

Impromptu

60 days of practice challenge - In the Students' words

By Rhona-Mae Arca

My students and I have been doing a new practice challenge this school year. We started a 30 Days of Practice Challenge in September. The practice challenge was inspired by concert violinist Hilary Hahn and her 100 Days of Practice Challenge on Instagram.

I felt that my students need to build up their chops a bit before they are ready to tackle the 100 Day Challenge. Enter Stage 1: the 30 Day Practice Challenge.

The premise is that students commit to practising 30 days in a row. Healthy days, that is. Sick days won't count against them. I told my students that I didn't want them anywhere near their instrument if they had a fever or felt like puking. It would be a wasted effort. Better to concentrate on getting well.

They earned \$200 Maestro Bucks once they completed the challenge. If they missed a day, then they restarted the count.

They have been doing a combination of practising at the piano as well as theory and using some music apps such as Note Rush, Note Works, Music Reading Essentials, Perfect Ear, and Tenuto.

All I care about is that that they do something music-related daily. Thus, I let them include include band or work on other instruments. One included Electronic Music Class. Their progress has been steady in their repertoire, theory, and technical exercises

Stage 2 was the 60 Day Practice Challenge. They earned \$500 Maestro Bucks upon completing the challenge. Here's what they have to share on practising for 60 days in a row:

What was the easiest part for you about the challenge?

- Remembering to practice everyday because now it is just a part of my daily routine.
- Keeping track. Finding a way to practice everyday.
- Having the small online practices that still count for something.
- This wasn't much of a challenge for me because I practice everyday anyways.
- For me, the easiest part of the challenge was probably being able to take a lazy day when I was sick, or not feeling my best.
- By listening to my pieces everyday and by being in band.
- It wasn't much different from the thirty day and I practice daily anyways.
- The easiest part was doing the hand drills or listening to my pieces because it was something I could do really fast and call it practise.
- Finding any aspect of music to practice, such as music apps, listening to pieces, theory, and drumming.

What was the hardest part for you about the challenge?

- Making sure I don't skip a day even when I don't feel like doing piano or when I'm really busy.

- Knowing what to practice. Making it a variety every day.



Honours Recital 2019

- Having the motivation to practice on days I'm tired.
- The hardest part for me about the challenge was not being able to take a break. Another thing that was hard was probably at the beginning, thinking "I have so many more days left!"
- The hardest part was trying to get to the piano when you have lots of homework or working up the courage to perform in front.
- Nothing.
- The hardest part was playing everyday because it was challenging to balance school and music. I would have to remember to practise, even on days I was busy, so I can learn my pieces or so I don't have to restart the challenge.
- Finding time on the piano is a challenge.

Has your playing changed since participating in this challenge. If so, how?

- Not much since the last challenge.
- I feel my playing has improved much quicker than it did before.
- Just learning pieces/trouble spots/scales faster.
- No.
- The same.
- I think that my playing has changed during the challenge, because the more I practiced, the better I got at my songs and scales.
- Yes, I feel that I am getting better and faster at learning new pieces.
- I have been able to learn songs faster.
- I think so because I feel that I'm not stressing to get all of my pieces ready in a short time but I have a week to slowly play my pieces.

Continued on pg. 9



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IMPROMPTU

PUBLICATION INFORMATION

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FALL ISSUE:

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Impromptu is the newsletter of ARMTA Calgary branch with the purpose of informing members of events of interest, providing summaries of Calgary meetings, and encouraging and supporting professional development through member-written articles.

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President's Message

As I write my last message to you as president of the Calgary branch, my thoughts go to the many members that I have been able to make connections with during the last year. There are many long - time members of ARMTA that I finally met in person this year and it was really nice to be able to put faces to names. I was able to interact with new members as well and also make connections with others in the community. I have had wonderful conversations and idea exchanges with many teachers in the city through email, phone conversations and face to face meetings. I feel fortunate to have had an amazing and supportive executive committee and extended executive to work with; at times the learning curve seemed steep but wisdom, guidance, and experience were all present to assist me in my term as president.

When I started my term I had some specific ideas about what I wanted to accomplish; some of it came to fruition but our work as an executive took a different turn than what any of us were expecting. We have been asking questions and exploring ideas to ensure ARMTA Calgary branch stays relevant to the membership but also how we as a teaching community can promote our profession to the general public. Our membership survey that went out last fall has given us some good ideas as to what our member's value about being a member of the Calgary branch and also some clear indications about what programs and services they place less value on. Although we do not have cut and dried solutions to some of the issues that we face as an organization, the executive are committed to developing ways to ensure that ARMTA continues to support teachers and students, and promote high quality music education.

Music teaching can be a solitary and sometimes lonely profession but I have welcomed the opportunity to meet new people and forge new friendships in the three years since I joined the executive. Life is busy - sometimes too busy – it would be far easier to stay in our studios and never venture out or get involved in organizations like ARMTA. I see very clearly now that human connections, comradery, friendship, and cooperation far outweigh any negative perceptions I may have had about getting involved. We will (hopefully) soon turn a corner towards spring, and our AGM in March brings the nomination and election of a new executive to lead the Calgary branch forward. I ask you to consider putting your name forward to join us as we move our organization forward to a stronger future.

Lisa Kiernan

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ARMTA CALGARY ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

March 18, 2019

9:15 a.m.

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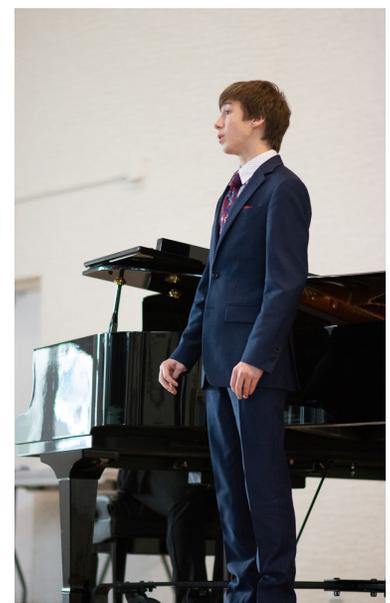
Calendar of Events

DATE	EVENT & PLACE	CONTACT
February 15	Application deadline for Provincial Piano and Voice Competition	armta.ca
February 23	North Student Recital, St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW, Calgary	Rita Thurn, rita_thurn@telus.net
February 25	ARMTA Calgary Executive Meeting, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca
March 9	Provincial Piano and Voice Competitions, Red Deer	armta.ca
March 9-10	Rotary C3 Competition	Barbara Robertson, barbrob@telus.net
March 18	ARMTA Calgary AGM, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca
April 6	South Student Recital, Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary	Carol Moore, rhythmreader@shaw
April 15	ARMTA Calgary Executive Meeting, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca
May 11	South Student Recital, Steinway Piano Gallery, 76 Heritage Gate, SE Calgary	Carol Moore, rhythmreader@shaw.ca
May 13	ARMTA Calgary GM, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca
May 25	North Student Recital, St. David's United Church, 3303 Capitol Hill Crescent NW, Calgary	Rita Thurn, rita_thurn@telus.net
June 17	ARMTA Calgary Executive Meeting, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca
June 18	ARMTA Calgary Executive Meeting, First Church of the Nazarene, 65 Richard Way SW, Calgary AB 9:30 a.m.	Lisa Kiernan, kiernans@shaw.ca



Honours Recital Strings-Junior One Silver Medalist- Photos by Miriam Johnston

Impromptu - February 2019



Voice Junior Two Silver Medalist

60 days of practice challenge - In the Students' words

(continued from page 1)

- Yes, my practicing has become more focused.

Have you noticed or discovered anything interesting about your musical journey since starting this challenge? If so, what?

- Not really.
- The challenges help me improve my piano skills.
- I feel I am more interested in practicing since my skill and confidence in the pieces has improved.
- I noticed how much practicing, even small practices affect how fast you learn things.
- It took longer.
- I have discovered that if I push myself on things I don't really want to do (a part of a piece or something), I can get better at it and it can become a piece that I actually like!
- I have been doing more practice and noticed that I am surrounded by music [more than] I thought.
- Not really.
- I've noticed that I'm learning pieces a little bit quicker compared to last year.
- I've discovered that I'm constantly surrounded by music, so it's easier to take a moment and practice in different forms.

Any other comments, questions, or suggestions to make the practice challenge better next round? Or other practice challenges/projects?

- Nope!
- I think that next round, we should be allowed one break day ;-).
- Nope. :-)
- 100 days of practice but not every single day
- Set reminders to practice more regularly.

Most of my students are in the throes of the 100 Days of Practice Challenge. A couple have opted to go back to the 30 Days of Practice Challenge, which is fine. They have picked a goal that they are more confident they can achieve and are committing to it. What more can a music teacher ask for?

Thank you to my students Henry, Kateri, Claire, Tanya, Alexandra, Haley, Erika, P. and Anon. for sharing their feedback here.

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When You Want to Teach One Sibling, but Not the Other

by Diane Hidy

What a dilemma. I faced just this situation a few years ago when a mother came to me with three children. I immediately wanted to teach the older daughter and the younger daughter, but didn't want to teach the boy in the middle. There were lots of reasons why I wanted to teach the oldest and the youngest—they were interesting children, completely ready for lessons and I immediately liked them. They'd had some "lessons" with another teacher, but I could tell right away that they would be successful piano students.

The boy was completely different. He was definitely hovering at the edge of the autism spectrum and had great difficulty controlling himself. That wasn't what actually mattered in making this decision. Yes, he had some physical challenges that would make piano playing difficult for him. But even more important was the fact that he was fiercely competitive with both of his sisters. Even in the interview, he compared himself to them constantly. Trying to teach the three of them would have set him up for nothing but frustration.

Years ago I might have thought the only options were to take all of them or none of them. I've gotten wiser in my dotage. Here was my solution:

I took the mother out for coffee. Sometimes it's easier to have difficult conversations in person. You can make eye contact and use non-verbal cues to convey your sincerity and warmth. Email can be particularly treacherous in situations like this, especially if you're just getting to know someone.

We met in a Starbucks to discuss the situation. I explained why I thought that having all three kids playing the same instrument was, in this case, not advised. I clarified exactly why I thought that playing the piano, specifically, would be more challenging for him than it would be for his sisters.

She agreed with me that he was too competitive to tolerate watching his sisters shoot ahead as he struggled. He needed something that, by definition, would make him special and make comparisons more difficult. I felt that it would be better if her son played a completely different instrument and suggested the guitar. (The guitar is easier to play, especially at the beginning, and almost impossible

to compare to the piano.) I was completely honest with her about my assessment of the situation. And though I was kind and understanding, having raised a difficult boy myself, I didn't offer to take on her son as my student. I took the girls and, as I'd predicted, they did quite well.

If you can see heading into a situation that it won't be successful, follow your instincts.

Any healthy parent would always prefer your honest opinion as long as you are kind, gracious, and offer another solution that will work better. You'll be doing no one a favor if you teach a child that you think isn't a good fit, even if the siblings are studying with you. It's far better to follow your heart and speak the truth kindly.

Diane Hidy is a piano teacher, composer, and co-writer of the series Piano Town. She lives and teaches in San Francisco, USA and has a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from the University of Southern California after attending Julliard School. Diane's website dianehidy.com includes a teaching tips blog where she gives good advice to teachers, and also provides helpful products and recommendations.



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Rotary Concerto Competition

The annual Rotary Concerto Competition will take place March 8, 9, and 10, 2019 with 48 competitors taking the stage to perform at Scarboro United Church. The competition schedule is at www.rotaryc3.com. The final concert for winners with Civic Symphony will take place June 2, 2:30 at Jack Singer Concert Hall.



Voice-Advanced Gold Medalist and Harold Saklofske Scholarship Winner

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Strings-Intermediate Gold Medalist

Honours Recital

by Lisa Kiernan

The annual Honours Recital was held Saturday February 2nd with 37 performers representing the disciplines of Strings, Voice, Speech Arts and Piano. Scholarships and medals were awarded to all the students and ARMTA Calgary Branch awarded seven new scholarships for Advanced Theory students. The Graduate Ceremony recognized those individuals who completed the requirements for their ARCT. The event ran smoothly thanks to the many volunteers who helped out both at the event and in the months leading up to it.

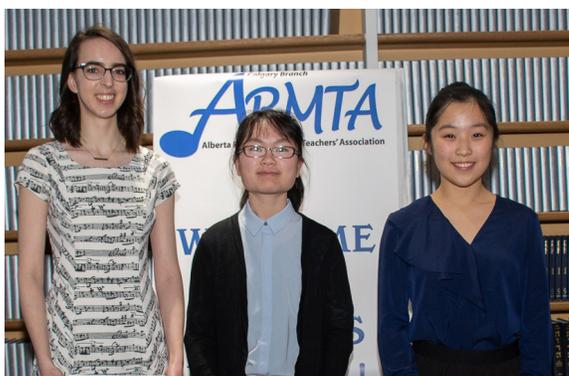
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Graduate Ceremony



Peter Turner Memorial Scholarship





Piano-Junior One



Piano-Junior Two



Piano-Intermediate



Piano-Advanced



Voice-Junior One



Voice-Junior Two



Strings-Junior One



Strings-Junior Two



Strings-Intermediate



Speech Arts

HONOURS RECITAL AWARDS

Voice-Junior One

Nora McCluskey	Gold
Keira Jordan	Silver
Sophie Obriegewitsch	Silver
Claire McCluskey	Bronze
Robert McDonald	Bronze
Shaela Rideout	Bronze

Piano-Junior One

Selena Ham	Gold
Matthew Wang	Silver
Yishui Xu	Silver
Hannah Li	Bronze
Rylea Roque	Bronze

Voice- Junior Two

Aidan Pheifer	Gold
Robert McDonald	Silver
Sage Gilliland	Bronze

Piano-Junior Two

Sarah Wang	Gold
Emily Cao	Gold
Seabert Yuan	Silver
Ethan Lin	Silver
Martin Irac	Silver
Allan Xing	Silver
Arianna Williams	Bronze
Hannah Hodjati	Bronze
Charles Xing	Bronze

Voice-Advanced

Cynthia Gan

Strings-Junior One

Nolan Rock	Gold
Thien Ai Le	Silver
Daniel Lang	Bronze

Strings-Junior Two

Evan Jung	Gold
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Strings-Intermediate

Bernice Cao	Gold
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Speech Arts

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Yandan Ma	Bronze

Piano-Intermediate

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Daniela Garcia	Gold
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Piano-Advanced

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Piano Diploma Association

Melanie Tan

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Hitomi Sato

Eileen and Elgar Higgin Memorial Scholarship

Cynthia Gan

HONOURS RECITAL GRADUATE CEREMONY

Hitomi Sato

ARMTA Teachers Represented in Honours Recital

Esther Bing	Peter Rudzik	Naomi Williams
Allen Reiser	Joan Bell	Rachel Hop
Carol S. Moore	Brian Cross	Elaine Case
Gloria Chu	Ena Shparberg	Nathan Chan
Barbara Robertson	Elisabeth Szojka	Paul Bagley
Linda Kundert	Fiona Carnie	Jan Cherniak
Ivea Mark	Jacqueline Mendoza	

Honours Recital Volunteers

Alicia Romero	Janet Porter-Chaudhry
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