra on such stage is an extremely rare opportunity. In general, only the winner through a concerto competition gets the only one spot to play with orchestra. The director at the Mozart School of Music believes more students can benefit from such prestige experience, so she started the gala concert annually five years ago.

Piano lessons started in the second week of September this year. I was lucky to be invited by the director of Mozart School of Music, welcoming my students to join the audition that the school was holding, giving them a possible opportunity to have a chance to play with an orchestra at a professional concert hall.

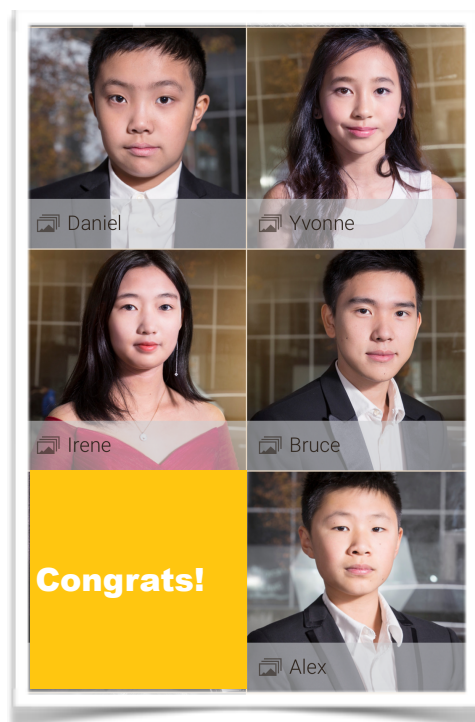
When I explained about this to the students, they were all very excited. However, when I mentioned that the director was holding the audition in the second week of October, everyone was concerned because that means only about four weeks of time to learn their new concertos. What I am most happy about is that they all decided to give their best shot in the four weeks that they have.

Everyone really tried working extra hard to give the best outcome in the four weeks. Honestly, whether or not they would pass the audition, I would have been very happy with all of their effort at this point.

On the day of the audition, I knew they were all nervous because they all wanted to be selected from

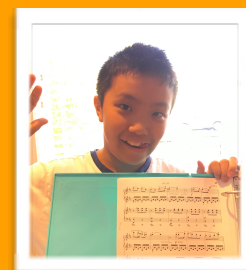
the audition. However, they all seemed to play calmly and with more of a “performing colour” than what they did in the lessons. After the director heard them, she was so happy and announced on the spot that they have all been accepted!

Congratulations to all who have been selected! I am extremely proud of you all! This is just the beginning, we will keep working hard! There are still many related trainings to come! Good luck to everyone!



The students who passed the audition are:
Alex Zhu(11), Daniel Chen(11),
Yvonne Hung(11), Irene Wang(15), Bruce Bai(15)

This was the very first time Daniel learned a page of music, studied and followed all markings on the page on his own. When he played this page for me in the lesson, he did all the staccatos and slurs perfectly, arm movements perfectly, and most importantly the sound he created was singing and beautiful! I did not need to remind him of anything already printed in the music. He deserves recognition!



Year End Student Recital

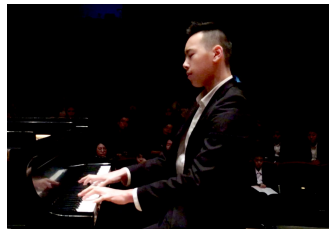
Since we started doing the Halloween Concert this year, I “strongly encouraged” everyone to play a different piece than in the Halloween Concert. Therefore, in comparison to the past recitals, we had only half of our usual preparation time as most of the students started new pieces in November.

I am extremely happy with how everyone put in so much effort and being willing to try new challenges. Most of the students learned and memorized and successfully performed their pieces in only a few weeks. I would like to mention a few students from this recital:



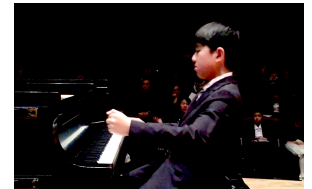
Ken’s principle instrument is the violin. He has such passions for classical music, and he wishes to become a musician. His love for music is beyond the violin, he also self taught himself the piano learning from watching Youtube videos often. Ken’s mom realized his passions for music, therefore, he officially

started piano lessons in the summer. It may be that he has some basic understanding of music already, along with his love for music, his progress on the piano is marvellous. Three weeks before the recital, I asked him if he would like to try and see if he could get Shostakovich’s second piano concerto ready for the recital, and he right away said sure! To play a concerto is a big project in the sense that one has to learn one’s own part, and play with a second piano. However, Ken, who had only had lessons for 5 months, showed his strong determination and effort in front of such challenge. Congratulations to Ken for successfully performed his first piano concerto in life!

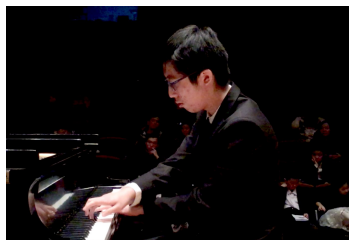


Ryan is a hard working kid who has very high expectation of himself. When he first joined my studio, he showed deep concerns about my policy that everyone must perform. He often lost sleep the day before a performance. However, Ryan asked me if he could perform more this

time! The solo piece he performed in the recital was given to him two weeks before the concert. The first week after getting the new piece, he basically learned and memorized the whole piece, and he was ready for my comments. I basically heard it twice, and any comments I made he changed instantly. In this recital, he did an unusually artistic performance, which was John Cage’s 4’33”. This was an example I told him once in a lesson when we were discussing about modern music.



Then I asked him if he would be interested to do it in the recital this time, and to my surprise, he said yes right away. Since he was excited to do this, I thought it would also help him presenting himself in front of people, so I decided I “might as well” as him to explain the piece to the audience. He hesitated a little, and then he took the challenge. He went home and did some research on John Cage, and then we discussed about what to say. My only condition for doing this piece is that he must keep it a secret, because it will be an experience for the audience without knowing. He kept the secret even from his mom. I started to see a little excitement and enjoyment of music and performing from Ryan’s performance. His change in performing is what I am most happy about. Hard work pays off! Congratulations to Ryan successful performance!



I met Henry when I was still teaching theory 4 years ago. He was my theory student. Back when he was 12, he had written a short piece for piano, voice

and trumpet for a school homework. He had shown great interest in music and his unique vision of the colors of different chords when I taught him theory. He is currently in Gr. 11. I'm very happy that being so busy he is still having music alongside of him. The last lesson we had right before the summer break he mentioned how it was boring to practice other people's works. I took the opportunity and half jokingly said why doesn't he write one for himself?

Our first lesson when school started again, he brought a little what he had written down, and that's when we started the plan to perform his own piece in the student recital. Henry is a very humorous person, and I can't help it but laugh hard in our lessons often. His piece also shows his humorous personality. From the

title of the piece "A Title by A Person" to the ending of the piece where he made it sound like an ending, but to everyone's surprise there is one more short

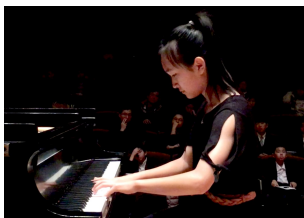


chord creating an unfinished atmosphere, it showed genuinely Henry's style. I'm sure it was a special experience for him to play his own piece. He had tons of colorful sounds in his performance, and the audiences loved it. Congratulations to Henry's success! If there's a time machine, I think Henry should meet 20th century composer, Erik Satie. (See page 20 for Henry's music)



Alex picked a concerto at the beginning of the school year for the audition. He had never played a piece that was as long as a concerto prior to this. On top of that, he had

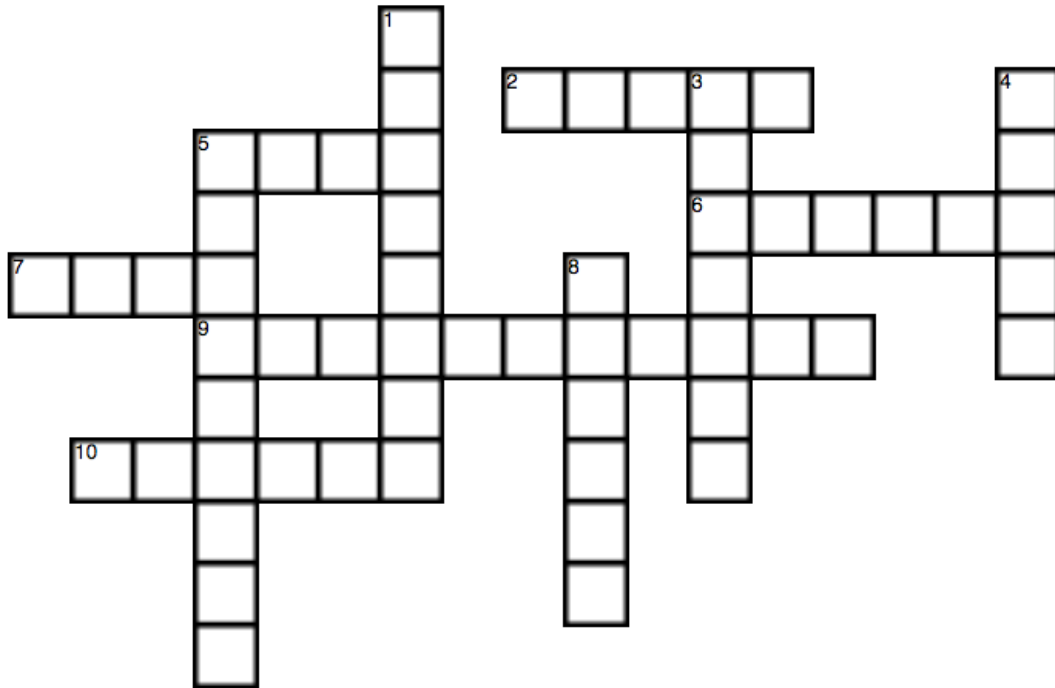
to also play with a second piano, so he expressed some concerns at the time. Trying means he would have a chance, so his mom and I encouraged him to give it a try. He was selected on the spot at the audition! That means he will play with an orchestra at the Chan Centre in May. This rare opportunity encouraged Alex, who is very responsible, to practice even more dedicatedly. His mother told me even on the days when he went home late due to classes, he would make sure he practiced before he called it a day. His performance from the recital not only showed his improvement in his technique, but it also showed Alex's understanding of dynamics and controls in the colors of the sound. His first time performing a concerto has definitely reached a new level comparing to the last performance. Congratulations to Alex who successfully challenged himself to a concerto! Let's look forward to his performance of this concerto with the orchestra in May!



Sunny is a new student who joined us in the summer. After having a few lessons with Sunny I quickly noticed her curiosity and dedication in learning. She is open to

explore new ways that I suggest in her practicing, and she often comes to her lessons with questions from her observations. Because of her dedication, in the past short 4 months she had completely changed the way she plays the piano. Through learning the concerto, she had learned more in depth how phrases and structures in a piece work. Sunny had never played any piece that is more than 4 pages at a time. And to play a concerto for her performance at UBC is definitely a brave challenge. I am extremely proud of her courage. Dedication brings success! Congratulations to Sunny for her successful performance at UBC! I look forward to her next challenge already!

11 Great Composers



ACROSS

- 2 He was nicknamed "The Father of Symphonies" because he wrote 104 symphonies.
- 5 This composer was very good at mathematics, and he incorporated math in his music.
- 6 He was a perfectionist who would only keep his own compositions that he thought were perfect.
- 7 The composer of "4'33" who was interested in zen and Indian philosophy.
- 9 This composer wrote the music for the famous Nutcracker Suite.
- 10 He was one of the leading composers for piano music of the Romantic era.

DOWN

- 1 He suffered from mental disorder. After attempting to jump in the Rhein River in Germany and being rescued, he was admitted to a mental asylum.
- 3 He is one of the leading composers from the impressionism era. He wrote the famous "Clair de Lune".
- 4 He was the one who started memorizing piano solo music in concerts. He was also one of the best pianists in history.

MUSICIAN FUN



First Halloween Concert



Photo Credit: Special thanks to Irene's dad

First Halloween House Concert

This was our first time hosting a Halloween concert. All the students looked so cute performing in their costumes!

I have always wished for more performing opportunities for the students, bringing them a positive and musical environment. Since we moved, now we have a better space. I'm so lucky to have all of these hard working students and supportive parents.



It happened that my husband was doing a small tour with University of Manitoba violin professor Dr. Oleg Pokhanovski and cello professor Dr. Minna Rose

Chung. So I invited them to be our special guests at the concert. Special thanks to the trio for bringing us a high level performance that everyone could enjoy so closely.



The purpose of house concert is to provide more practices for the students, so that they gain more performing experiences and understand performing art through such friendly environment. Also, it provides the students and the parents a chance to meet and exchange ideas. I truly believe that having friends in music is an important fact in thickening their interests in music!



Lastly, thank you to all the parents who shared all kinds of delicious food!

Kids' Talk

One day, I suggested to a boy who was nine at the time that he should play some four hands music with another student of mine.

He looked concerned and said:...but I only have two hands...



Matching Game

Please match the following key signatures to their corresponding keys:

F# C# G# D# A# E# B#

Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb

F#

Bb Eb Ab

F# C# G# D#

F# C# G# D# A# E#

Bb Eb

Bb Eb Ab Db

F# C# G#

F# C#

Bb

Bb Eb Ab Db Gb

F# C# G# D# A#

Bb Eb Ab Db Gb Cb Fb

F# major

Cb major

F major

B major

Db major

C# major

Bb major

A major

Ab major

D major

G major

E major

Eb major

Gb major

FROM THE CLASS

Insights about composing

By Henry Zhou (16)

When I started the composition, I was tired of the same pieces people played over and over again. They all started in a major key, unfailingly moved into the dominant, and then plodded on and on with the same chord progression for hours. Just get it over with, please! And don't get me started on Bach.

So I resolved to do a thing. I wrote stuff? I guess. Sorry, if you were looking for sage insights, perhaps I'm not the best person to ask.

But I thought it turned out okay. The main theme was slightly repetitive and I regret not making it more diverse. I could've, I think. But it didn't sound terrible, right?

Just put notes on the page and press the right keys and roughly the right time. Then everyone will

About 4'33" and When the Frog Goes Wandering

By Ryan Zhou (11)

First of all, I never knew about John Cage until Clare mentioned 4'33". At first glance, I thought that this was pretty cool but then I thought about what I would have to do to achieve this. I gave it some more thought and I decided, yeah, let's do this. John Cage was taught by Arnold Schoenberg, who invented 12 tone music. Surprisingly, he didn't hold a college degree or studied music in an academy. He believed Zen Buddhism so this music is not the sound of musical instruments but that of other human-made objects, and sounds of nature. On top of that, he once said: "And sounds, when allowed to themselves, do not require that those who hear them do so unfeelingly. The opposite is what is meant by response ability."

He has written many pieces that people consider to be music, or not to be music. Perhaps his most famous piece is 4'33" and he is well known for writing indeterminacy music which was determined by the roll of a die. In Cage's mind, Beethoven, Mozart, and traffic in a big city were all equivalent. Cage also understood that the nature of silence is a key concept of both Eastern and Western thought. He applied silence to music and tried to liberate silence from feelings or context. Cage also once said that "The sound experience which I preferred to all others is the experience of silence."

I learned When The Frog Goes Wandering for a competition. It was a tight schedule so I had to learn it in one week and memorize it as well. It seemed like a lot of work, it was. I learned the whole thing in 2 ½ days. The abstract art didn't make any sense to me, so you can probably tell it was a pain to memorize. I had to put in extra mental work. I had to think about it everywhere I went: During school, on the car, in bed, even in the washroom. I knew it was impossible, but somehow I managed it. From this, I learned about indeterminacy music, aka chance music, and several ways to memorize fast. I now understand how some modern music and abstract music is created. For memorizing fast, one strategy I used is to pretend to play it without the piano so that teaches your mind on where the notes are. Another strategy I found really helpful is memorizing it in ups and downs. So when there is C E G C chord you think it goes up starting with C and you can memorize it really fast.

I can't understand why people are frightened of new ideas. I'm frightened of the old ones.

—John Cage (Composer)

The Challenge I'm Proud of

By Sunny Jiang (13)

I started learning at the Yuan Studio in September 2018. Starting with a new teacher means new learning styles, new routines, and new expectations. At first, I was not at all open to trying new pieces or any new methods of playing. If my attitude had stayed that way, I would not have learned as much as I have in the past four months.

Clare showed me all the different postures and ways to push the keys before we started on any new pieces. It gave me an understanding that piano isn't as simple and pressing keys and making sound. It's a complicated work of art that requires time and focus. Not only did my playing posture and sound improve lots, Clare convinced me to try a completely new style of music. Before, I had always stuck to RCM pieces as I thought they were the only kinds of pieces. However, Clare convinced me to try to play a concerto for my very first winter concert. To be very honest, while learning this piece, I had lots of trouble. Not only was it my first time playing it, there were many new things that I had to learn and incorporate. I had many times where I wanted to give up, but that's where I've grown. I learnt that learning any piece requires lots of time. I calmed myself down and took my time learning and preparing my piece. Both Clare and Scott gave me lots of encouragement and made learning it more fun.

In just a short amount of four months of time, I was able to learn the longest, and hardest piece that I have ever played. I was also able to play it in a music hall in front of an audience. The moment I took a step onto that stage, my heart started its ridiculous beating. I was extremely nervous working up to this performance. I played with all the things I've learned. I played knowing there were people watching me with anxious and excited hearts including myself. I am more than proud of myself for accomplishing something so big. I look forward to the upcoming challenges and performances!

What I have learned

By Candyce Gao (13)

From my 8 years of experience piano can be frustrating and from this frustration I have learned how to push through hard times.

Don't keep playing if you're confused or not in the mind set. Take a breath, find a different way to learn it. Because dedicating your time and effort can be stressful but this time and effort should be enjoyed. Take little goals to reach your big one at the most effective way. It will come with less stress and more enjoyment at my personal state of excellency.

From what I have learned, what I find the most important are the notes. But with the notes they have tempo and loudness of different touch. This change makes the emotions with different colours. What do you want others to perceive it as, because you need to have touch and movement in a performance. Acting is what a performer has to have, if an actor has memorized all his lines then just reads them in front of a camera as the movie, then it has no meaning. The same goes to an expressive speech or a rock band concert it will have a mood.

In conclusion, music is an art of creation with many styles, be passionate or find something in music to have a passion about. Music are different languages that will connect to every being to enjoy!





▲ Dulcimer



▲ Harpsichord

Clavichord ►



◀ Virginal



▲ Cristofori Piano-Forte



▲ Spinet



▲ Upright Piano



▲ Square Grand Piano



◀ Piano of Lincoln's Period



▲ Piano of Beethoven's Period



▲ Modern Grand Piano

*All pictures are from Evolution of the Grand Piano poster

How can parents help their kids with practicing?

By Clare Yuan

I'm always hoping that the parents can come to the lessons with their kids, so that they can practice with their kids at home. Kids' understanding is quite different from adults, so it can be a big help if parents can take some notes in the lessons. Then, when kids practice at home, the parents can help with some guidance. However, ultimately we want the kids to think independently, so knowing how much to be involved can be tricky sometimes. Here are a few things for parents to consider when practicing with kids:

1. Don't get anxious. The young minds learn at a different pace, so there can be things that adults find very easy but kids just can't do it on the spot. If the kid is thinking and trying something, allow them some time to think it through. It's an important training for the mind when a kid can focus on thinking; it's necessary for them to find a solution at their pace. It's understandable that sometimes parents can lose patience, but if the kid is always scared of taking time to think, in the long run, he/she will subconsciously focus on getting it over with quickly. It may seem like efficiency, but in the long run there will be numerous problems. I will share more on this topic in more details later.

“It's an important training for the mind when a kid can focus on thinking; it's necessary for them to find a solution at their pace.”

2. Don't give the answers right away. If there is something that the teacher had already explained it in the lesson, but the kid forgot when practicing, parents can give some reminders, but don't tell the answers right away. For one, it helps training the kid to focus better and understand the important points in the lessons, and for two, it helps training the kid to try to find a solution instead of getting

an answer instantly by just asking the parents. After all, parents can't practice with their kids forever. This is something they have to learn.

3. Practice quality is over quantity. The most important thing in practicing is the quality, but all kids think playing fast is the only important thing, and therefore, the details are often neglected. The observation of all markings on the music should be developed from the beginning. Kids also need to learn to recognize the difficult spots, and take the difficult parts out to drill. It's important that they learn to face problems and to solve problems rather than just playing a piece from beginning to end over and over. To do so, slow practice is a must! Only when the speed is slow can there be enough time to think and process every detail, and the body can coordinate. This kind of high quality practicing must be established from the beginning.

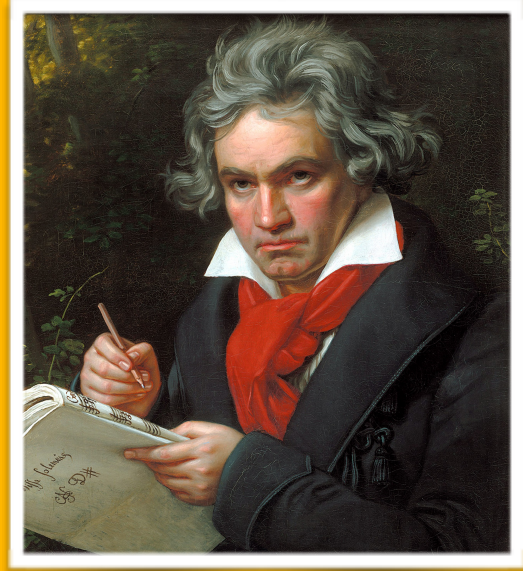
“It's important that they learn to face problems and to solve problems rather than just playing a piece from beginning to end over and over.”

4. important from the beginning. Don't give up. It's no doubt that playing the piano is difficult; the hands have to move, the eyes have to look, the ears must listen, and above all that the brain has to think. A page of music is covered by all kinds of logical problems that also require physical movements, so it's no wonder that kids have a certain level of fear and anxiety about practicing (especially when learning new pieces). Therefore, when kids face problems and feel like giving up, or when they are impatient to think for a solution, parents must encourage them so they understand after the problem is resolved that taking a step at a time, they will find the solution in the end. As they advance, it will only become harder, so training the mind to be okay with problems, be okay to take challenges is very important from the beginning.

5. Be persistent. Kids may start crying or acting up about practicing. The best way is to have them calm down first and then continue. Sometimes when kids act up parents just give up and say they can forget about practicing for the day. This is a solution that must be avoided because they will very quickly learn “the way” to not have to practice. Past the ages of crying, they will then learn to find other way to “negotiate” about practicing. It’s important that kids develop a proper attitude about practicing from the start.

6. Guide them to set smaller goals, and be generous with compliments. When kids first start, what they neglect the most is listening to the sound they are creating. It’s important to keep reminding them to listen to the “right sound”. When practicing with kids, it’s important to give them some positive comments when they’ve done it right. Help them learn to set small goals. For example, when playing a scale, aim at a even speed and correctly fingering. When making a small goal that kids will more likely to accomplish, they will feel good about achieving the goals. Then, they will look forward to the next little challenge. This will help develop their patience when practicing.

I’m sure everyone has heard of the benefits of learning the piano. Aside from the scientific facts that it benefits coordination, memory, expressions and reactions, more importantly it shapes kids’ personality, will power, ambition, and independence. All of these can result from persistent daily practice. With the help of the parents from the beginning, the kids will have much better confidence to take challenges and learn more. Hope this helps!



Ludwig van Beethoven

(Dec. 16th 1770 - March 26th 1827)

Did you know?

Beethoven’s deafness is actually caused by lead poisoning

Beethoven had various symptoms early on, including buzzing in the ears, abdominal pain, headache, etc., but the doctors couldn’t find the reason. The buzzing got worse and worse and eventually it lead to deafness. He could never have imagined that after hundreds of years, his hair was sent to a lab to find that his body had 42 times more lead than a normal person. This along with all the other symptoms suggested that Beethoven was lead poisoned. Since the water pipes used in the area where Beethoven lived were lead pipes, this is presumed to be the reason for the cause. Check out the book “Beethoven's Hair” for more information.

Practice Tip

The quality of practicing piano is more important than quantity. Practice the same passage several times throughout a day can lead to mastering it in less time. For example, if a person practices a passage three times a day, 20 minutes at a time, will learn it faster than a person practicing the same passage once a day, but a for whole hour in one sitting!

From the Parents

I learned only one thing when I came to Canada! Be patient!

Be patient to the administration and work efficiency, and even more so to my children! The Kids are reluctant to listen to too much, especially the ones who grow up in the Western culture. It is difficult to apply the traditional Asian disciplines to them. In addition, my two kids have very different personalities. I see more about what Confucius said about "teaching students according to their capabilities." How to find a suitable teacher for their personalities, or even communicate with the teacher about motivating them. Learning to step back and just watch them try and make mistakes so that they will learn to self-reflect and improve, I think this is what I learned from my two kids the most. Sometimes parents have blind spots, and with the teachers' professional and objective perspectives, it's easier to get better results! I'd like to thank Clare for listening to the requests of the parents, spending time and effort on how to solve the problems for each child and guiding them to the fun and achievements of learning music! Let's all keep working hard!

—Ken and Yvonne's mom

My two boys, Henry the elder one appears cool but aspiring inside. Ryan the younger one is young at heart and sincere. Thanks to their piano teacher Clare's great leadership, my two boys with different personalities both enjoy their piano lessons with great joy. Clare not only give them professional instruction on how to play piano, but also work very hard to bring in most surprising way of teaching to inspire their interest in music from within them, which is far beyond our expectations as a piano teacher. With her sharp observation and true understanding and love to our children, Clare transforms a possible dull and boring piano learning experience into a magical experience of exploring the wonders of music. In the process of learning, Henry and Ryan not only gained better piano techniques, but they also gained self confidence and goals for the future. As a reward of learning piano lessons, they will have music be alongside with them, enriching them growing up. We greatly appreciate Clare's unreservedly giving with all of her heart. We also like to thank Clare's handsome husband, Dr. Scott Meek, who helped and as a role model for our children.

—Henry and Ryan's mom



Hold the Vision, Trust the Process

By Cindy (Steven's mom)

Why do you need to learn music? With different experiences, we seem to have a different answer every year.

Learning music is both happy and hard for me and Steven. From the initial excitement, to the endless and boring basic exercises, to the hand-correction period that lasted for half a year, to whatever he played sounding like an etude, and to now, when he started to think and play with the expressions, it's hard to summarize what we have been through in a few words.

I don't believe in complete stress-free learning, but I also don't think that one must suffer to learn. Learning music in my opinion should be the same as our work, study and life in that it's with layers of colours. The only thing we can do is: Hold the vision, trust the process. Other than insisting on high-quality and productive practicing, we try to periodically reflect on the goods that we have done, and what other new attempts we can try to broaden our perspectives, and also to overcome utilitarianism and focus less on pride.

The relationship between parents and kids is not merely to educate and to be educated. Excuse me, this is my first time being a parent. You are also a child for the first time. I gradually discovered that my state affects his state very subtly. When I am calm, he is very determined. When I am distracted, he will start to lose focus. When I am upset, he gets offensive. When I am excited, he becomes confident. It seems as if I am facing myself when I face him. I remember for a while when he was confused and facing a bottleneck, he had doubts about why he had to practice the piano every day. Many of his classmates didn't need to, and practicing didn't seem to bring him a clear and immediate reward. It happened that I was also facing a bottleneck at work at that time. I told him that many good things come delayed, and only when you keep going will they come to you. I also reflected on myself, and honestly, I wasn't doing any better than him.

When I put myself in his shoes and showed my sincerity to evaluate both his and my problems, I think he could feel my sincerity. During that period of time, we tried to understand each other more and we enjoyed peace.

For the past year, I am very fortunate that when my work was extremely busy and I wasn't at my best state, he continued to practice piano, although the results may not have always been the best. I would like to thank teacher Lu in Shanghai for the patience and help. Then, we came here in the second half of the year, and we met Clare. We started a new way of piano learning with new experience and understanding, and met many excellent students, and Steven is playing the piano with new understanding and appreciation. We are very happy that, especially in the past month, his playing showed great improvements both expressions and techniques. As for me, the new life and work here are stable and happy now.

It is really wonderful. It turns out that he is me. I am him. So as long as I can do my part well, he will be fine. It turns out that I am his "process."

I'd like to thank Clare for this opportunity, so I can summarize the learning process of Steven in the past while. I also look forward to more communications with all the parents.

MUSIC QUIZ

1. What nationality is Chopin? Where did his family immigrate to?
2. What instrument did Chopin write the most for?
3. What way of playing was invented by Chopin?
4. What is Chopin's nickname?
5. What was the reason for Chopin's death?

Learning is Endless

The Joy and Benefits of Learning How to Play the Piano at Fifty Something

By Esther Savard

I was almost 50 years old when I decided to learn to play the piano. I took that decision only a few days after the death of my beloved grandmother who has played the piano until about one year before she passed away at the age 107. I have always been fascinated by the fact that my grand-mother seemed so full of life and happy while she was playing, despite the great hardships she suffered during her long life. Starting piano at my age was not only a decision based on my love of music but also on my search for happiness and fulfillment.

It has already been a few years now since I began my piano adventure. Here are a few observations on my own personal experience.

Learning as an adult can be at times challenging but above all very rewarding.

As adults, we are self-conscious and we can become easily discouraged when we look at the young kids move fast on the keys and pick up easily some techniques that we adults may sometimes take months or even years to master.

Learning to play the piano as an adult requires some humility, patience and optimism. The rules that you must apply if you are determined to learn how to play are in a way similar to the ones that young entrepreneur who wish to start a new business must follow: you must be persistent, patient, not be afraid to fail, take small steps at a time to achieve your goals and manage your time efficiently.

Learning to play the piano is like learning any other language or any other new skills. You must

practice, practice and practice again. For me, after a few years of learning, I feel that the art of practising is probably what matters the most. Practising the right way can make you save lots of energy and time. It's not always easy and it takes lots of discipline, but I know this is the only way to improve. It is sometimes tempting to try to play the whole piece from the beginning to the end instead of focusing on the small passages that you need to focus on. Listening to some of the world renowned pianists say how much they still practice despite their level of virtuosity says it all and is in a way very inspiring. After a while, practising becomes a very enjoyable moment because you understand more how to obtain results.

Of course, finding a talented, very patient and encouraging teacher you get along well with is paramount. Lessons must be fun and not intimidating. I have been lucky to be introduced to Clare with whom I am learning so much and who has always been very positive and encouraging, despite my difficulties.

Despite the various challenges, learning the piano is extremely rewarding.

I feel learning to play brings beauty in my life. When you play, you aim for beauty at every note and every phrase you play. This is of course a goal and this easier said than done. A slur badly executed, the wrong dynamics, a note you poke instead of touching gently make a whole difference. You have to bring your attention to such a large number of details to aim at the optimum result. It can take a while to master all the details at the same time, but when you do, or almost do or feel you almost do, it is extremely rewarding.

Music is the divine way to tell beautiful, poetic things to the heart.
— Pablo Casals (cellist)

Learning about music brings so much beauty in life. Learning how to play enables you to appreciate the works of the great composers and it is for me a limitless source of pleasure.

Learning how to play the piano is also a very impressive brain workout. I feel that playing the piano has sharpened my ability to remember what I read, what people say and what I see. We hear a lot about neuro-plasticity, that is to say our brain's capacity to adapt. The learning to play the piano is the perfect tool to help create new connections between our neurons.

Every week I hear about a new study about the positive effect of music on the brain. Lots of research is being done in Canada and in many other countries and I hope more and more people, young and old will learn to play the piano to gain the benefits of piano playing.

Memorizing pieces is not so easy for me. But the more I learn about the art of piano practising, I realize it has more to do with the way of you practice than being older. There are tips and that many people whatever their age may find memorizing challenging, so I try not to discourage

In the crazy and busy world we live in, people search for ways to find some calm in their daily lives and to reduce their level of stress and anxiety. Some people choose to meditate, some start running, others prefer yoga. For me, playing the piano is the cure. If I practice at the end of the day and feel tired, after playing a few minutes, I regain some concentration and feel refreshed. I have the feeling that my level of consciousness has reached another level. There is definitely some truth when people say that music elevates the spirit.

When I observe the young people learning the piano, I feel so happy for them. They do not really realize yet, but by learning the piano they develop not only their knowledge of music but also their empathy, their curiosity, an unmatched sense of discipline and hopefully, contrary to too many people, they will not be intimidated by classical music and they will want to go to the concert and learn more about music, composers and performers. I was told recently that one of the biggest regret of people who had learned how to play the piano when they were young was to have stopped learning. It's sad, but I would tell them, it is never too hard to start learning again.

MUSIC
IS NOT WHAT I DO,
IT'S WHO I AM.

Match Game - Answers

Please match the following common tempo terms to the correct definitions:



MUSIC QUIZ - Answers

1. What country is Ludwig van Beethoven from? **Germany**
2. What physical condition did Beethoven suffer from which made him hard to get along? **Deafness**
3. What era is Beethoven from? **Classical**
4. What language did Beethoven speak? **German**
5. Which symphony did Beethoven dedicate to Napoleon, and later changed to "Heroic Symphony"? **Symphony No. 3**

ARTICLES WELCOME

Welcome to all parents and students share your musical learning experiences. Your experience may answers the questions of other parents or students. Your experience may help the others facing similar confusion and insecurities.

The help of articles is beyond words, therefore I invite you all to share. (I will translate all articles. Don't worry!)



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a title by a person

a subtitle

a person(could be Henry)

♩ = 120

Incredibly rubato

Open for interpretation

5

9

Copyright by Henry Zho

12 2

18

22

27 *meno mosso*

32

3

8va

37

42

47

53

accel.

4

rit.

58

GRANDIOSO

8va | 8va | 8va | 8va

64

8va | 8va | 8va | 8va

accel.

69

75

5

81

87

Calmato

sarcastic *pp* *rapping*

98

cresc.

8^{bb}

106

6

Measures 106-110 of a musical score. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The music features a complex rhythmic pattern with eighth and sixteenth notes, and some chords. A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

111

Measures 111-115 of a musical score. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The music continues with complex rhythmic patterns and chords. A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

116

Measures 116-121 of a musical score. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The music includes a piano dynamic marking (*p.*) and an octave marking (*8va*). A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

122

Measures 122-127 of a musical score. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The music features complex rhythmic patterns and chords. A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

128

Measures 128-132 of a musical score. The system consists of two staves. The upper staff is in treble clef with a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The lower staff is in bass clef with a key signature of one sharp (F-sharp). The music includes an octave marking (*8vb*). A large, faint watermark is visible across the page.

133

