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Our Mission:

To give every child the opportunity to nurture their innate musical abilities, guided by enthusiastic and compassionate teachers, without regard to financial circumstance or demographics, empowering each child to be a positive influence in the world.



An American Dream

Vice President/Grant Writer **Beth Ann Johnson**

Ebo and Abena fled Ghana for the USA, searching for a better, safer life for themselves and their three children. Making a new life in the USA was a lot of work. They were not sure what “the American Dream” was, but they knew that they wanted it for their children. When they heard about Jump Into Music (JIM) at a street fair, they enrolled the children in the program. They had one stumbling block: their chosen instrument was the piano which they did not own. Luckily, a JIM donor had a piano that needed a new home, and soon an upright piano was sitting in their home.

Over the past five years, it has been a joy to watch all three children progress in their lessons and watch the connections between the three of them grow stronger. Alphaeus has become a mentor to his younger sister Janelle, practicing with her at home, and the two have learned to play duets together.

Some of our kids don’t have great support at home. And we try to provide as much support as we can, even during the pandemic. But the support the members of this family provide each other inspires us. When Ebo decided his job as a long-haul trucker wasn’t giving him much time with his family, he took a lower paying local trucking job so he could be at home most nights with the kids. He is very proud of what they have accomplished so far: “Our children are everything. We want them to have the best chance possible to make their dreams come true.”

Lisa, the oldest child told us “My friends are surprised how well I can play. But I mostly play for myself because it gives me joy. I do not think I will ever be a professional musician; but after working with my younger siblings, I think maybe I will be a teacher. And I hope when I finish school, I can be a volunteer musician in the community and share music.”

Thank you to the Cann family for sharing their story; the family recently relocated to Texas, and we wish for all of them a bright future.



Fall 2021

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The 'Attitude' Antidote

In addition to being treasurer of Jump Into Music and one of our piano teachers, I'm also a pilot and flight instructor. This requires extensive training not just in aircraft, but also psychology, weather, mechanics, physics, navigation, and medicine. Safety is the undercurrent in all of this, and I find it noteworthy that the first thing addressed in pilot training (and brought up in every aspect of it) is "aeronautical decision-making" (read: critical thinking).

One of the most commonly referenced ideas in ADM (aviation is full of alphabet soup) is the group of "five hazardous attitudes of pilots" and the "antidote" to each. These attitudes are not unique to pilots, though, so below is an adapted version of each for music.

1. **Anti-authority:** "You can't tell me what to do!" or "The way I practice works just fine." or "Why does the right fingering matter so much?!" or "I'm practicing enough and don't need to do any more, thank you very much."

Antidote: Follow the rules; they are usually right.

2. **Impulsivity:** "I don't need to practice this piece — it's easy!" or "I'll just sightread this without scanning or counting off. It's no big deal." or "I'm going to jump from piece to piece instead of really learning something."

Antidote: Not so fast. Think first.

3. **Invulnerability:** "I can play this really fast really well, so I don't need to do any more slow practice before the recital." or "I can go from practicing 30 minutes a day to five hours a day overnight. No sweat!" or "I'm at a higher level than those students, so I don't need to practice as much."

Antidote: [Accidents, mistakes, and injury] could happen to me.

4. **Macho:** "I just finished Mary Had a Little Lamb and now I want to play Beethoven." OR "I decided to finish the theory for the whole book, even though we're only two songs in! Did I get it all right?"

Antidote: Taking chances is foolish.

5. **Resignation:** "No matter how many times I play this, it's never right." or "I can't improve, no matter what I do!" or "If only I were as talented as that other kid is."

Antidote: I am not helpless; I can make a difference.

While it would be too much to expect our students to fully understand these attitudes, it is especially helpful for us as teachers, parents, and supporters to recognize them- and to notice them in ourselves as much as we do in our young musicians. It is even more important that we know the antidotes to challenge these attitudes and shift our students' behavior and mindsets to those of critical thinking and growth, both musically and psychologically.

Hold the Applause
(but give us a hand!)

November 30, 2021

Donate to help pay for music lessons



GIVING
TUESDAY

Board President/Piano Teacher: Cheryl Drewes

One Fantastic Game

"As a child, you respond physically, tactically. You're delighted by sound, you're delighted by recognizing something. It's like hide and seek. Is it there? Is it not there? Is it this note? Is it not this note? It's one fantastic game." Yo-Yo Ma

These words by the world-renowned cellist brought me back to my own childhood, a vivid recollection of wondrous discovery, with all the senses fully engaged, not just in music, but in every experience that was new, exhilarating, and sometimes a bit terrifying: like diving into the deep end of the pool for the very first time. We've all been there because we were all children once, and I invite you to recall the delight of the senses in discovery in your own lives. For me, considering Yo-Yo Ma's words, these early memories emerge:

- **As a child, you respond physically, tactically.** At the beach with pail and shovel in hand, a slurry of sand and ocean water drip through my fingers to delicately adorn the emerging sandcastle.

- **You're delighted by sound.** The swish of the basketball, that by my calculated aim (or sheer luck), falls through the hoop for the score.

- **You're delighted by recognizing something.** The magic of chemistry revealed over time after kneading and forming loaves of bread, now risen perfectly and ready for the oven.

- **It's like hide and seek. Is it there? Is it not there?** The anticipation and surprise when the planted seed germinates and finally emerges from the warm soil, tender leaves facing the sun.

As a child learning how to play the piano and organ, all the senses were engaged at once, delight after delight, the hide and seek of anticipation and discovery, and yes, the fantastic game complete with puzzles, clues, and solutions toward rising to the next level! My biggest thrill was to learn that chords had names, were organized in a hierarchy, and ordered in function. Suddenly, not only could I play, but I could also compose. It was like discovering gold overlaying the simultaneous delights of the physical, aural, visual, and interpretive world of music.

One more early memory gleaned from Yo-Yo Ma's words: **Is it this note? Is it not this note?** As a child, finding the right note was often a mystery, and as I tell my students today, it requires a detective's mind, always looking ahead, always examining closely. By the time I was in high school, I began exploring modern music, encountering the unfamiliar and unconventional. Now less about detective work, Yo-Yo Ma's words remind me that I once thought this note was jarring, and that note was out of place. Thankfully, perceptions change, musicianship matures.

I don't know the original source of Yo-Yo Ma's observations about childhood learning. Was he drawing on the memory of his own childhood during an interview? Was it an anecdote within a lecture for music educators? From wherever it came, his words speak wisdom that inspires the continued journey. Thank you for helping us bring this journey to children, especially those in need, so that they, too, may experience the sheer delight of music!

"It's like hide & seek;
Is it there? Is it not there?"

