



Why it is advisable for a student to take full advantage of the GSM Program?

By Rufina Gorin, MA, NCMT, GSM musical director

After hearing some questions I have been receiving recently, it has become quite clear to me that clarification is needed on why it is beneficial for students to participate in all parts of GSM's Program, especially various evaluations & recitals. I would like to begin by emphasizing that **the structure and implementation GSM's Program aim to create a relatively stress-free environment for students so that they have an opportunity to reach specific individual goals.**

However there seems to be a misconception that evaluations or recitals are "stressful", and that "to take evaluations mean we are training professional musicians." I would like respectfully disagree. To enjoy something, you need to be good at it. The term "good" is relative term in this case and applies individually accordingly to each student's abilities. We do not seek to create negative stress but rather to nurture confidence.

At GSM we do not use a generic approach for all our students; instead we create an individual plan for each student's accomplishment, so that each student can open up and bring out his or her potential talents in their own time. Even though we are taking an individual approach in selecting material and how many pieces student learning through the year, the final measure is to see student's progress (regardless of how big or small). That is absolutely vital for being able to move forward with planning, sometimes adjusting, or even making some major changes.

After being in music education over 40 years as a piano teacher, as a CM and National Guild evaluator and judge at numerous competitions, I can assure you that the structure and implementation the GSM Program were specifically designed for children of various capabilities, with consideration of their sensitive natures. GSM's Program and its philosophy make us successful, judging by GSM's yearly recitals and our graduates. In order to be successful in each case we need to have parents' understanding and support in making appropriate decisions.

It is important to recognize that with more chances for students to present themselves either to the evaluator (Evaluation) or audience (Recitals), they develop self-confidence, graceful presence, and the comfort of being in front of people. Is not this a great quality we would like for our children to develop for life?

I would like to share with you one example from my experience. It happened many years ago with one of my students, but since it was an extreme case with such an incredible transformation of the student, it has stuck with me. The child, a seven year old girl, was very pleasant and well-mannered, and had musical abilities which needed to be developed. However, she was extremely shy and timid; her playing was so quiet that it was difficult to hear, even sitting next to her. Her parents, a lovely couple, were very respectful and supportive of my work with the girl. Apart from teaching her skills of playing piano and developing her musically, I felt that my task was to make her not afraid, to develop the self-confidence and social skills that would help her later in life. I

can't tell you how much effort the girl, her parents, and I had to apply to make this girl less timid, more outgoing. But the effort paid off. During her high school years, she was not only regularly performing piano and violin, but also was a part of school play performances and participated in public speaking debates at her school. Would that have happened if we had not gone through some difficulties of her first recitals and been consistent in reaching our goals?

Of course, participation in GSM's Program is monitored with every student and recommended accordingly depending on the specific situation. And this is where we need parents' willingness to understand and create a team effort involving the student, parents, and Faculty for success as an end result.

We should not forget that all skills, instrumental or behavior, which are formed during the years of study at GSM, will be helpful latter on in life. Teachers and parents work together as a team to provide our children with the proper tools, utilizing a very careful approach that considers the individual qualities of each child.

To learn more about The Gorin School of music, visit www.gsm-music.com, call (650)-961-4910, or email us at mmgorin@aol.com.