

Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation News

*To facilitate, promote, and
educate the public on the way
of teaching and playing the piano
taught at the Talent Education Research
Institute in Matsumoto, Japan by
Dr. Haruko Kataoka*

Piano Basics Foundation News

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Joy of Music

By Haruko Kataoka

From the Matsumoto Suzuki Piano Newsletter

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Translated by Chisa Aoki and

Teri Paradero

Edited by Karen Hagberg

It was the New Year of my 6th birthday. Even though there were three siblings in our family, only my sister and I were chosen to take piano lessons. Since my mother loved classical music and had amassed a large number of classical recordings (in those days they were in LP record format), I am sure that I had already been listening to good recordings before I started piano lessons. So this was the beginning of my long relationship with music.

It must have been fate to have music in my life. I'm told that I was very driven about piano in the beginning. Being the middle child, my competitive streak was strong. I wanted to beat my sister at everything. I remember being highly motivated to practice so I could advance past her. My sister was laid back and therefore moved slower through the repertoire so eventually I attained my goal. As a result my sister decided that she wanted to quit piano and stopped practicing altogether. My mother who had been so strict about everything for some unknown reason agreed to let her quit. The fact that my mother conceded so easily to my sister puzzles me to this day.

With my competitive impetus gone, my motivation to practice waned and I came to hate piano practice. However, this was the very stage in my life when I truly started to develop my love for music.

I hated to practice but I loved music. And there were so many pieces that I wanted to play. I remember feeling so excited when my piano teacher would tell me to learn the

next piece. Though I hated to practice, because I was forced to practice every day, eventually the piece would take shape. When I was finally able to play a piece well, I would feel so happy and content.

I often reminisce about the time I was in the first year of middle school when I was practicing the Beethoven Waldstein Sonata, the introduction to the second movement and the following *Allegretto* movement (sol sol mi re sol do mi).

It was a cold winter's night. As I was listening to the melody I became transported from present reality into an otherworldliness where I felt indescribable joy. Ever since, I have always wondered in awe about the nature of music. Whether we are happy or sad, music can touch our heart and tame the human being in all of us.

A piano teacher who lived in Kobe during last year's earthquake shared with me an experience that happened during the aftermath. The music of Mozart was audible while she was standing in a long line waiting to receive her water ration at a local schoolyard. As she was listening, something inexplicable came over her. She was so deeply moved that her tears were flowing spontaneously. She was awestruck by the beauty and wonder of music. Unlike buildings and objects, no matter what happens music can never be destroyed or broken.

I became cognizant of the fact that among all living creatures on this earth, God has granted

one thing only to us—the arts. Humans are the only beings who can be soothed by music when we come home tired and weary at the end of the day so that we can awaken to face the next day with renewed energy.

I met a physician in America some time ago who lamented, "Music is your work. Since music can make people happy, you are truly fortunate. On the other hand, doctors have a tough job. We have to deal with unhappy, troubled people on a daily basis."

On the 28th of April, we successfully concluded the eighth 10-Piano Concert. So many individuals who had come to listen to every 10-piano Concert in the past were moved to tears by the music. Though these children are not professionals, their hard work and focused performance affected so many people. The children themselves were pleased that they were able to perform the concert twice. They said that during the first performance they were so nervous and worried that they were not conscious of what they were playing. However, the second time around they really enjoyed their performance.

When we decided to have two concerts because the audience had outgrown the hall, we were concerned that the children would become tired. On the contrary, they took their nervous energy onstage to become immersed in the joy of great music.

Music is a source of so much happiness!



COVID SNAPSHOTS

Imagine the Editor's Surprise

By Karen Hagberg

Imagine my surprise! This is the most fun and interesting newsletter I have worked on in all my 25+ years as Editor of this publication. The reason? Many of you out there (teachers, parents, students) sent in your experiences for this column, Covid Snapshots, that I proposed in the previous issue. Never before has Suzuki Piano Basics seemed like such a wonderfully cohesive and diverse community from one side of our country to the other. There is so much awesome material that much of it will be saved for the next issue and possibly for issues after that, and it means that any of you who have not yet submitted your photos, thoughts, dreams, etc. will have at least another couple of months to do so. If your submission does not appear in this issue, it will show up eventually.

I am left to wonder: does it take a pandemic for us to communicate so meaningfully with one another? Now that we have been limited to virtual social life and virtual teaching has our need for community bubbled up to the virtual surface? Did receiving the newsletter in a different format, email instead of hard copy, suddenly grab more of your attention?

Periodically, over the past 25 years, I have called for submissions from readers on various topics, usually with no response whatever. I have had to beg people to submit articles, often with no results. Frankly, I did not expect it to be any different this time.

I wish we could publish all of the submissions in this one newsletter so that you could see them altogether in their amazing variety, but it is important that each be given the space it deserves. In addition, I want you to be filled with anticipation for future items in this column *as you too are deciding what you want to contribute now that you have more time.*

The pandemic will be over one of these days, but I hope and pray that this is just the beginning of a time when this newsletter truly does what it was meant to do: create community among our diverse and far-flung membership, including parents and students as well as teachers, while, at the same time, informing Dr. Kataoka's timeless pedagogy.

Submissions may be emailed to me:
khagberg1943@gmail.com

Upcoming Events

Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, in the foreseeable future we cannot predict whether or not anticipated events will take place. To the best of our understanding, events scheduled for the summer months of 2020 have all been cancelled. The decision on scheduling the 10-Piano Concert in Matsumoto in April 2021 will be made by the end of the summer, as will the question of holding a February workshop with the Japanese teachers in the United

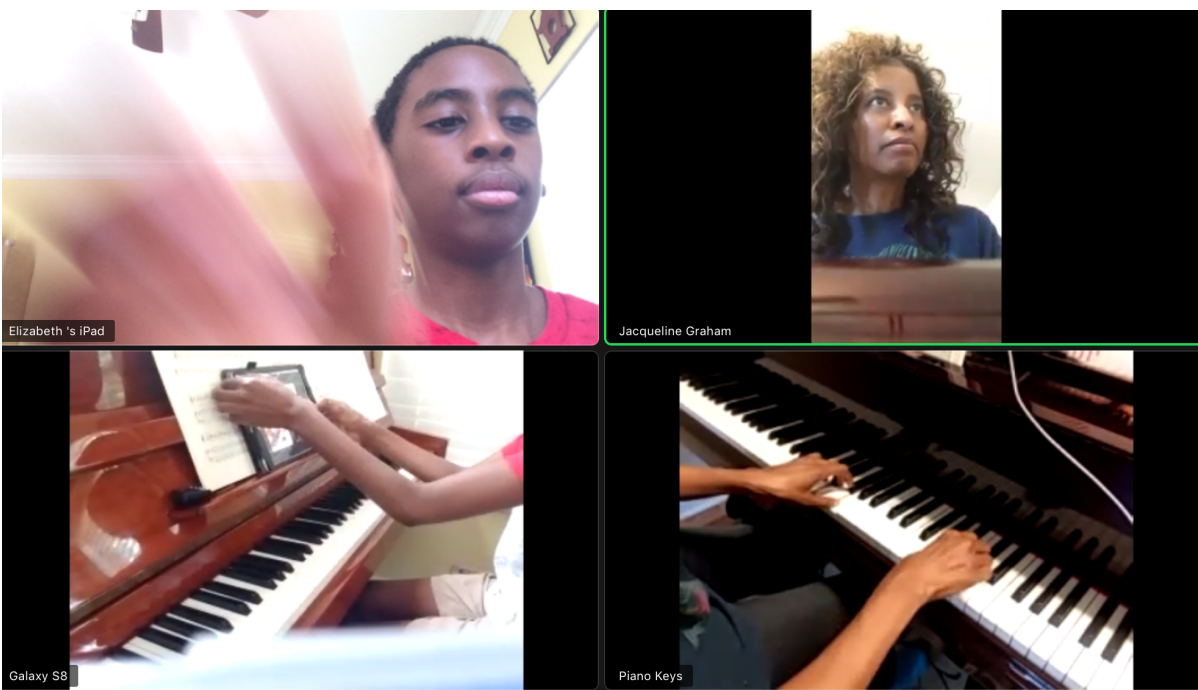
States next year. Please all take care of yourselves.

Web site:

You all have recently received an email from our Web Editor, Ken Wilburn, about new features of the site and information about how to access it. The quickest and easiest way to access the site is to do an internet search for Suzuki Piano Basics Foundation.

COVID SNAPSHOTS (cont'd) ***Lessons During Quarantine***

By William Ogonga, student of Jacqueline Graham, Augusta, Georgia



William Ogonga's Zoom lesson with Ms. Jacqui.

During this Coronavirus era, the world changed its way of things. I made myself more comfortable having piano lessons on Zoom. At first I worried that I would not get as much help from my teacher, and that there would be a limit to what she could do. Now I'm getting used to learning from home, and I'm enjoying it.

I'm still looking forward to in-person lessons, yet feel it is very important to have apps like Zoom to help us through this hard time. The experience of learning from home has taught me that even if we are apart we can still learn from each other.

We had a piano performance on Earth Day. It was fun to see everyone perform.

Later, my sister and I found a mockingbird in our back yard. It was so adorable that I found it hard to leave it there, but since it was a fledgling, we had to leave it for its Mom. Ms. Jacqui gave us advice. The assignment she gave me was to compose a piece about the little bird. I'm looking forward to performing my composition in one of our upcoming Performance Classes.

(Note from William's mom, Elizabeth: I am amazed at how easy the transition to virtual learning happened. Ms. Jacqui was so quick to embrace the change and encourage William. What a wonderful instructor she is. We appreciate you, Ms. Jacqui.)

COVID SNAPSHOTS (cont'd)

Joyful Sounds Remote Spring Recital

***By Julie Zobel, parent of Sarah Zobel, student of Nancy Hochstetler
Joyful Sounds Piano Studio, Gainesville, Florida***

The students of Joyful Sounds Piano Studio didn't let stay-at-home orders prevent them from holding their annual Spring

Recital. Suzuki teacher, Mrs. Nancy Hochstetler, said her students were enthusiastic to prepare and record their

performances, which were compiled in a full studio recital video that students could share with their friends and family via YouTube. The students donned their formalwear and the teacher even congratulated Suzuki Book graduates as well as other students earning trophies. The Suzuki parents surprised their children with the actual trophies at home during their watch parties.

Mrs. Nancy has gone the extra mile to make lessons via FaceTime productive and fun. For instance, during online lessons, she

allows students a choice of which crazy hat, scarf, or boa she has to wear after they earn their choice through quality repetitions or completion of a task. Seeing their teacher smile, hear positive reinforcement, and celebrate achievements, whether on the screen or in person, is always a bright spot in their day.

Editor's note: While recovering from surgery, Nancy Hochstetler asked her parent, Julie Zobel, to submit these wonderful photos of her remote Spring Recital.



Joyful Sounds Suzuki Piano families marked their children's achievements and hard work by making their private events memorable, offering special treats, decorations, formal attire, and picture taking.

COVID SNAPSHOTS (cont'd)



Danielle Kolb brought in special lighting equipment to ensure a quality video recording for her son, Ewan, who earned his first Formal recital pin and Star Student trophy.



Sarah Zobel was surprised to receive her Star Student trophy and NFM Cup during Quarantine. Sarah has participated in 12 annual Spring Formal recitals and was grateful to keep up the tradition even though it felt a little different than usual. The show must go on!



The whole Huish family posed for a photo with their son, Caleb, to celebrate his first formal recital.



David Berryman is super excited to earn his first Star Student trophy from Suzuki Dad, Brian Berryman.

COVID SNAPSHOTS (cont'd)

Coast-to-Coast Piano Basics Teachers Gather for a Zoom Meeting

By Malinda Rawls, Louisville, Kentucky

On June 16, 2020, 22 teachers from Washington State to Florida and Pennsylvania signed in to a Zoom meeting for a time of "seeing" each other and Research. Everyone enjoyed the experience. Keiko Kawamura in Japan watched and listened while she was eating her extremely late dinner.

The Zoom gathering was a time of renewing acquaintances and comparing notes about teaching during these times of quarantine. Insights were shared on cameras, microphones, recitals, and teaching techniques. Bruce Boiney showed off his 4-channel switching system which enables the display of four views: Right Hand, Left Hand, Overheard, and Side View of teacher and piano. He also demonstrated his new iPad displaying full-page-sized images of the music onto which he can make annotations with a pen. He then sends that marked image of practice points to the student. He says it saves time during the lesson because it is so quick and easy to use.

The Louisville Research group then presented a demonstration "research" lesson with Karen Huffman, Portland, Oregon, playing Twinkles, Down-Ups, and

Book 2, Ecossaise. Afterwards, the Louisville teachers discussed aspects of her playing which led to a general discussion of teaching points.

The purpose of the meeting was to encourage the formation of peer groups within the Suzuki Piano Basics community for furthering the Suzuki Method. With the medium of the internet and Zoom, no longer do teachers have to gather locally in order to Research, even though in-person Research is still the best way. Until such times that Institutes and Workshops can be held again, Zoom can provide an effective way to meet and learn from each other. Teachers can reach out to friends to form groups and use the addresses in the current Membership Directory of Piano Basics which was just sent via email.

Anyone may view the recording made during the meeting by entering the following address:

<https://spaces.hightail.com/space/D5s01JOLUU/files>

No password is required and pdfs of the Piano Basics Membership Directory are also there.



Suzuki Piano Basics Teacher Research: Karen Huffman, Portland, Oregon (lower R) performing for critique by other teachers during Zoom meeting, June 16, 2020. Clockwise from upper L: Vicki Merley, Tucson, Arizona, Bruce Boiney, Louisville, Kentucky, and Karmalita Bawar, Richmond, Virginia.

The Age of Enlightenment

By Rae Kate Shen, Redlands, California

This unique time has certainly produced many triumphs as well as discouragement for me. I have had to learn new computer programming skills in order to teach online and also provide material for my college students that must be comprehensible and accessible for students who may be variously challenged. For someone accustomed to tinkering on a keyboard of a more musical nature, tinkering on a technical version has caused many sleepless nights, as I wonder how to score a hundred percent to make **“Ally” (an online program used by the colleges to grade mandated accessibility of materials created or uploaded by instructors)** happy. While some of this has been enlightening, it has also been pure frustration.

At the same time, unable to teach at my schools, my little house feels no longer like a home, but more like an IT office space. (Ugh, I cannot stand the mess of all these music books and tech tools strewn about!). Using both FaceTime and Zoom, these are only some of the Do’s and Don’ts I have so far discovered in the process:

Do:

1. Dress up each day as if you are going to teach outside your home. You will feel better, and get up on time.
2. Turn on “Original Sound” in Zoom meetings and teach your students how to do it too. **You can google “how to turn on original sound in Zoom” or “how to use music mode in Zoom”. There are many simple YouTube videos to instruct you**

on this. It makes the biggest difference in consistency of tone production. Unfortunately, it does not stop frame freezing or buffering at the most inconvenient times.

3. Drink lots of water to keep your vocal chords lubricated. Which leads to #4.

4. End lessons 5 minutes early. Not only does this allow you time to switch platforms, it also allows you to take a quick trip to the bathroom.

5. Have a notebook handy to keep notes on each student's weekly assignments. Also have duplicates of the students' music, a magnetic staff board and white board (or scratch pad) to be able to quickly draw a visual for any explanations needed, and any other visual aids you may need to help with your teaching, especially music reading.

6. Have a good book handy to read while waiting for the next student, or when there is not enough time between students to do some quick house cleaning.

7. Take a break (like a week or two) after several consecutive weeks of lessons to "online detox," clean out your mind, and recoup.

Don't:

1. Let the poor sound quality on Zoom get to you and make you lose your voice because you need to shout to be heard. Use the Chat feature at the bottom of the screen or get earbuds.

2. Stay cooped up in the house all day long: take short walk, pick up the mail, talk six-feet-apart with your neighbors, do some gardening, etc.

3. Give up hope that we will see our students in person again one day soon.

I am sure I will discover more Do's and Don'ts this Summer as we continue to shelter safely. **Unfortunately,** many necessary, personal Summer projects have been put on hold. However, I am learning to live with this, hopefully temporary, new norm. In the meantime, I have been able to Zoom or FaceTime with friends and family with whom I have not spoken in ages because of time constraints.

So, enjoy this special opportunity to slow down, connect again with others and get re-energized. As I tell my students daily, "stay safe, stay smart and stay well friends!"

Minuet in G
Zoom Edition

Bach? arr. Samantha Coates
@BlitzBooks

Con Internet

fff

simile

meno internet

senza internet

From Rae Kate in a moment of levity.