

Huntington Piano Lessons Newsletter

January 2013, by Helena Almberg

Quote of the month

"I find playing music to be one of my strongest personal therapies, not only from the state of being I can achieve while playing, but also from the energetic balancing and mood-enhancing effect on my mind, body and spirit throughout the day." Frank Fitzpatrick

From my Piano Bench



Yesterday, my daughter was asking me how motherhood changed my life. Oh girl! did it ever. That conversation got me thinking about another life changing event: music.

Barry Parker (in his book *"Good Vibrations - The Physics of Music"*) defined music as sound that is organized, with musical sounds that are for the most part, pleasant and pleasing to the ear. Ok, simple enough if you are thinking as being a mother is about having babies.

Luckily for my hurricane Sandy reading, Barry discussed further on how music creates emotion, it can make you cry, cringe, smile, feel exhilarated and relaxed. Just like motherhood, in my personal experience, music can also change your life.

The piano was invented during Mozart's life time, and when Mozart was asked to play on this new instrument, there was no turning back to old fashion harpsichord. From that time on, he played the piano and all his music was composed for the piano. Mozart liked the piano so much that he experimented with trying to improve it's mechanism.

So Mozart's life was changed by a piano and many lives were changed by Mozart's music and classical music.

Nowadays, most parents and children scramble to get on time for this and that activity. The end result

in my opinion, is that there is not really much time to get really good at one thing. No time.

That's where playing the piano first changed my life. Focus! I practiced at least one hour a day, every day. I looked forward to my practice. Of course, the more I practiced the better I got. My focus was on one thing (for one hour a day), and that didn't take time away from my friends or homework.

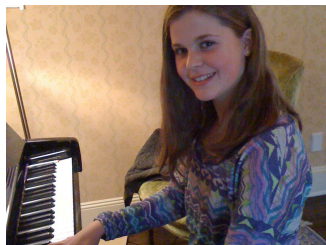
I loved showing off and playing things for my friends and especially for my father. He still loves to just sit there and listen to me playing, scales and all. It was a good feeling then to know that *"I **am** good at something"*.

Piano also taught me to be meticulous, precise, disciplined and how to deal with frustration. I also learned that there is no one else to blame for my failures and especially that the final successful result was all achieved on my own, (the best feeling ever!)

Later, when I started teaching, my life was changed by the piano again. It now provides me with means to survive, to use my patience skills, to give kids an opportunity to feel really good about being able to play the piano. Kids can feel proud that they are doing something that is difficult, takes time, patience, practice, dedication and most of the time sounds good. Maybe music can change your kids lives too. It's up to you and them.

Save the date for next live recital: March 17, 2013

Featured Students



Erin Wallace: has been studying piano since she was 6, but started taking lessons with me in 2009. Erin is a very eager piano student, she practices a lot, she has great facility in sight reading and an inner sense of rhythm that makes a metronome jealous. Her favorite sports are volleyball, basketball and soccer. She lived in London and Tokyo. Erin also plays the cello and is a great student in school. She believes in unicorns and her favorite color is purple. As you can tell working with Erin is always, to say the least, entertaining.



Lucas Cirlincione: Piano student since 2009. Lucas is 8 years old and attends 3rd grade at Washington Primary School. His ability to memorize music instantly is amazing. Besides being a great gymnast (in the last meet he won 5 medals and a trophy), Lucas is a great runner, he is very, very fast. He is also a happy new owner of a labradoodle puppy. Lucas loves to play piano, especially a piece that is really cool, such as Fur Elise, by Ludwig van Beethoven.

On a lighter note,

Thank you Nicholas Banai, Samantha McGloin, Emily Mavroudakos, Samantha Healey, Kate Sheran and Abbie Grogan and Alyssa Healey (team captain) for participating in the Music Link Foundation Playathon (www.musiclinkfoundation.org). The foundation raised \$2,000.00 for talented kids that cannot afford music lessons or instruments.

*“Let’s talk about the **The Nutcracker Ballet**”*

Every Sunday, at 4:50pm, WQXR 91.1 classical radio station, airs a short program about a classical composer or a piece. The program is funny and designed to get children’s interested in classical music. Needless to say, I became a big fan.

I downloaded one show, and at the beginning of each class, we sit together and listen to the podcast. By the way, when was the last time your kids “*listen*” to something that has no screen or video attached to it? Just sitting comfortable on a sofa or on the floor and listening to the show with the kids was a wonderful experience.

The link for the show on the Internet has also activities that are related to the featured piece or composer. If you are interested go to www.classicsforkids.com.

We started with the Nutcracker Ballet, everyone has heard of and most kids have seen it. It is staged everywhere and by amazing professional companies such as the New York City Ballet as well as ballet schools around Huntington.

A ballet has three main components; the story, the dancing and the music. The story was written by E.T.A. Hoffman, Alexander Dumas version made it suitable for a “stage play”. The dancing was choreographed by Lev Ivanov and the music written by one of the most famous russian composers, Peter Illyich Tchaikovsky. Commissioned by the director of St. Petersburg’s Imperial Theatre, the ballet opened on December 18, 1892, at St. Petersburg Theatre.