



SASKATOON TALENT EDUCATION  
**SPRING 2017**

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**“Any child can be developed, it depends on how you do it”**

**Dr. Shinichi Suzuki**

Last year, I stated in my 2015 Spring Newsletter, it was my forty-third year of teaching, however, my math was a little off. It took a surprise gift of 100 promotional pens to set the record straight. It turns out the 2015/2016 term was my forty-fourth year of teaching, which makes 2016/2017 my forty-fifth.

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Forty-five years seems like long time, but it really doesn't feel like it to me. I enjoy working with my students so much that most-often, teaching doesn't seem like work. There is the occasional rough day, but isn't that just part of life?

Over the years, I have had the opportunity to work with literally thousands of students. Through them I have witnessed and experienced many things, and they have taught me much, enriching my life and shaping me as a teacher.

#### MY STUDIO HAS BEEN HOME TO MUCH HUMOR

There was the cute little girl who insisted on calling me “Mrs. Pianowich”.

How about a cherub-like curly-haired three-year-old boy who loudly announced to me, as I knelt beside him at the piano, “Excuse me. I have to flatulate and possibly have a bowl movement!”, (in exactly those words).

Then there was the little fellow who I barely managed to catch in mid-air, as he stepped off the elevated stage at the Saskatoon Public Library after a recital performance.

My sweet little daughter and her best friend giggled so hard, they couldn't perform at a recital.

Once, a father caused myself and all group lesson members much concern, as he collapsed while attempting to stand up after a class – it turned out both of his feet had fallen asleep.

Just a week ago, a little guy stroked my arm, exclaimed “All your hair fell off your head and ended up on your arm!”.

I once told a little girl I could pull out her tooth by attaching a string from it to my adjustable piano chair and retracting the seat. She declined at the time, but I received a perplexed phone call from her mother the following day to tell me the girl now wanted me to perform the extraction.

## MY STUDIO HAS EXPERIENCED MANY HEART-WARMING MOMENTS

As a young teacher, I taught in Viscount, SK once a week during school hours. One student, a young girl, always had great difficulty playing her pieces. She insisted she practiced every day. After weeks of watching her suffer, it finally dawned on me to ask her about her piano. Was it full-sized? When was the last time it was tuned? Could it be tuned?

Her answer was a tearful one. Since parents could not afford a piano, her fashioned a cardboard keyboard for her. She practiced on it every day, but had no idea how her pieces were supposed to sound. I was heart-broken, shocked and at a loss for a solution. When I told an acquaintance, from Viscount about this, small town spirit kicked in and he found her a piano. I can still recall the look on her face when we told her.

I once worked with a ten-year-old boy with Asperger's syndrome, who had studied unsuccessfully with other teachers. This boy was brilliant – he was at a very high academic level, but possessed the social skills of a young child. When it came to music, his highly-analytical mind did not relate to abstract concepts such as tone, dynamics, and control. He played very mechanically and became frustrated very easily, often throwing what I called “musical tantrums”. He also often doggedly questioned my instructions.

In five years of piano study, he had not been allowed to perform at a recital, due to his inability to focus. My goal was to get him listening instead of thinking, and to simplify the way he learned. We worked on easily-attainable one-page pieces with specific goals, one phrase at a time. That year, he did play at a recital. As he performed, I looked out into the audience to see his mother crying tears of joy.

## MY STUDIO HAS BEEN HOME TO THE BIZARRE

One bitterly cold winter's evening, there was a knock on the front door of my house. A mother, who had just left group lessons with her two boys sheepishly asked my wife to use the phone because one of her children had thrown her car keys high into a pine tree in front of my house.

Early one October, a massive snowstorm crippled Saskatoon. Huge amounts of heavy, wet snow fell, toppling trees, making driving nearly impossible. Phones were out, so I had no contact with students. People did not show up for lessons that day, until.....

My last lesson was to be at 8:00 pm, but no one came. Shortly after 9:00 pm, the doorbell rang. A mother and her three children had come for their lesson. It took them over an hour to reach my house, with the dad slowing down just enough to let them out at my house so he wouldn't get stuck. His plan was then to drive around until the lesson was over. It was a very short lesson, because the girls had not touched the piano that week! We sat and waited, with no way to contact their father. He had become stuck a few blocks away from my house. It was a very long night!

A mother forced her way between her eleven and thirteen-year-old sons, to break up a fist fight they were having in my studio. As I approached to lend a hand, one boy tore the mother's blouse wide open as he reached around her. I promptly retreated.

## MY STUDIO HAS EXPERIENCED MUCH JOY

Being part of so many children's lives – watching their journey from toddlers, through their adolescent and teenage years to adulthood – what a privilege!

Many years ago, Dr. Suzuki said “Ability development is a long-term process. Do not be influenced by the short-term, every day difficulties. Always be confident that over time, with the proper environment and careful nurturing, ability will grow.”

I have been witness to this on many occasions. Parents dedicated to their children's growth, recognizing the value of a musical education, providing support and encouragement through the good times and the bad times, allowing ability to grow naturally. This requires commitment, perseverance, patience, and above all, faith. The result is well-worth the effort.

## MY STUDIO KNOWS THE FEELING OF ANTICIPATION

Each spring, as I write my yearly newsletter and student evaluations, I reflect upon my teaching experiences over the past year. I also cannot help but to begin to wonder what the future will bring.

This year, as I prepare to enter my forty-sixth year of teaching, things have not changed. I look forward with great anticipation to meeting new faces and renewing old acquaintances. My sincere thanks to all of you!

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**“A man should hear a little music, read a little poetry, and see a fine picture every day of his life, in order that worldly cares may not obliterate the sense of the beautiful which God has implanted in the human soul.”**

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

## 2017/2018 REGISTRATIONS

### Students Currently Studying with Zane

**Registration Deadline is Monday, June 19, 2107**

*Your current lesson day and time will be held for you until this date. Returning students registering by the deadline will also be given preference as to requests for changes in lesson day and time.*

### New Students

**New students will be accepted on a first-come-first-served basis after June 19, 2017.**

*I am very flexible in scheduling lessons. Lesson times are available Monday through Saturdays, including early morning, daytime, noon hour, after school and evenings.*

### How To Register

*Return your completed Registration Form, along with your deposits and post-dated checks to me, or..... use my Online Student Registration Form and pay your registration fee via PayPal at [www.saskatoontalentededucation.com](http://www.saskatoontalentededucation.com)*

## A CHILD'S BRAIN DEVELOPS FASTER WITH EXPOSURE TO MUSIC EDUCATION



A two-year study by researchers at the Brain and Creativity Institute (BCI) at the University of Southern California shows that exposure to music and music instruction accelerates the brain development of young children in the areas responsible for language development, sound, reading skill and speech perception.

The study of 6-7-year-old children began in 2012, when neuroscientists started monitoring a group of 37 children from an underprivileged neighbourhood of Los Angeles. Thirteen of them received music instruction through the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles Program where they practiced up to seven hours each week.

Eleven children were enrolled in a community-based soccer programme, and another 13 children were not

involved in any training programme at all.

The researchers compared the three groups by tracking the electrical activity in the brains, conducting behavioural testing and monitored changes using brain scans.

The results showed that the auditory systems of the children in the music programme had accelerated faster than the other children not engaged in music. Dr. Assal Habibi, the lead author of the study and a senior research associate at the BCI, explained that the auditory system is stimulated by music and the system is also engaged in general sound processing. This is essential to reading skills, language development and successful communication.

## MORE ON CHILDHOOD LEARNING

This article was originally published in my 2016 Spring Newsletter. The information is so important, I decided to publish it again this year.

### “THE “MOTHER NATURE” METHOD – HOW A CHILD LEARNS A LANGUAGE

- **PRE-BIRTH** - Conclusive tests by scientists in Washington, Stockholm and Helsinki proved that babies start to develop their hearing ability thirty weeks into the pregnancy.
- **NEWBORNS** - At zero to six months, babies are intense listeners. They learn to recognize voices and begin trying to communicate through crying. They soon engage in “vocal play”, (babbling, gurgling). They learn to recognize their names, start responding to salutations, begin to recognize words they have repeatedly heard and babble even more, as they try to imitate the sounds of the voices around them.
- **THE ONE-YEAR-OLD** - They can now start to point to different parts of the body when asked, and respond to queries such as “Where’s Daddy?”, and



requests like “clap hands” and “dance”. Comprehension level is far beyond their ability to speak, but words are starting to happen.

- **AGES TWO TO FOUR** - Vocabulary increases dramatically, language structure gradually becomes increasingly intricate and sentences become longer and longer. By the age of four, most children have learned the language and have become fluent speakers. They can convert abstract thoughts into complete sentences, respond to questions and have meaningful conversations. They are becoming increasingly comfortable with the highest of linguistic skills – the ability to improvise. They love repetition. Things like singing the same songs or reciting nursery rhymes repeatedly.
- **AGE FIVE AND BEYOND** - Until now, children have learned whatever complicated language they have been surrounded with by hearing it. They even have the ability to learn multiple languages at this young age simply by listening. As time goes on, there is a gradual transition from their reliance on aural skills to the visual for learning. This continues until adulthood. Thus, the reason it is so difficult for adults to learn a new language, while it is easy and natural for a young child.

## WHAT THIS CAN TEACH US

Think about it..... Learning any language is a monumental achievement! Any adult attempting to do this can attest to the level of difficulty. So, how can tiny children, in a matter of three or four years, learn to put thousands of complicated sounds together into cohesive sentences?

- Listening is central to learning any language. It is virtually impossible to become comfortable and fluid in a language by simply learning to read and write it. Although listening is a seemingly passive activity, with its benefits apparently intangible, but it is important to understand it is invaluable.
- When learning a language, there is much to be learned from making mistakes. This is key in learning to be comfortable with any vocabulary. We don't worry when a young child mispronounces a word or makes a grammatical error when learning to speak. We accept this as being part of the learning process. The child just continues growing and learning by listening.
- Repetition is a vital element of learning. Young children will listen to the same things, watch the same things, and say the same things repeatedly, seemingly never becoming sick of it.
- Immersion – this includes being exposed to what you want to learn every day, hearing it, experiencing it, trying it and repeating it.
- Natural learning – We are confident that all, normal, healthy children will learn to speak fluently at their own pace. We accept this process as being a part of growing up, thus allowing it to occur naturally.
- Leave the abstracts for later. We don't begin teaching children to read and write until they are relatively fluent in their language. It has always puzzled me that the “Traditional Music's” underlying philosophy involves the teaching of abstracts first, thus ignoring the child's natural “aural” abilities.



“The fate of a child is in the hands of his parents”

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

“Without accepting the fact that everything changes, we cannot find perfect composure. But unfortunately, although it is true, it is difficult for us to accept it. Because we cannot accept the truth of transience, we suffer.”

Dr. Shinichi Suzuki

“A lot of people ask me where music is going today. I think it's going in short phrases. If you listen, anybody with an ear can hear that. Music is always changing. It changes because of the times and the technology that's available, the material that things are made of, like plastic cars instead of steel. So when you hear an accident today it sounds different, not all the metal colliding like it was in the forties and fifties. Musicians pick up sounds and incorporate that into their playing, so the music that they make will be different.”

Miles Davis

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We live in an age of change and music is no exception. Music in the 20th Century underwent an unprecedented explosion and the trend has continued to mushroom in 2000's. Prior to this time, innovation in music was driven primarily by the Classical composers, who were continuously looking for new ways to express themselves.

In my mind, the Twentieth Century is when innovation in music shifted from the Classical world to more grassroots popular forms. The birth of the blues morphed into jazz, swing and eventually, rock and roll. With these, came experimentation with instrumentation, new harmonic ideas, and the birth of the electric guitar.

Gramophones became mono record players, which became stereo systems, and the tape recorder emerged. By the early 1960's, the number of musical genres had exploded – jazz, blues, bluegrass, country, pop, rock and roll, swing, none of these present a hundred years earlier.

Then, The Beatles spearhead a never-before-seen tidal wave of musical experimentation, technological advances, and innovation. The Fab Four changed the way music was written, fueled the birth of new recording equipment and techniques, and crossed over the boundaries between rock, blues, classical and jazz. Their producer, George Martin's classical background played a major role in the way their music sounded. Other bands followed suit and a new age of musical creativity was born.

In 1969, Miles Davis released “Bitches Brew” a double album featuring Wayne Shorter, Bernie Maupin, Joe Zawinal, Chick Corea, John McLaughlin, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette, Billy Cobham, and many other musicians. This album experimented with the introduction of electric instruments into a genre that was previously, acoustic. Even though jazz purists rejected it, it sold over a million copies, triggering a renewed interest in jazz, and more importantly, igniting a new genre called Fusion.

Also around this time, a new instrument, the synthesizer appeared. It offered a myriad of musical opportunities by allowing the performer to imitate instruments like piano, Hammond organ, flute, vocals; natural sounds like ocean waves, etc.; or generate new electronic timbres. Musicians such as Keith Emerson, Rick Wakeman and Isao Tomita became synthesizer virtuosos, and as the instrument evolved, it was used in all forms of music. New musical genres such as Disco and Ambient resulted in even more technological development of this instrument.

In the 1980's, personal computers began to gain popularity, and along with them, came digital music. Initially, it was very crude, used primarily for early video game background music. Today, it has evolved to the point that many music and



producers and engineers are doing all their musical creation on computers. Now, tools for the creation of music are easily accessible through inexpensive software, which includes virtual instruments, recording/mixing capabilities, and much more. Young people have embraced this, using this technology to express themselves via Electronic Music, predominantly E.D.M. (Electronic Dance Music). I recently watched a fantastic documentary on the history and evolution of music over the past couple of centuries, which concluded that E.D.M. is the Folk Music of our age.

In 2017, the list of musical genres is massive. A small sampling would include, Classical, New World, Experimental, Blues, Reggae, Ska, Country, Bluegrass, Pop, Easy Listening, Cajun, Christian, Jazz, Fusion, Rock, Heavy Metal, Electronic, Ambient, Breakbeat, Dub, Hip-Hop, Folk, Latin, Soul, and R&B. Genres can also often be divided into multiple sub-genres.

**“Good music is good no matter what kind of music it is.”**

**Miles Davis**

Has the musical education system kept up with the evolution of music? On a post-secondary level, I think the answer is “yes”. Schools like The Berklee College of Music, the Eastman School of Music, MacEwan University, and Humber College offer comprehensive education in “Practical Musical Instruction”. I believe many school system band programs have made great strides by attempting to introduce Jazz and other popular music forms at an early age.

In Canada, the study of the piano is most-often through the Conservatory system. This has been the case for decades. Has it kept up with the trends in music since the early 1900’s. When it comes to developing pianists with strong practical skills, I believe it falls far short. In a world that is constantly changing, the approach to teaching in the Conservatory system is almost the same today, as it was when I was a little boy.

Adults are wise, but children are far more intelligent. We can use this wisdom improve the way music is taught and allow children to use their intelligence to embrace it. It has been more than fifty years since Dr. Shinichi Suzuki proved to the musical world that musical education can be started at a very young age, and children have the potential to accomplish much more than traditional musical education gave them credit for. Traditional music educators have yet to embrace this. Today, a student completing all grade levels in most traditional methods will have attained theoretical knowledge equivalent to that utilized by composers in early nineteenth century music. It is safe to say traditional Theory courses have remained virtually unchanged for the last hundred years or so.

There is great value in studying the works of the great Classical Masters, but their music only a small part of the vast musical tapestry that has evolved since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Today, those wishing to study other genres must be basically self-taught or attend post-secondary education. I believe these elements can be presented to young students, providing them with the tools at an early age to be more creative, and far more versatile musicians.

**“I call myself a teacher because they want me to call myself a teacher, but actually, what I'm doing is I'm studying.”**

**Chick Corea**



My goal as a teacher is to produce well-rounded, well-versed musicians with practical musical skills. This includes technique, tone, and development of the ear, expanding the mind, knowledge of various genres, the ability to improvise, and a deep knowledge of the elements of music. Keyboard Theory plays a large role in this. If I had my way, I would have all my students studying it. In a perfect world, it would just be included as part of the everyday lesson. The reason I can't is because I must spend many hours writing and modifying it, as well as printing hundreds of pages a month.

I am passionate about Keyboard Theory. The concept is to teach the elements of Theory and Improvisation in a practical way at the piano. There is no curriculum, so I have spent the last decade developing it. It is a continuing, seemingly never-ending process. Concepts are tried, some retained, and many discarded based on how students respond. This year, I completely revised the first "Rudiments" book and I am excited by the results I have observed. Over the summer, I will be tackling subsequent books in preparation for the fall.

### WHAT THE KEYBOARD THEORY KIDS HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS YEAR

- Students as young as six have gained a much stronger working knowledge of the keyboard and notation via the first book of Rudiments
- Students as young as ten being able to improvise 12-Bar Blues in the twelve major keys. Many have also begun improvising in these keys using the major scale and Dorian mode.
- Students, as young as twelve being able to improvise in the twelve major keys using the blues scale, the major scale, and the Dorian mode, over more demanding walking bass lines and chord progressions.
- Students as young as thirteen being able to add chord accompaniments to chord charts, playing the melodies with the right hand. In addition, being able to play the same charts in "keyboard style, with the left hand playing the bass and right hand the chords.
- Students as young as thirteen studying supplemental materials as taught at the Berklee College of Music

### KEYBOARD THEORY GOALS FOR THE 2017/2018 TEACHING YEAR

- To complete the Book One Rudiment revisions and to begin a comprehensive review and re-structuring of Books Two and Three based on observations of what has and has not worked with students in the past year
- To continue the development of the improvisational exercises, taking students through more advanced improvisational scenarios.
- To add ensemble playing in different genres. Students play along with recorded musical "beds", in different keys and styles.



## DIGITAL RECORDING

My Digital Recording Studio this year have truly been fantastic to work with! They are eager, informed, creative, and attentive. It has been a pleasure watch them record and mix. I hope I have taught them as much as they have taught me!

### FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN DIGITAL RECORDING, I PROVIDE THREE OPTIONS

1. **Live Recording/Digital Recording/Mixing/Engineering/Producing** – for aspiring recording artists, singers, composers. We record students performing their own compositions, including vocals and instrumental parts. This provides a basic knowledge of live recording techniques. We also have the option to work with a wide variety of digital instrumentation, ranging from drums, to strings, to orchestra, to synthesizers and much more. Once instrument tracks are completed, mixing techniques are introduced. These include equalization, compression, reverb, delays, and exposure to literally hundreds of other plugins designed to produce studio-quality mixes.
2. **Mixing/Engineering/Producing** – This is for students who do not wish to record their own compositions, but who are interested in the Mixing/Engineering/Producing aspects of recorded music production. We use pre-recorded vocal and instrumental tracks as a starting point to build a unique mix. Students learn mixing techniques, including panning, automation, equalization, compression, reverb, and digital effects. They may also choose to add digital instrumentation as well as experiment with other production techniques.
3. **Electronic Music** – Students work with a multitude of state-of-the-art in-house electronic instruments, synthesizers and samplers to build their own electronic sounds. They learn about electronic sound creation and manipulation, as well as mixing, engineering, and production basics.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- To provide an adequate amount of time to each student enrolled in Digital Recording, I limit the amount of Digital Recording students each year to five.
- In the past, I have worked with students as pre-preparation for media school, others intending to enroll in post-secondary sound production programs, and still others looking to release Demo Cd's and EP's.

### NEW FOR 2017/2018

I am very excited to be adding Native Instruments' Maschine Studio to my arsenal of music production equipment for the 2017/2018 term.

Maschine is "The flagship music production system for tactile, creative music production and performance – luxurious physical control."

I am looking forward to spending countless hours over the summer building a lasting and meaningful relationship with my new friend!



## SUMMER LESSONS – AGAIN?

Last summer, a few of my senior and adult students have asked me if I would consider teaching them over the summer months. Things worked out well, so I will be available for lessons on a limited basis this summer. Here are the details:

- I will take a maximum of ten students.
- I will be limiting my teaching to a maximum of two days per week, but would prefer to teach all on the same day. (day(s) and times to be determined).
- Summer lessons will begin on the week of June 26 and run throughout the summer months.



*Please contact me if you are interested in studying over the summer.*

## RECITALS

### House Concert in a Store!



Sunday, June 11  
2:0pm – 7:00 pm

Yamaha Piano Centre  
Broadway Avenue

## THANK YOU!

My sincerest thanks to all my FANTASTIC students and wonderful parents for another great year!  
I appreciate your efforts and your support!

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**“To stop the flow of music would be like the stopping of time itself, incredible and inconceivable.”**

**Aaron Copland**