

# PIANO NOTES



Dear Piano Families,

I hope you had a wonderful half term holiday and feel rested. I've been thinking about creating a regular newsletter for a while and decided that I would start now as we go into the second half of this term. I hope to produce these twice every term and that they will be useful, informative and inspirational for you all.

This year is off to a wonderful start with a few new students joining the studio and lots of exciting things happening around the area. Several piano students have already been involved in, or signed up to perform at their school talent shows, music showcases, and in local events around the community. I love that we can all share and enjoy music this way, and that it's only February and we have so many performances underway!

I want to say a big 'thank you' to each of you for supporting music education and helping to make learning music such a wonderful experience for everyone. Happy Spring!

*Hannah*

## DATES TO REMEMBER

- **Sunday 24 March: Piano Master Class** A chance for students to play for each other casually and enjoy some fun and games. Sign up sheet will go out soon for time slots.
- **25 - 30 March: Watching Week** Parents invited into the lesson to watch. We will demonstrate different things we've been working on; technique, repertoire, games etc. you will probably be invited to join in for some fun!
- **1 April - 6 April: Last Week of Lessons for this Term**
- **Tuesday 23 April: Summer Term Starts**
- **Sunday 12 May: Recital Rehearsals**
- **Saturday 18 May, 12.30 PM: Student Piano Recital**, Godalming Baptist Church (Please note that this is earlier in the day than the Christmas recital.)

**THE PRACTICE TREE** *"The trees are coming into leaf. Like something almost being said" –Philip Larkin.* Our Music Tree is coming along beautifully! The goal of this practice challenge is to help students develop a habit of having really focused practice sessions. I love watching everyone develop this valuable skill. Thank you so much for helping with this and for getting involved both with making sure timers are set and keeping track of practice session in the practice diaries.



## Piano Pedagogy Sound Bite

**Reading Music Notes:** When pianists read music we rarely read *note-by-note-by-note*... Instead, we read in huge notational patterns. Although we do eventually know all the names of all the notes on the Grand Staff, it is impractical to learn by first memorising all the lines and spaces. Piano students learn to read by starting with two landmark notes (Treble G and Bass C) and start to practice recognising patterns in the score and how these should be played on the piano.

Look at this example of the *C Sharp Minor Prelude* by Rachmoninov to understand why it's impossible to read one note at a time and why it's so much more useful to understand patterns:



## What I've Been Up To...

- I have been having a wonderful time this term rehearsing and performing the *Valse and Romance* for 6 Hands by Rachmoninov. This piece was written for three pianists on one piano. The result is magnificent, almost orchestral. It's not often that we hear this type of sound produced on one instrument. We played this month at the Farnham Chamber Music Club and will perform again at the Godalming Music Festival in March.
- I will be spending the day in London next week to attend the Music Educators Expo. Amongst many things I will hear a talk by the pianist Lang Lang and attend a workshop about the Alexander Technique for musicians. I can't wait to bring some of this information back into our studies and development of healthy technique.
- Before we break for Easter I will spend the day at the Elena Cobb Star Prize Festival Teacher Training Day with Vera Kameneva, Tania Kozlova and Irina Gorin. Irina is one of the leading pedagogues in the Russian method, and am excited to meet her.



### Get Your Piano Tuned

As the weather turns warmer it is time to tune your piano. If you need a recommendation for a piano tuner I would like to suggest Value Piano Tuning: [www.value-piano-tuning.business.site](http://www.value-piano-tuning.business.site)

### PRACTICE TIP

As in the story of The Tortoise and the Hare, we should strive to be the hare when it comes to piano practice - steady, regular, just keep going. This produces amazing and long-lasting results.