

Calendar

Events

Aug. 19, 7-9 pm Adult Jam and Singalong
at the studio

August Birthdays

01 Maeve Kelly
01 Neil Moore
07 Olivia Kiefer
12 Elijha Mott
13 Dianna Larson
17 Laura Torres-Salvador
17 Sofia Torres-Salvador

Simply Music Teacher Workshop Report



The last week in July we were privileged to host in Omaha a workshop offered to Simply Music teachers featuring piano techniques developed by SM teacher Nancy Reese from Driggs, ID. Neil Moore was here as well.

Nancy is widely recognized for her work with piano technique and piano-related, repetitive stress issues. Due to success with students who had the most severe of these injuries, focal dystonia, she developed her unique "Breakthrough Piano Technique" method.

Nancy teaches people how to play with ease, comfortably, in a way that actually allows the pianist to achieve more beautiful tone quality and expression from the piano. It can completely transform the way we play and enjoy our music.

It was fascinating to hear why some very common beliefs are actually false:

- Finger 4 is not weaker than the other fingers
- We don't need strong fingers
- We don't need curled fingers
- We don't need exercises for speed
- In reality, we don't play the piano with our fingers (hmm!)

We look forward to sharing her techniques with students in the future!

Should we strive to be more perfect. . . or more human?

By Laurie Richards

Recently, a Simply Music teacher from Australia named Unmani shared this story with other teachers. This is such a wonderful story, especially for those students who are so hard on themselves when they make mistakes when playing piano:

Last night I took two children to see Michael Kieran Harvey arguably Australia's foremost classical pianist. We were in the front row and saw the sweat and fingers flying. It was a night of etudes - Messian, Stravinsky, Liszt, Bela Bartok - really pianistically, technically very challenging, athletic, brilliant stuff and exquisite crisp quiet moments.

In the middle of one piece he stopped suddenly and said - 'I've gone blank; I'll do that section again (I certainly didn't know there had been any problem). He did it again, completed the piece, then suddenly said to the audience, "I'll do the piece again", and it was fine. In fact I personally enjoyed revisiting the study so immediately.

I loved a few things about this moment. . .

One was that he didn't beat himself up or fall apart, and his statements to the audience were clear and present and unemotional, and we were in his hands, so to speak.

And I could wax philosophic about the fact that we are on our journey to be as good as we possibly can and strive for perfection. . . our playlist, as spouses, as parents, as teachers whatever. But there's this anomaly about perfection being impossible.

And I am reminded of the statement 'If every musician waited until they were perfect the world would have no music.'

Probably everyone who has ever performed in some capacity or other has experienced moments of memory lapse, nervousness getting in the way, or just feeling afterward that we could have (or worse, *should* have) done better; and wishing everyone could have experienced the better version. We allow these feelings to affect our performance as we strive for perfection. Think of how beneficial it would be to everyone if we approached performances in the manner that Michael Kieran Harvey has - by preparing and by doing our very best, but also acknowledging that we are human and make mistakes, and sometimes we 'd just like to have another go at it.

STUDENT LYRICS

"Pillow Fight" by Jay Otto
(sung to Night Storm)

Flying feathers
Duck and cover
Grab the corner tight
Up and down
Around the bed, oh
It's a pillow fight!

"Fruit" by Blase Sindelar
(sung to I'll Be There)

Apples are great
And grapes are too
Pass me your plate And I'll
share with you
I love to eat
Maybe it's true:
Someday I will eat you.

"Frog" by Levi Hill
(sung to Dog?)

Saw this little frog, Jumping all around
Pushing with his back legs
Off the ground
Doesn't have a tail, funny bulging eyes
Makes a noise like 'croak croak'
Eats a lot of flies.

"The Zoo" by Max Sindelar
(sung to I'll Be There)

I like the zoo
It's very fun
Sometimes I walk
Sometimes I run
I see monkeys
and dolphins too
Then it is time to go.

"Little Bear" by Jacob Wessel
(sung to I'll Be There)

There's this little bear
That was very small
His paws were no bigger
Than my hands
Had a little ball
Played with it all day
Chased it into the lake
Splish splash had a bath.

'Like' Keys to Harmony on Facebook!



Please visit our Facebook page, Keys to Harmony, LLC. We regularly post inspiring videos of students, teachers, and Neil Moore; pictures, discussion questions, event reminders, and more. We have almost 200 'likers' but want to see more of our students in that number!

On August 15, all studio families who like us will have their name put in a drawing for a Keys to Harmony mug and four Java 'n Ice gift certificates. This is one prize. We appreciate your support!

FYI . . .

Sherrine Fossler has been a 50% owner in Keys to Harmony since last summer. She has decided that at this time she needs more time for her young children and her family, and as such cannot devote the time needed to run a business. Sherrine will continue to teach all her classes at Keys to Harmony as an employed teacher.

Sherrine and I have had loads of fun (and occasional stress) as business partners. We have learned a lot from one another, and I have the utmost respect and admiration for her as a friend and a colleague. I look forward to many more years of working with her!

Nothing will look different to studio families. But going forward, any studio concerns should be directed to Laurie Richards.

Class Spotlight - 'The Zippers'



Miss Laurie teaches a wonderful class who has named themselves The Zippers. As you might surmise from the picture, The Zippers love to use the inflatable microphones and sing during class. They are quite talented singers, and we always have fun in class. They just started Level 3 in the Simply Music program.

Jacob Wessel, 8 (back left) plays soccer and basketball and likes to swim. His mom has always wanted to play piano, so she's learning right along with him! This has been a big help to him. Jacob enjoys learning music together with other kids. His favorite song is Sleeping. Which is interesting, since Jacob is so full of great energy!

Sophia Dolton, 8 (back right) can dive off a diving board at the pool. Her favorite song so far is the Dreams Come True arrangement in D (with the LH chords). She likes listening to the others in her class play songs on the piano. Sophia is always full of wonderful smiles.

Levi Hill, 7 (front left) loves sports - especially swimming and soccer! His favorite song is Alma Mater Blues, and he says being in a class with other kids makes music fun. . . everyone is good at a different musical feature. Levi learns new songs with ease and especially excels at the blues!

Amelia Dolton, 6 (front right) has two fish named Cherry and Berry and a guinea pig named Henry. She and her sister Sophia once wrote lyrics about Henry! About learning in a group, Amelia says, "If we mess up on a song, we can learn from the other kids." At age 6, Amelia will knock your socks off with her level of musical talent.

I asked them each what is the coolest thing about The Zippers. Here's what they had to say:

Jacob: "We all help each other and share our ideas."

Sophia: "The Zippers learn songs zippy fast."

Levi: "They are always eager to learn something new."

Amelia: "The Zippers are zippy at learning new songs."

I certainly couldn't argue with any of those statements! It is my absolute privilege to teach The Zippers and their dedicated moms.



Perhaps the most valuable result of all education is the ability to make yourself do the thing you have to do, when it ought to be done, whether you like it or not; it is the first lesson that ought to be learned; and however early a man's training begins, it is probably the last lesson that he learns thoroughly.

Thomas H. Huxley, English biologist (1825 - 1895)