



CSYM NewsNotes

November 2007



Saturday 24th November
CSYM AGM in ZBCH Vestibule
12:30-1:00 PM for all Parents
(All Children meet with Betty in Hall)
1:00-1:15 Chat & Tea & Biscuits

EVERYONE PLEASE COME AND
SUPPORT THE LIFE, AIMS &
ACTIVITIES OF CSYM!
WE NEED YOU!

Sunday 9th December 3PM
CSYM West Road Concert*

Featuring *Musica Hungarica*.
Celebrating the Hungarians and
Zoltan Kodaly's 125th Birthday

All friends and family invited!
Fliers available from Betty on Sat 24th

*See Dress Rehearsal Schedule
Attached Last Page of Newsletter

Former CSYM pupil **Chloe Martindale**, now an A-level student at Chethams' School of Music, will perform a concert in aid of Addenbrooke's Hospital at West Road Concert Hall, Wednesday 19 December from 7:30 PM. Chloe will play pieces by Beethoven, Chopin and Debussy, her friend Emily will perform on the Euphonium (look it up if you don't know!) and together they will play some "Christmassy things at the end" Please help support Chloe's concert, which promises some lovely music for a very good cause!

2008 DIARY DATES

Sunday April 20th

Annual CSYM Charity Concert
Theme: *Carnival of Animals* Featuring
Music by French Composers and original
compositions by students

Dr Suzuki Anniversary Concert:

Sunday June 29th

West Road Concert Hall
Hosted by CSYM

EPTA Piano Festivals (TBA)

SPRING TERM 2008

GROUP CLASS SCHEDULE

Jan 5, 12, 19*, 26

Feb 2, 9, 23

(Half-Term 16 No Classes)

March 1, 8*, 15th

*Group Class Concert Days

SPRING TERM 2008

PIANO TEACHING SCHEDULES

BETTY (10 week term)

January 7, 14, 21, 28

February 4, 18, 25

(Half-term Feb 11 No lessons)

March 3, 10, 17

STEPHEN

Jan. 5 Sat until Sat. 22nd March
(excluding Feb 11-17).

Sharzad's Lessons: Jan 5, 12, 26, Feb.
2, 9, 15, 23 March 1, 15, 22

Players' Club Class Concerts:

19 Jan & 8 March from 4-5PM

STUDENT NEWS

EPTA First Round winners **May Kershaw** and **Nathalie Kantaris Diez** have been invited to take part in a master-class at the Purcell School's brand new music block as part of the EPTA Teacher-Training Weekend in February 2008. This is a nice bonus to come out of their participation in last year's EPTA European Piano Teachers' Association competition – congratulations to May & Nathalie!

Noa Cebon, Sharzad Shini, and **Sam Wood** will participate in the 'Cambridge Young Musician of the Year' competition taking place over the next few weeks.

Congratulations to Sam Wood who got as far as the third round of the 'BBC Young Musician of the Year'. Only eight pianists from around the UK were selected to proceed onto the 4th round semi-final of the keyboard specific stage, so it was quite an achievement to get this far in the competition. Sam's success demonstrates how important it is to perform the same piece of music several times in concert, each time re-learning as if it were a fresh piece using slow practice, hands separately, returning to the score to reflect more on what is there. Since approximately 2 hours of music is needed for the competition in total, such projects (including diploma recitals) require many hours of practice on a long-term & consistent basis to have the repertoire at its best level of performance each time. A highly-demanding challenge and a great accomplishment – Well-done Sam!

From 1 October, many CSYM students have joined the CSYM Practice Club and taken on the "Every-Day Practice Challenge" with great success. Congratulations to **Alexander Mitchell, Mathilda Streets, Sarah Chang, Claudia Bisutti** (and unknown others?) for completing their first 30 consecutive days of piano practice, winning the Bronze Award Certificate. Keep going, and you will gain a Silver Award (60 consecutive days). After 90 days consecutive practice, you will become a member of the exclusive Gold Club whose members are invited to a year-end Pizza Party celebration with Betty & Stephen. If you haven't already, find out more details from Betty and sign-up now.

Early Christmas Shopping Suggestion! DVD 'Daniel Barenboim 50 Years on Stage' EuroArts 2050429 Cost: £30 Recital Programme celebrating 50 years of his performance career as pianist & conductor. Suzuki repertoire includes : Mozart K330 and Scarlatti K9, and Mozart K545. I greatly enjoyed this fantastic recital and recommend the whole programme without reservation. But listen in small sections as the whole concert lasts three hours!!!! Daniel Barenboim will perform Beethoven Sonatas in London early next year at the Southbank and I recommend going to hear this legendary artist in the music he is most associated with.

NEW....CSYM PARENT BLOG

From Betty

During this term I received some very positive and encouraging emails re: your success with daily practice. This email newsletter is the best way to share ideas and tips with everyone at once, without having to go to the trouble of having an on-line chat site! Please keep in touch with your own stories – parents really hold the key to practice success!



The first report comes from Karyn Barnes back in October. (mother of Lauryn age 8 in August) "I haven't made a big fuss about the daily practice chart with Lauryn because I have said to her that it is just part of the day – like brushing teeth – for her own good really. Her reward is her perfect performance and the pride/satisfaction she derives from playing well. It's taken a while to get to this point but I wanted to move away from working for 'rewards' only."

"Currently, I sit with her for all her morning practises Mon – Fri and work through everything on the list (when we don't do that, it is usually my fault because I've been up with Erin in the night or am ill – Lauryn does lecture me about waking up late and on several occasions has started practise without me!!)"

"But on Sat & Sun, we've agreed that if we have a good week of practise then she can practise on her own, calling me when she needs help – but I'm still listening. This is when she works on learning her new left hand piece with her ipod. She takes as much time as she wants. Sometimes she gives up, then goes back. Last Sun she worked at Aunt Rhody for a whole hour and then called me in to hear her play it. I haven't suggested listening is a substitute for practise – she's now believes that listening makes her practise easier, and interestingly, now that she has 'control' of her listening choices, chooses to listen to her pieces more than I used to have it on!"

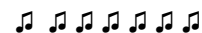
"You're right about the 'small chunks' and 'repetition' – that's why your practice booklet works so well. She has a visual cue for each task and because we have had 3 days of working on each task – in military style for want of a better description as we have to get through it all in 30 minutes – by the weekend, she knows what's expected."



This comes from Louise Mitchell, who has undertaken the Daily Practice Challenge with son Alexander, just age 6. "When I told Alexander we were going away this coming weekend to see friends and have an overnight stay he replied, "It's just a disappointment mummy, they don't have a piano so how will we do practice?" (We of course as we did practise on Saturday before Music Group as usual and then Sunday pm when we returned)

Alexander will be 6 soon (I have marked the practice chart with a star for his birthday so that he has a sense of future timing really. He said - "for a real treat on my birthday , can I practice all my favourite pieces?"

I can honestly say we did have a good routine for practice before but on occasion would miss perhaps a day a week , the significance of every day is really quite telling in Alexander and has further embedded the fact that piano is as much part of the day as eating breakfast , lunch and tea!



And this comes from Alison James, mother of Christopher (age 5/6?) "Just to let you know that our practise is going well this week and Christopher has been polishing Cuckoo by playing it 20 times a day! He is listening to French Children's Song at bedtime for a couple of hours each night and this has very much improved his grasp of it and he is happy to find the next note. He is very pleased when he works these out for himself, I am letting the CD do the work and not saying very much just letting him find out for himself so that he can enjoy the sense of his own achievement. "

NOTES FROM THE STUDIO

Re: The Daily Practice Challenge From Betty

I have been so very encouraged by the positive attitude towards practice that the CSYM Practice Club seems to have generated this term. I thank parents for that, because I know that several of you have made one or two very significant changes in your weekly schedules in order to help your child's learning. I am delighted for students when their learning is smooth, which is demonstrated each week by small but steady improvements in known repertoire, and regular progress in their new pieces. As one mother described, it is the sense of achievement overall which is the intrinsic reward for children, and even greater reward awaits as they continue to make steady progress in their skill development and reading, resulting in greater ability to play even more wonderful and sophisticated repertoire over time.

What happens when you DON'T practice every day? From my vantage-point in the studio,

1) Students who only experience 3-4 good practices each week cannot possibly be thoroughly-prepared and are therefore not confident with their playing OR they are forced to move very slowly through the repertoire as their skill development lags behind - which is a very de-motivating experience, especially for all our bright & capable CSYM children!

2) Lessons often need to be repeated, once, twice, maybe three times, because it takes so long for one assignment to be mastered. I'm sure you would all agree that this is deeply frustrating, not only for the student, but also for the parent and the teacher.

3) The worst thing of all is that these parents and children just don't look happy, which is the most disappointing thing to me as a teacher.

The problem is, practice of any kind has to do with SKILL DEVELOPMENT, which means repetitive physical training. After missing a practice or two, the next time it's time to practice,

- it's harder to get started,
- it's harder to remember what to do and how to do it accurately,
- it's harder to maintain the momentum of practice, because the practice tasks have increased in difficulty due to vague memories or confusion,
- more time (not less) is needed to complete the tasks, therefore concentration and patience may be at low levels

AND more chances arise for conflict between parent and student!

Parents, if you haven't yet, why not try a new way of thinking - organize your schedules for one month, and convince yourself that EVERY-DAY PRACTICE (AND LISTENING) IS VERY MOTIVATING and actually makes your job - and your child's job - much easier!