

26 July 2007

To whomever it may concern,

I have known Jan Gwatkin in the capacity of piano teacher since 1998. I took lessons from Jan myself as an adult student, and then began instruction for Andrew. He was four years old and very keen to learn. Under Jan's patient guidance, Andrew developed sound music skills which have stood him in good stead for further instrument study. Through learning the Suzuki piano repertoire, Andrew's ear for sound became finely tuned. Jan then introduced improvisation skills and jazz style pieces to enliven the lessons. Jan taught creatively and was sensitive to student needs in developing their individual musicality. The lessons were always conducted with enthusiasm and mutual respect between teacher and student

The Suzuki method requires the parent to be present during lessons. Therefore younger siblings become part of the lesson. Our younger family members learnt in a caring environment, how to be a good audience. However toddlers don't always behave as expected. Jan firmly stated the expected behaviour required, often backing up my previous requests to the toddler. The good times were acknowledged at the end of lessons with a kind word and may be a lolly. Now they are on their own music journey, making the natural progression; from the couch listening, to bowing at the end of Andrew's lesson, then their own lesson. Jan's respect for the family made it possible to participate fully in the lessons.

Matthew began with Jan as a four year old after listening to his brother since before he was born. Again, the lessons are lively and fun adapting to a different personality. Matthew enjoys playing for an audience and Jan provides opportunities for this to occur for all her students. Participation in Suzuki graduation concerts, music festivals, exams and Pizza parties for family and friends provide occasions to share a love of entertaining through music. They are always conducted in a relaxed manner, allowing even the most timid young beginner a chance to shine. This requires effort on Jan's part as group classes are tricky with piano students. It is appreciated.

Jan has always maintained a professional manner in her education of my children in music. It has extended to inviting other family members into a quartet, to enrich the music experience for all. Jan is always creative in her

lessons and sensitive to the child's mood from week to week. Gentle encouragement and helpful suggestions overcome difficulties. Methods and techniques to achieve goals are demonstrated carefully and repeated until the student understands. It is a positive learning experience each week, for the student and those on the couch.

Our family is musically rich from Jan's influence and it's a gift we'll have for a long time to come.

Janelle Healy

27/6/07