

ten thousand stars studio

*I'd rather learn from one bird how to sing
than to teach ten thousand stars how not to dance.*

-e.e.cummings

Newsletter Spring 2008

As you certainly know, I do much of my work from home. Some days I love it; some days I hate it. True, I have a personality that is well suited for working from the comfort of my living room: usually I don't have problems with motivation in attacking the pile of music needing to be learned, or facing the computer and working on another article or essay. The television is not much of a temptation. I like being able to throw in a load of laundry between practice sessions, or to water plants in between rehearsals. There are always dishes that need washing in my sink or a pile of clothes that can be folded if a student is five minutes late. Generally this ease of working and playing, living and maintaining one's existence is an easy balance.

I've been thinking about this lately, because more and more there are little to no boundaries between my work and play. Just as I don't don on a suit and "go" to work, I am always juggling multiple roles: I am musician and writer; teacher and wife; friend, daughter and

sister. All of these so-called labels have no schedule. I am not a musician only when I am performing on the concert stage, or a teacher only when I have a student in front of me. Instead, the older I get and the more my home life and my work life are interchangeable, the more flexible these roles become.

There are two sides to this equation, of course. For all that is good about my life being so seamlessly integrated, there is a downside of not ever being able to escape the pull of work calling me from the living room. I have learned that it takes actually leaving town to truly feel like I have time off. I have discovered that while I might be fine "working" all the time, my husband is less fine with it, and with much trial and error, we are finding ways to balance work life with home life in ways that we can both tolerate.

I tell you all of this because, in an ideal world, I think having seamless identities is a good thing and something I would wish for my students: that they would

see themselves equally as soccer players *and* pianists, poets *and* swimmers, fifth graders *and* composers. I wonder if I adopted the identity of a pianist early on because I started playing the piano at age four—so that now, some thirty-plus years later I can't remember a time when I didn't play the piano. Of course, not every child will start the piano at the age of four, nor should they, but the fact that I grew up knowing I was a pianist was a gift. I have my mother to thank for that.

To that end, I encourage you to look for ways to make the music-making in your house more integrated, more seamless, more an easy part of the family life, versus adopting the attitude that making music only happens when we practice. Sure, I want the practicing, don't get me wrong, but more than that I want to cultivate the idea that we are raising musicians who make music, easily, seamlessly, effortlessly, throughout their lives. This year I want to actively seek out more ways to expand our music-making opportunities. I will be assigning more duet playing — with parents and children, with siblings, with play dates both in and out of the studio. I want to find chances for students to begin accompanying other instruments — maybe siblings, maybe friends, maybe other studio members who have begun playing the trumpet or the violin. I have been talking with the director of the UNM Children's Chorus about the possibility of some older students accompanying the choirs. Actually, the possibilities are endless. There are a million ways to make music not just something we do in lessons and in our reserved practice time, but something that is a more integrated part of who we are.

In this world where everyone has an iPod in their back pocket, the act of making music yourself is becoming an old-fashioned concept. Matt often brags that he has live music daily at his house (I think sometimes this is said rather sarcastically when thinking of the hours of lessons and practicing he endures daily.). You, too, are blessed with live music in your homes—celebrate it!

Here's to another year of music-making!

Piano Tuners

Pianos need regular tuning. Nothing makes my skin crawl more than a student who looks at me and says, "Miss Amy, my piano doesn't sound anything like this." Yikes! At the very least, tune pianos once a year—twice is ideal.

Recommended piano tuners:

Jean Luc Matton: 259-2368
Fred Sturm: 345-2154

Contact Information

You can now find the semester calendar, most current newsletter, and studio policies on line at:

www.tenthousandstarsstudio.net

Also, make a note that my e-mail address is changing to:

amy@tenthousandstars.net

Spring Payment Schedule

You either can pay the semester total at the beginning of the semester or divide into five equal payments. All monthly payments are due on the first lesson of every month. There are twenty lessons per semester—17 private lessons, 3 performance classes. Payments received after the 10th of the month are subject to a \$25 late fee.

Semester tuition:

Monthly payment:

Spring 2007

January 7, 2008--Semester begins

January 26-27--Performance classes

February 22-24--Performance classes

March 24-28--Spring Break. No lessons.

April 18-20--Performance classes

April 25-26--PEP

May 3--Spring Recital, 7pm. St. John's UMC

May 12-15--Make-up lesson week

May 19-June 1--Spring semester recess

June 2--Summer session begins

Performance Classes

In order to better accommodate busy schedules, performance class times in the spring semester will be as follows (Note calendar for dates):

***High school group** will meet on Sunday evenings from 6:30-8:00pm.

***4th-6th grades** will meet on Friday afternoons from 4:45-6:00pm.

***Kindergarten-3rd grades** will remain on Saturday mornings from 9-10am.

Note: On Saturday, January 26th, all K-6th grades will be holding a special performance class with composer Dennis Alexander. 4th-6th grades will begin at 1:30; K-3rd grades will join at 2:15. Reception with the parents will be at 3:00.

The high school group will meet on Sunday, January 27th, from 6:30-8:00.

Make-up Policies

Remember that students are allowed **one** make-up lesson per semester. Any other additional missed lesson will **not** be made up. Unless otherwise arranged, all make-up lessons will take place during the last week of the semester—May 12th-19th.