



September 2011 News and Notes



Every year I work to find ways to help our students more successfully become musicians, and this year is no exception. Here are some changes for this year.



Circle the Wagons: Early American pioneers circled their wagons each evening to provide protection and opportunities to know each other better. Likewise, my students are asked to "Circle the Wagons" each practice day by playing already memorized pieces as a means of protecting and continuing the work they have done, remaining familiar with those pieces as they become better "friends", and maintaining a body of work at their fingertips which may be played anytime, anywhere they come upon a piano. This may be at the beginning of a practice session (appetizer), at the end (dessert), or between practices (snacks), but at least 3 pieces from their list should be played each day in addition to their assigned practice. Rotating through the list through the week will help maintain familiarity with all.

Computer: Last fall I subscribed to *musiclearningcommunity.com*, a web-based playground of music learning activities and games to enhance elementary and lower intermediate students' musical progress. This year computer work will be required rather than optional. A minimum of 20 minutes per week of an assigned game or two will be required for students through Level 3 KITS theory, or Basic Rudiments theory, with a printout of that week's scores to be brought to lesson each week. It may be done in my studio before or after their lesson, or at home, but it is a required part of my program for their growth as musicians.

Piano Explorer Magazine: Students in ALL group lessons (except P and PP) are required to read their Piano Explorer Magazine each month. There will be a Baseball-themed quiz game at each group lesson this year covering the material in that month's magazine. Magazines will be distributed a few weeks before the group week, giving students ample time to give it a thorough reading.

Video Progress Week: I'm excited to announce that starting soon, (probably the week before group lessons), we will video each student's progress on one to three major pieces. Seeing their progress each month will be encouraging, as well as enlightening to see what more could be improved. More information ahead.