

Testimonial for Jan Gwatkin.

I have been studying classical piano with Jan Gwatkin since early 2007.

I am nearly 50 years old, and after a 30 year break from any piano playing, I resumed piano studies at the conservatory of music, at Mount Royal College in Calgary, Canada, where my husband was based. I was fortunate to study with an extremely kind, patient, Russian-trained teacher of piano performance. Even though I lack any natural talent at all, he told me I was his hardest working student and he loved teaching me. I studied with him for 18 challenging months, struggling to remember all the basics of piano playing, and making painfully slow but steady progress. When I realised we would be transferred to Perth, my teacher helped me to identify suitable teachers in Perth. He felt there was a distinct lack of what he termed truly professionally qualified and experienced teachers here - and he only found a handful he thought were suitable.

I consider myself extremely lucky to have found Jan. It is a privilege to study with her. Every lesson is extremely well structured, challenging and stimulating. She seems to bring a tremendous sense of joy to her teaching. Each lesson is varied, humorous, highly professional, and more than anything, enjoyable and satisfying - even when I play terribly! I see my lessons with Jan as an on-going learning journey and a gift to myself. She has extremely high standards and I respect that enormously. I can see and hear the progress I have made and it is due to her persistence, encouragement and gift for teaching music. I find she has a wonderful and unusual combination of intellectual depth, outstanding piano performance skills, and most importantly, a passion for teaching music. Her heart shines through in all her lessons. Teaching is her love, not her job, and all her students benefit from her passion.

I believe that Jan will one day receive the recognition she deserves as an exceptional teacher and will probably lecture at a college overseas - but until that time, it is a privilege to study with her. She has helped me to re-discover my very rusty piano playing skills in an environment which is never embarrassing or awkward. I enjoy my lessons so much I have signed on for 2 lessons a week from next term. Jan is prepared to teach me jazz, in addition to my classical studies. That in itself is a testimonial to her

enormous belief in her students. I see it as a tremendous leap of faith on her part - but I know I will not fail....Jan will keep pushing me along firmly, and we will laugh, play beautiful music, work very hard, and continue to study together. I love my lessons - and I like and respect my teacher very much. I wish her great success and happiness. She is an exceptional teacher. Please contact me for any further comments you may need. I highly recommend her.

Wendy-Anne Counsel
June 2007