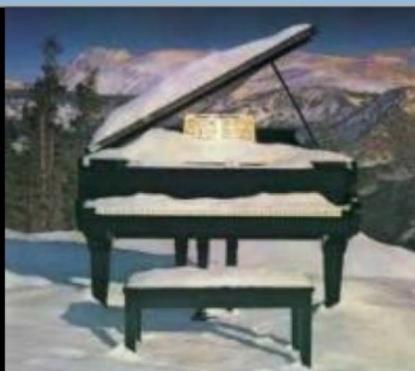


The Soundboard

A Newsletter for Music Educators
Winter Edition



Think Out-of-the-Box and Off-of-the-Bench Autism and Music Series

by Sevy Phalangas

I appreciate being invited to reflect on my experience in teaching piano to students on the autism spectrum. I hope that I can impart some meaningful insight on a subject dear to my heart.

I have come to attribute the rewards I have gained and success I have seen with my students on the autism spectrum to my out-of-the-box and off-of-the-bench approach to piano/music instruction which I was already using, especially for young beginners. Working with children in different areas of the spectrum, as well as with other types of learning challenges, has not been about working in a separate world of techniques. It, in fact, has been about reinforcing personal philosophical principles on teaching and learning, magnifying areas that need to be isolated and addressed in order to effectively deliver to all students the different layers of music instruction at the cognitive level, motor-skill level, and expressive

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Welcome to our Winter Edition of *The Soundboard* Newsletter

Happy New Year!

In this issue, we bring you a new article submitted by piano teacher, Sevy Phalangas. In our *Marketing Your Teaching Studio* segment, Sonja Lynne offers ideas on utilizing **Networking** to enhance your teaching studio. Also, Eric Benson will update you on the latest news from the MTNA, PMTA and the DSMTA in his series entitled *Features for Teachers*. We hope you enjoy this issue!

level. Working with children on the spectrum has enlightened me to hone and intensify best practices for teaching anyone. This first article holds an overview of the philosophical and practical subjects I intend to cover in more detail in the upcoming articles on this series.

1. Without meaning to put up the peace signs and sound pretentious - all of what you do as a mentor must come from the spirit of love and faith that everyone can learn, deserves to learn, deserves your best as a mentor, and deserves to be guided to feel the reward of accomplishment – often in ways he never knew or expected. *Some teachers and programs are too rigid and linear, and fail to recognize that teaching is not only about showing the student, it is also about finding the student and learning how to help him find his way – holding his hand along the way.*
2. A successful teaching approach also recognizes the need for spontaneity – how to accommodate children’s needs to move *off of the bench*, to accommodate their love of interaction and their shorter attention span.
3. Dealing with the multitude of concerns of parents with autistic children emphasized the importance of taking a holistic approach to teaching any student. It is important to keep antenna up for parent sentiments, temperaments, any family needs or issues and either explicitly address them with parents/student or implicitly direct one’s lessons to embrace any challenge.
4. I feel blessed to be able to use music as a tool to not only enrich, but improve and strengthen people’s lives. So much research has helped to validate and quantify the value of music education on many different levels. It is a perfect tool for autistic children because of the many ways we are *wired for sound*.
5. By the same token it is important to acknowledge with every student that, initially, we are all *wired to fail* in the playing of an instrument on a neurological and physical level. Showing simple examples to highlight this fact helps children understand why they are struggling and helps nurture patience to “*re-wire themselves*”, practice and keep growing in their music development.
6. Words matter. Through the years I have developed a dictionary’s worth of vocabulary, which is kind,



Piano Master Class **Eugene Albuлесcu, Steinway Artist**

Four Outstanding Students will Perform!

**Sunday
February 10,
2013
2:00 pm**

Eugene Albuлесcu is an award-winning performer who combines a blazing technique with artistic integrity and originality to express musical emotions at their most personal level. Mr. Albuлесcu is on faculty at Lehigh University.



**Steinway Recital Hall
Jacobs Music of
Delaware**

There is no charge for this event.

understanding, and forgiving, but still addresses the demand for high standards – high standards for everyone, including those children on the spectrum. I have also developed symbols to cut through the symbols and simple cartoon-like pictographs that immediately get a complicated technical or intangible point across – I've been using my own P.E.C. and emoticon systems before those were defined!

7. Finally I would like to emphasize my mantra – *teach toward a smile*. A smile reveals a wealth of information. A smile reveals the “A-HA!” moment of revelation. It reveals a level of comfort and trust. It is a spontaneous reflex for showing pride in oneself. It is the affirmation of finding value, meaning, and joy in what we are doing.

The next article in this series is entitled “*Wired for Sound.*”

Editor's Note: *If you have a subject you would like to write about in a future newsletter, please contact us.*



Features for Teachers

Interesting News from the World of Music Education
by Eric Benson

Music Teachers National Association: The Best Investment You Can Make as a Teaching Professional

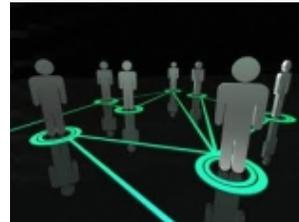
Since 1876, Music Teachers National Association (MTNA) has been the undisputed leader in empowering the music-teaching professional. Their mission is to advance the value of music study and music making to society and to support the professionalism of the independent and collegiate studio music teachers.

As a board member of the Delaware State Music Teachers Association (DSMTA) these past few years, I have seen firsthand the benefits of joining MTNA from the local, state and national levels.

At the local level the Northern and Southern Delaware Music Teachers Associations offer student recitals, educational workshops for teachers and opportunities to make new friends. In February, the SDMTA will hold their annual Piano Marathon in Dover.

The Delaware State Music Teachers Association holds their Annual

**Limited Seating.
Reservations are
required.
RSVP by calling
302.478.1888,
[Email](#), or [Facebook](#).**



Marketing Your Teaching Studio

Networking

In our last issue, we talked about creating business cards for your teaching studio. The next step is to go out and meet people! Going to concerts, master classes and local events is a great way to start the process of making inroads in the local music educator scene. Joining the Delaware State Music Teachers Association, Pennsylvania Music Teachers Association and other groups that support your work is a wonderful way to meet people.

Networking happens at its finest when it's win-win. Meaning that you are able to offer something tangible to someone else, and they, in turn, are able to help you at some point. It could be a referral of a new student, a request to bring refreshments to an event, and so forth.

Networking is about building relationships and creating

Convention each November. The Convention features nationally acclaimed clinicians such as Helen Marlais and Marvin Blickenstaff. The day concludes with the MTNA Competition Winners Recital.

DSMTA held their second Piano Marathon to benefit water well drilling in Africa also in November. DSMTA also organizes and conducts Festivals for the members and their students. The Piano Ensemble and Vocal Festivals are in February. The Theory Festival is in March and the Solo Piano Festival will be in April. For more information about dates and to see photos of the Convention and Marathon go to www.delawaremusicteachers.org.

MTNA provides many services from National Student Competitions, Professional Certification for teachers, and the MTNA Foundation Fund which provides funding for grants for teachers, students and local associations. Educational opportunities are available for members through the National Conference such as workshops and seminars which cover all areas of music teaching.

Visit the MTNA website www.mtna.org for more information concerning membership and benefits.

Here's to a Happy and Prosperous 2013!
Eric



STEINWAY & SONS

Steinway Factory Tour

Many teachers have asked us to organize another trip to the Steinway & Sons Factory in New York City. We are working with Steinway on a date for sometime in the Spring. The opportunity to tour the factory is a memorable event for anyone but especially for those of us who study or teach piano. Teachers love going as it helps them know what goes into manufacturing the hand-made Steinway pianos, and for students it can be a trip that they'll remember for the rest of their lives. There is a small cost of \$45. involved because we rent a bus, provide the tour and lunch. We'll be in touch soon with more details and the date that Steinway can accommodate our group from the Delaware region.



Looking

relationships and creating business opportunities. But it doesn't happen if you don't get out there! Everyone can use a little help sometimes. You'll be surprised how appreciated your colleagues will be at your next event when you offer to do something special. This is networking! This is helping everyone achieve their goals - as a team.

And when you're meeting someone new - don't forget to give them your business card!
- Sonja Lynne

Essex PIANO
DESIGNED BY STEINWAY & SONS*



Product Spotlight Essex EUP-123

The Essex Pianos, designed by Steinway & Sons, offer our customers a well-built piano at affordable pricing. Their 48" upright piano is a workhorse of an instrument that offers beautiful and rich tone along with all the features you expect from an upright piano. This piano offers you and your students a great sound in an upright piano. The piano has a full tone with a wonderful dynamic range. The middle pedal offers a mute for playing quietly. It's available in



Looking Forward to 2013!

quality, the finishes in
polished ebony, satin ebony
and polished mahogany.
Please contact us for current
pricing.

We are looking forward to hosting many events in the upcoming year. Among them are master classes, artist recitals, and workshops. Also, this year, we celebrate the 160th Anniversary of Steinway & Sons. It was 1853 when [Heinrich Steinway](#) started the company with his sons. We are working on a celebration of this historical and momentous event.

Our goal is to enhance your teaching by offering events that are meaningful to you and your students. We look forward to seeing you at some of our future events.

Bruce Cohen, Eric Benson, and Sonja Lynne.

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