

Simply Music is a revolutionary Australian-developed piano method that offers a breakthrough in music education. This unique approach has students of all ages playing great-sounding contemporary, classical, blues, jazz and accompaniment pieces-immediately- from their very first lessons!

This new method called Simply Music is an Australian-based piano teaching method being taught by former Selbyite, Janita (Brockel) Pavelka. Janita, the daughter of Carroll and Jan Brockel, is a 1982 graduate of Selby High School and owns New Song Piano Studio in Bellevue, NE where she teaches students of all ages and abilities.

Janita is a classically trained pianist having started piano lessons at a young age from Mrs. Irene Buechler, Bowdle and continued in Aberdeen under Mrs. Hall.

Pavelka used to teach piano lessons with the traditional approach, which is reading-based, but students found the approach slow, laborious and frustrating and would quit. "It broke my heart as a teacher. I wanted them to have music as a life-long companion."

She heard about Simply Music from a friend in San Francisco four years ago. "At first I was skeptical, thinking, 'Oh, it's just a California thing', "she said. "However, once I understood the paradigm, I was sold. I found it much easier to teach."

Initially there were three reasons Pavelka wanted to teach Simply Music:

- 1) She couldn't play anything without reading the music, which is similar to not being able to speak without a script.
- 2) Pavelka wanted her children to be above and beyond where she was as a musician.
- 3) She wanted her students to love playing the piano.

There have been more benefits from teaching Simply Music, such as the opportunity for a great home business.

Pavelka went through the training in 2003 and still is on a learning curve as she learned to play by reading music, and Simply Music does not have students learning to read music until they are nearly through their first year.

Reading music, Pavelka said, requires a student to look at seven different "languages" at once: notes, rhythm, dynamics, lyrics, fingering, pedal, and order and continuity, which can be information overload for many students. "Similar to a pinball machine on tilt" said Pavelka.

The Simply Music approach is a 'playing-based' approach, which focuses on the sheer pleasure of playing music. The 'hands-on' nature of the program puts the directions out on to the keyboard, similar to laying directions out on to the road when driving.

With Simply Music's approach, a student learns one "language" at a time, breaking each into a single thought process. Pavelka said if the student does not understand the material, there is not something wrong with the student, there is something wrong in the way it is being taught. For the Simply Music Method is based upon the premise that everyone, without exception, is naturally musical.

The songs first-year students can play include classical pieces such as *Sonata in C*, *Amazing Grace*, *Fur Elise*, *Minuet in G*, *Ode to Joy*, Greensleeves, Star Spangled banner, and other contemporary songs, accompaniments and the blues.

Janita and her husband Timothy have four children, Rachel, 12; Hannah, 8; Amanya, 6; and Christian, 10, who all are learning piano the Simply Music way.

Connor and Ethan Russell, students of Janita (Brockel) Pavelka, and sons of Doug and Jill Russell, Blair, NE and grandsons of Everett and Delores Russell, Selby, enjoy the new method of playing the piano. "If they were true Russell boys, after 9 months they should be complaining by now, and they aren't," Doug said.

Doug was so impressed with his boys' progress and enthusiasm for the piano, he signed up to be a Simply Music teacher in June.

Doug, a 1985 graduate of Selby High School, studied piano with Mrs. Irene Buechler of Bowdle and Mrs. Betty Kuehl of Selby. He received his degree from Grace University in Omaha, where he is presently the Alumni and Pastoral Relations Director. He is slated to start teaching his first students in August.

More information can be found at www.omahapiano.com or by calling Pavelka at (402) 293-5577.