

WDSS NOTES

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Ms Gill and Ms Sandy's students gather to celebrate!



Perpetual Motion Cello-bration

This weekend, the cello studios got together for a Perpetual Motion Cello-bration. Students rewrote Perpetual Motion to include a tricky technique in their current piece. For example, Tavia is learning Long Long Ago Variation which uses the bowing slur two, hook two so she played Perpetual Motion with that bowing and in the key of C Major. Evelyn is playing Minuet in G by Beethoven which has a tricky shift up to 5th position so she learned Perpetual Motion up an octave to practice that shift.

We had lots of fun sharing our Perpetual Motion variations, playing the Cellist's National Anthem (French Folk Song) in 4 part harmony, eating pizza, and voting for categories such as Most Creative Idea and Most Interesting Rhythm. It was a great afternoon spent in community and a good reminder to use your review pieces to help you learn new pieces. Try it out and share your own Perpetual Motion variation with your teacher!

Happy Practicing!

An Interview with Maddie Knight and Ms Lannie

What made you want to play violin?

When I was about 8, I saw a fiddler with a top hat on stage at a theatre show in Boulder. I thought it was exciting which surprised because this rejected my former idea that instrumental music was not interesting. I immediately asked my mom if I could learn to play.

What kept you inspired to polish a lengthy, advanced piece like Accolay for the solo recital last semester?

Ironically, one day I was paging through unfamiliar pieces in Barbara Barbara Volume 3 at home and started to play through Accolay since I was curious about it— and then later that evening I went to my Front Range Youth Symphony rehearsal where I noticed one of the advanced violinists was actually playing this piece as they warmed up for rehearsal! From that moment it felt like it was meant to be for me to learn this intriguing sounding piece and I became intent on learning the whole thing!

How did you overcome specific challenges in polishing this complex recital piece?

Using the metronome was essential at home in order to accurately play triplet rhythms with tricky bowings that go over the bar lines. Also I was much more prepared to collaborate with our accompanist Mr Evan at the piano coaching by doing the following exercise during a section of repeated triplets. I temporarily removed the repeated notes and only played the melody notes, much like that section from Vivaldi A Minor 1st mvt at the bottom of the first page. In other words, in note-y passages, highlight the most important notes which bring out the melody! It came out great eventually.

Tips to my fellow violinists who want to get better:

Find something you enjoy in the music. For instance, do you like the character or story of the piece? Certain sections? Do you like certain keys? Personally I'm drawn to A Minor. I like pieces that have very contrasting sections, too! Also I recommend taking note what pieces you love the sound of at our recitals, or elsewhere, so you can look forward to playing it.

Thank you Maddie and Ms Lannie!



'If children hear fine music from the day of their birth and learn to play it, they develop sensitivity, discipline and endurance. They get a beautiful heart.'

Shinichi Suzuki

Concert Clothes Exchange



WDSS Group Class Concert and Recitals are coming up and there is a dress code. Concert Dress is DRESSY white on top and black on the bottom. Shirt may be short sleeved but NOT a golf shirt. Pants which have belt loops should be worn with a belt. Please try to have the children BLACK wear dress rather than athletic shoes. Long ties with a dress shirt is appropriate. We can help each other. Please check your closets! As your children grow, consider collecting their too small black shoes, belts, white shirts/blouse and black pants or skirt and donating them for others to wear. If you have borrowed from the Concert Clothes Exchange, please return what you no longer need. You may give the donations to your teacher or the Concert Clothes box which is usually stored under the desk in the Ms Crystal's studio .

Thank you to those who have dropped items off to the **Concert Clothes Exchange:**

Important WDSS Dates Correction!

May 1 Wednesday 5:00pm Group Class Concert Call time 4:30pm St James Sanctuary

May 6-10 Piano Rehearsals scheduled through out the week. Ask your teacher about your time.

May 18- Saturday WDSS Spring Solo Recitals 10:30am,12:15pm, 2:00pm, 3:45pm

100 Days of Practice Challenge!!!

by Eli Pouliot

Hi everyone, my name is Eli and I used to study with Ms. B and Annie! I'm currently studying with Alex Gonzalez at CU Boulder while I pursue a bachelor of music. Some of you may have been following my 100 days of practice challenge on Facebook or Instagram. As of writing this, I am more than halfway through! "Challenge" is somewhat of a misnomer – to me, it is a time to discover myself as a player and my habits. By recording 100 days of practice, I watch myself go through the highs and lows of practice. Some days that means rest, being too busy, or simply forgetting. Other days, it is inspiration, excitement over newly acquired skills, or a minuscule achievement. The obligation to record and have something to post helps me to get over the initial activation energy required to practice. I also love to share the reality of practice with others as I too am inspired by great artists like Hilary Hahn as well as my own peers.

I used to be a chronic under practicer (Don't tell Ms. B or Annie!). Lessons and school orchestra were often the only times I touched the violin in a week, and practice almost always felt boring unless I truly enjoyed the piece. I loved to play, perform, and especially loved playing with friends in ensembles, but practice felt lonely and like a chore. I didn't really know why I loved the violin. Going on this practice journey as an adult, has helped me to find joy in the "boring" parts of music. Recording helps me to question: "Is practice just fixing things until I can play everything through? Can it be something more?"

I have found that my focus improves while I'm on camera. I become a more critical listener, as if an invisible audience is asking: "Is that what you want?" These questions without judgement, pure observation works wonders. I know I want to practice this part slowly for more resonant intonation, or I know that I want to practice consistently nailing that shift.

Recording can also be disilluioning. Our listening skills are much better when we are not simultaneously playing, so intonation, pulse, sound quality, unintentional phrasing, tension, and habits our teachers easily see, become much more obvious. Most maladaptive habits are easily fixed by bringing awareness to them.

Sometimes I record moments of great joy, nailing a passage or falling in love with the music, other times I record lots of frustration. Most often, there is a mix of both. I love to see the trends in my practice, seeing my overall improvement (or lack thereof) as I change as a player, practitioner, and human. Watching my earliest videos from a few years ago makes me proud of both what I could do then, and what I have made possible now.

You should consider 100 Days of Practice! It can be whatever you want. You don't have to share recordings, or even record at all. You can work on solely one piece, only scales, or multiple instruments. Perhaps you truly want to challenge yourself to practice 100 days straight, or just monitor over 100 days. It is half public accountability, and half personal intent. Embark on a journey to experiment and discover what makes you tick, and how to harness that to accomplish what you want. The best part is sharing that process with a supportive community. In my own experience, I've become more patient, critical, less judgmental, and passionate about practice because of it.

I'm always happy to answer questions and have discussions about practice and music! Have fun practicing, and hope to see some of you give it a shot! Follow my progress on instagram: https://www.instagram.com/poulioteli_music/?hl=en Or friend me on Facebook!



'Practice makes permanent. Take care to practice tricky places slowly and mistake-free from the beginning' from *Six Practice Hacks* by Ms Sandy

Luna and Stella LOVE Live Concerts

Luna (4) and Stella (2) love to listen to music. In the car, they take turns asking for their favorite music. They like Frozen, Katy Perry, and other popular music, but Stella often asks me to play Russian dance, the fight with Rats by Tchaikovsky, Polovtsian dances by Borodin, Waltz No. 15 by Brahms, and more. Luna's requests are the Four Seasons for cello octet by Piazzolla, Horn Concerto K495 3rd movement by Mozart, Nocturne by Borodin, etc...

Since Luna was a year old, we often took her to live music such as chamber music, symphony and piano solos and more.

When Luna was two, she was so into the Four Seasons by Vivaldi. She always pretended to be a conductor or violinist using chopsticks.

Because music is very important in our lives, we want to be around music, and want to enjoy live music. If our daughters don't like being around music, I don't want to force them to do it, but seeing them, they are so flexible and their hearts and brains are like sponges, they want to know more about the beauty of the universe!

In summer, we take them outside to live concerts. These concerts are more casual and it's wonderful to see them to dance around.

Ballet shows are a favorite. After we saw the Nutcracker, they were dancing with Tchaikovsky songs all the time.

In our family, we go to the Colorado Symphony almost every month. Last season, Stella was one, so we were not able to stay for the whole show, but this year, we stay there the whole show with joy. We often go to Starbucks after the show. While they are eating cake pops, we talk about the show. I quickly download those songs they just heard on my phone. On the way back home in the car, we listen to them and usually the girls say "Oh, they just played this song!" If they like it, I put it on my Favorites playlist. They were crazy about Borodin after we went to the Colorado Symphony/NYC Ballet in January. They didn't want to leave and Stella asked for more! After that, we talked about Borodin and searched for more songs by him.

When we attended to the WDSS faculty concert, Luna and Stella loved the Sonata for Two violins Op.56 second movement by Prokofiev.

It is so nice that the number of their favorite songs increase every time we go to a live concert. Luna often tries to play a new favorite phrase on her violin or piano. She tries to find the note by her ear. If I try to help her, she usually gets upset. I've learned that I shouldn't disturb her time connecting with music.

The energy, spontaneity, and raw emotions conveyed during a live show can be a powerful and memorable experience for us.

We're grateful that we live with music and look forward to experiencing more in the future.



Luna and Stella

Have a wonderful Spring Break!