

## Hints for Note Taking

- Look for a theme. If you hear the same aspect mentioned again and again, circle it at the top of your notes. (I.e. thumb position, foot position, D fingering etc.)
- In review songs, what is the teacher's focus? Sometimes it may just be a fun warm-up but more often there is a specific goal. Children do not like mind-numbing repetition (and neither do teachers!). Find the teaching point in the review (i.e. beautiful E's, breathing, air, etc.) and use it for the desired outcome in review.
- Write down **HOW** to do things!!!!!! Simply writing "the last two measures of Minuet" is **NOT** enough!!!! How did the teacher break it up? Did you follow the process; can you duplicate it at home?
- For scales and exercises, notice how they are worked on. Writing "F major scale is not enough..."
- Listen for cues, your teacher is always aware of your presence (and how mentally present you are). Whenever you hear the word "practice", heads up! Listen for colourful language ("fly your tone", like an elephant" etc.) and try to use these words in home practice.
- Listen for location cues ("the last measure of line 2", "where you start on B flat"). These location tips are for your benefit, too.
- Observe and adore your child! Relish this opportunity! Watch body language and facial expressions. How does your child learn? What feelings flicker past? It is very interesting and you may find something to talk about later or you may just cherish the memory years from now. But remember to keep negative reactions to yourself!
- Need time to space out? OK, there are times for that, such as when your teacher goes off on a long technical tangent, and you already have the gist of what is being done. But do listen for cues to bring you back to attention.
- Help your teacher. Have all of the materials ready. Ask for clarification of practice tasks at the end of the lesson. Try not to do noisy things. Bring up general practice concerns at the beginning of the lesson. Staring these important conversations at the end of the lesson can wreak havoc on the teacher's attempt to stay on time.
- Keep the teacher informed about events that may have an impact on the child in a significant way (illness, school stress etc.). A word to the wise will enable the teacher to respond in a sensitive, effective way. And remember, some issues should be discussed without your child present.

(with thanks to Heidi Ehle)