



Laurie's Music Studio
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Keynotes
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Simply Music Curriculum Overview

Have you downloaded and read the Curriculum Overview brochure on Simply Music's website? If not, I strongly encourage you to do so, even if you have been in lessons for some time. The brochure includes information on:

- background and goals of Simply Music
- what to expect each year in lessons
- how reading is introduced
- the structure of lessons and of practice
- choosing an instrument
- managing success

This helps you understand the framework in which the program operates. Take a look!

Calendar

Mar. 14 Daylight savings time begins

Mar. 20 First day of SPRING!

Mar. 22-25 Vacation week for Laurie's students

March Birthdays:

03 Julia Richardson

08 Jake Sindelar

19 Kate Williamson

20 Aiden Shackelford

Looking Ahead:

April 23/24 - tentative dates for Spring Event

Announcements

If you miss class

Just a reminder - if you must miss a class it is the student's or parent's responsibility to contact a classmate for the assignment and for any needed assistance learning new material.

Expansion

Watch for news in the upcoming months about my expansion into the bay east of the studio. The plan is to have the space ready to go by Sep. 1, 2010. I'm looking forward to having more space and a second studio!

Need to organize your student home materials?

A relative of my colleague Sherrine Fossler has designed and created canvas bags especially for Simply Music students. They have two compartments for books, several pen/pencil holders, and a pocket to hold CDs and DVDs. They are very sturdy and hold quite a few books. You can see them at the studio. If you'd like to purchase one, they are \$12 each.

Did you know. . .

Did you know that it has been proven that practicing the piano can make your brain bigger? Scientists at Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center in Boston report that in their study, the cerebellum of accomplished musicians was five percent larger than people who had not studied music. To add more size and power to your brain, add more piano practice time to your daily schedule beginning today!

Student Spotlight: Aedan Leahy

Aedan is a 2nd-grader at Joslyn Elementary school. He is 8 years old. His parents are Chad and Staci, and he has two younger brothers, Rowan and Kieran.

Aedan has many hobbies and talents. They include piano (of course!), legos, origami and video games. You can see an example of Aedan's origami skills at the studio - he made an origami piano for me!

Some other interesting facts about Aedan:

- If he could have one wish come true, it would be to have every lego set in the world!
- One of his LEAST favorite things is vegetables
- His favorite Simply Music song is Alma Mater Blues
- His favorite part of playing piano is that he gets to make up songs (he has a wonderful talent for composition)
- He has a dog named Cooper

Aedan's practice tip: Check off your playlist after every song you practice. (I couldn't agree more!)

Student Lyrics

(sung to The Pipes)

by Lucy Boever

Busy bees are buzzing by
the bluebells in the back

They zoom and zoom, they
buzz and buzz on errands
from the queen

They're on a most important
quest for pollen for the hive

Busy bees are buzzing by
the bluebells in the back

They zoom and zoom, they
buzz and buzz on errands
from the queen

by Matt DeCock

Scottish bagpipes playing
loudly on the lochs each day

Scottish bagpipes played by
children every single way

The sound they make
You'll want to take
A bagpipe home today

On the day I play my
bagpipes, Nessie don't
come near

SPRING . . . *almost here!!*

Featured Article

Investing in Strengths

by Glynnis Whitwer

from www.proverbs31.org

My 18-year-old son stepped on the stage, grabbed a guitar and turned to lead worship for the church youth group. He looked so at ease that I grinned thinking how far my previously shy and distracted son had come. It made me glad once more I hadn't listened to his piano teacher when Joshua was in first grade.

Even back then, Josh's love for music and innate abilities were obvious. The child could hear a song once and sing back the melody line with ease. So when his school opened a music academy, we saw it as the perfect opportunity to invest in what we believed was a God-given gift. Piano was the natural choice since we had an unused piano at home. We registered our little boy for the class, bought the level one book, and began classes.

Week followed week, and Joshua struggled to sit still long enough to practice. It took ongoing involvement on my part to redirect his focus back to the keys and book. But we saw it as an investment and enjoyed the fruits of his labor when he learned the simple songs. It came as a surprise, then, when his piano teacher stopped to talk with me after his lesson one afternoon. Perhaps I should have noticed the stressed look on her face and anticipated her next words, but I didn't.

"Mrs. Whitwer," she said, "you are wasting your money."

She went on to explain that in her opinion, Josh was just too distracted for lessons and wasn't getting anything out of them. We happened to disagree. It was obvious though, she was not the teacher for our son. After that experience, we could have been discouraged and quit. But we knew God had placed something unique in our son, and just because other people didn't see it, didn't mean it wasn't there. God gave my husband and me the responsibility to build upon what He had already started. Not just so Josh would love music, but so Josh would be ready to fulfill whatever God's plans were for him.

We continued to invest in Josh's love for music. In the early elementary years he sang in our church's children's choir. When we lived in North Carolina for

two years, he took a vocal class at a Christian music academy. When he was old enough to play in the school band, he started playing bass guitar in both the regular and jazz bands. In 7th grade he started playing bass on a youth worship band, and in 8th grade he learned electric guitar. Throughout those years we invested in occasional lessons, better equipment and lots of time with practice and concerts.

Only God knows where Josh will end up with his musical ability. He now leads a youth worship team at church, and has helped teach others beginning guitar so they can lead worship. I just know it's my job to invest in this strength for as long as I can, and not worry about the end result. And by investing in Josh's musical ability, it is my prayer that we have equipped him with other skills that will help him in the future, such as the disciplines of practice, perseverance, working with others, respect for authority, giving his best, and honoring God by using the abilities He has given.

Were we wasting our money back then? Absolutely not! We learned a valuable lesson: Sometimes it takes perseverance, creativity and patience when investing in a child's strength. Josh wasn't a musical prodigy, he occasionally forgot his guitar when going to band, and his dad and I had to remind him to practice. And yet the gift of music was inside my son waiting to be developed and used for God's glory. Helping to develop that skill was an act of obedience on our part.

What skills do you see waiting to be invested in and developed in your child, your spouse, or yourself?

There was an interesting ending to the piano lesson experience. At the final recital, about 25 kids took turns performing. Finally it was Joshua's turn. My little six-year-old walked up to the piano, sat down to play and carefully opened his music book. Not only did he play his piece beautifully, but he was the ONLY child who sang while accompanying himself – and he sang in perfect pitch.

All I could say was, "Praise God."



"If there is an underlying truth in the exclamation 'this noise is driving me mad', there may be an equivalent truth in its comic inversion, 'this music is driving me sane'."

~ Robin Maconie