**My Piano Teaching Philosophy**

Music expresses that which cannot be put into words. Most of us listen to music looking for solace, inspiration, excitement, or simply something that resonates with how we are feeling inside. Sometimes passive listening isn’t enough and we decide to pick up an instrument to express ourselves. My goal as a teacher is to make that possible for you. There is a joy in being able to feel free to pour out any emotion through a piece of music. Whether it is just for yourself or to share with others, it takes time and practice to achieve that freedom and I am here to guide you or your child on that journey.

Learning to play an instrument is like learning another language. One that requires the engagement of our bodies, minds, and hearts. When teaching a student, there is a constant interplay of these three faculties. Whether it is physically feeling rhythm through clapping or drumming, learning the theory of how music is constructed, or playing a phrase with subtle expression from beginning to end, I will guide you in all aspects of music making. My approach is to build skills step by step while also having fun along the way. You will learn rhythm, ear training, theory and piano technique while playing solo pieces as well as duets with me. For beginners, we will use a method that will introduce you to different styles of music for you to explore while you learn. For more experienced players and adults, we can pick out repertoire music together, looking for pieces that speak to you in the genres of classical, musical theater, popular or folk music of different cultures. I am also happy to take you or your child through the Royal Conservatory of Music program, a structured approach that is an excellent platform for developing skills and artistry.

Sharing music is a big part of learning to play. Once you or your child become comfortable and proficient with your pieces, I will provide opportunities for you to share or perform, both in a casual setting in my home as well as in more formal settings in public (stage, retirement home, music festival, etc). For intermediate and advanced level students, I may organize playing with a student of another instrument so that you can learn how to collaborate musically. During the summer months, I offer group workshops where we use many activities that highlight a theme like Going Baroque, Nature in Music, and Haydn’s Humor.

 Your lessons will be informed by my own experiences; wonderful teachers, challenges overcome and joy-filled performances. I grew up in a musical family where singing at the piano was my way of destressing. After going to a chamber music camp at 16, I decided to pursue classical piano studies in the former Yugoslavia, where my parents had grown up. I studied there and in Paris with a Russian professor, Igor Lazko, for 7 years before going to Indiana University to complete my master’s degree with Belgian pianist, Evelyne Brancart. Throughout my education, I developed a love for vocal repertoire and became a vocal coach as well as an accompanist of all instruments. I performed solo repertoire at festivals and concerts in former Yugoslavia, Italy, France and Switzerland and worked as an accompanist and vocal coach at Vanderbilt, Belmont, and Duquesne Universities. I have always maintained a passion for making classical music accessible and relatable to young ears while also encouraging improvisation and composition.

I accept students of all levels, from the age of 6 to 106. Whether you would like your child to follow a traditional path of developing the foundations of excellent musicianship in order to give them the opportunity to go on to study music at the university level, or you would like them to develop the skills to enjoy music for life, I can help your child reach those goals. If you are an adult coming back to the piano after a long hiatus or wanting to fulfill a lifelong dream and starting from scratch, you already have the motivation within you. Together we will create an approach that will help you become the musician you would like to be.