

# *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*

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Winter 2009

It has been snowing all day. I love these wintry kinds of days, these cozy stay-inside kinds of afternoons. It makes me quiet and reflective—a welcome change from the otherwise frantic pace of my overstuffed life. I find myself today taking stock a bit, both in general and specific ways. It has been a full, wonderful year in the studio.

In January, composer Dennis Alexander taught performance classes to the younger students. In April, many students participated in the local PEP event, getting excellent ratings. In May, we held our spring recital; the final performance for several students who were graduating or moving on to other things. In October, six students participated in the Honors competition, four winning third place. In November, we hosted composer and pianist Ken Medema for our performance classes and had our fall studio recital.

It isn't just those big events that make up our year, but all the little things that have shaped and challenged us musically.

More students are doing sight-reading assignments every week, checking out music from my sight-reading library, making a drastic difference in their music-reading skills. Performance classes are proving to be more valuable than ever, students performing at a higher and higher level and giving each other support and encouragement that I love to see. In general, students are playing better and more confidently, committing themselves to daily practice and tackling harder and harder music. There are a thousand big and small success stories every week.

And so, in these final days of 2008, I am proud of what we have accomplished, and look forward to the year ahead. Happy holidays to you all---

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## ***Contact Information***

All calendar, newsletter items, and policy information can be found on my website:

[www.tenthousandstarsstudio.net](http://www.tenthousandstarsstudio.net)

I also write a column for a national music journal *American Music Teacher*, which has a link to a blog I write about music and teaching. You might be interested in checking this out from time to time, as stories and essays about my students (with names changed, of course, to protect the innocent) show up now and again. Specifically, you might want to look under Nov 2008 for the essay I wrote about the performance classes with Ken Medema. There are some wonderful photos. (If you are interested in copies of any of the photos, let me know. Also, I have many more pictures than I put up, so there may be one of your child in my files if you want me to look. ) My blog can be found at:

[www.tenthousandstars.net](http://www.tenthousandstars.net)

Finally, you can always email me at:

[amy@tenthousandstars.net](mailto:amy@tenthousandstars.net)

or call: 573-5121.

## ***Piano Tuners***

If you are not tuning your piano at least once a year, you should be. A tuned instrument is not only more pleasant to listen to, it's healthier. I cringe when I hear students say, "Well my piano doesn't sound anything like this."

Recommended tuners:

Jean-Luc Matton 259 2368

Fred Sturm 345 2154

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## ***Spring Payment Schedule***

You either can pay the semester total at the beginning of the semester or divide into **five equal** monthly payments. All monthly payments are due on the first lesson of every month. There are twenty lessons per semester—16 private lessons, 4 performance classes. Payments received after the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month are subject to a \$25 late fee.

Semester tuition:

Monthly payment:

## *Calendar Spring 2009*

January 5--Winter Semester Begins

January 23-25—Performance Classes\*

February 20-22—Performance Classes\*

March 13-15—Performance Classes\*

March 23-27—Spring Break; No lessons

April 17-19—Performance Classes\*

April 24-25—PEP contest

April 30—Last Day of Semester

May 2—Spring Recital; 7pm

May 4-7—Make-up Lessons

\*All regular Friday afternoon, Saturday morning, and Sunday evening performance classes

NOTE: I am ending the semester earlier than usual this year. This is because my sister has informed us that she is getting married May 9 in NYC. I will take my semester break then, and most likely begin the summer semester during the last part of May.

## *Make-up Policies*

It seems a good time to review my make-up policies. Because I teach a full load, I cannot do make-ups on request. You are allowed one free, no questions asked make-up lesson, which will take place during the **make-up week** at the end of the semester: **May 4-7**. If you know ahead of time that you will miss a lesson, you are welcome to ask if I have any openings at any other time that week—if I do, I'll be happy to give you that spot. But chances are great that my schedule will be full and overflowing, and then your missed lesson will need to be taken during make-up week. Only **ONE** make-up lesson is given every semester during make-up week. Any other lessons you missed will be **NOT** be made up. Of course, I will make-up any lessons I miss. There are absolutely **NO** make-up lessons for missed performance classes. You are welcome to switch to another class during a performance class weekend, or even take two classes during a different weekend if you miss a performance class, but there are no private lessons substituted for missed performance classes.

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## *Home Practice*

One of the inherent challenges of music lessons is that a week goes by between contact with a teacher. This means that in order to make any progress, a student has to learn to be his or her own teacher at home. You can help with this, regardless of your musical experience. Students who have the best home environment make the most progress. Here's what you can do to ensure that your student has the best chance to reach his or her potential:

\*Pianos need to be regularly tuned and kept in decent repair. And if students need height under their feet in lessons, they will need this same height support at home.

\*Practice time should be sacred; students can't be expected to practice well with

competing noise from a television or computer games.

\*Students should practice a minimum of 5 days outside of their lessons; the day immediately following the lesson is the most important, as the new material learned will be the freshest.

\*Regardless of your musical abilities, you can support your child's practice. Ask them questions about their assignments, request that they play for you several times a week, go over their assignments with them to make sure they are not forgetting or misreading something.

Small things make a huge difference in home practice. You might be surprised what a difference even spending 5 or 10 minutes with your child's piano practice during the week might make. Music lessons are a huge investment of time and money---it is worth the extra effort to get the most out of your investment.