

Stuart Stratford
Music Director, Scottish Opera
stratfordstuart@hotmail.com
www.stuartstratford.com

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What first struck me about the Stepping Notes lessons was how they captured the fundamentals of musicianship in a completely natural, intuitive and fun way. By the end of my son's time with Nikhil, he acquired a fantastic sense of subdivision of rhythm and his sense of pitch and ability to express it in Solfa language was something that as a professional musician, at his age, I wish I had developed in this way.

The piano musicianship classes developed all the aspects of music making which were set up in Stepping Notes. The lovely aspect of the piano lessons is that three students shared the piano and were constantly playing by ear; each child being asked to suggest in a structured way the bass and then harmony to fit the melody they were playing - and then swapping around!

Of course they were also learning to play together in ensemble and were developing their listening skills as well as establishing their piano technique - all of this done with such joy of spirit led by Nikhil.

Angela's teaching is also embedded in Nikhil's Stepping Notes method - a unique personal blend of Colourstrings, Kodaly and Dalcroze teaching methods, all mutually supporting each other. Angela has a real gift in teaching the early years and it was a joy to see my son consider the violin lesson a highlight of his week.

In short, the time that my son spent in the Stepping Notes Music School, the piano and violin lessons, has set him up for life with a firm foundation of all the principals of what I think music making is all about. I can't recommend this fantastic husband and wife team highly enough to anyone, and if your child were to be offered the chance to join their groups - jump at the chance!



Stuart Stratford

25th June 2014

Dear Angela

I have written a short testimonial for you so that others can also benefit from the excellent teaching Imaan received:

'Imaan took up the violin with Angela Dally shortly before her sixth birthday. At this point she had over three years of learning at Stepping Notes under her belt. Angela's approach to teaching violin and music in general mirrored the Stepping Notes philosophies. Thus the transition to learning a first instrument was utterly seamless and an effortless joy for Imaan. The first tunes she played were the same as those she had been singing and dancing to for years. It was a natural progression to repeat the rhythms and sounds on the violin.

Angela is always meticulous in her teaching. From the care and detail she insisted on in obtaining an instrument worthy of playing, to her eagle eye for every finger placement, bending of knuckles, wrist positions – even angle of feet! Yet with this unscrupulous tough eye for detail, Angela is a patient and compassionate teacher. She praises and improves the playing, praises further and improves further. Angela seeks perfection but this lofty goal has never become a burden to Imaan.

In each lesson no stone is left unturned – and all this with the parent sat watching and therefore, without any musical knowledge, powerfully enabled to go home and actively support their child's musical education. I always felt this was fundamental to Imaan's progress with the violin. Angela did not just teach Imaan, she taught me to support Imaan.

Angela gives great consideration to creating a rounded musician. She has sought out enriching experiences that have brought violin playing to life. In the four years Imaan has been learning to play the violin, she has had a wealth of opportunities: ensemble groups, quality musicianship classes following her time at Stepping Notes, national level orchestral opportunities, concert experience, holiday camps, and workshops. Angela is always happy to see and help Imaan develop even if it means doing so away from her. She develops the student to be the very best they can be.

Sadly we have come to the point where there is an imminent parting of ways. Angela has guided Imaan to success at auditions to the Royal Academy of Music. It is a great opportunity however the sadness and reluctance my daughter feels at the thought of leaving Angela is a clear symbol of Angela's talent as a teacher. She is truly Imaan's teacher, mentor, inspiration and friend.'

Thank you ever so much for all your hard work over the years.

With kind regards,

Gava

Stepping Notes and Beyond

Like many parents, I want to explore my children's musical potential and believe that learning to play a musical instrument is part of a child's education.

Prior to joining Stepping Notes, my Daughter, Son and I, had attended two local children's music groups. My experience of these classes at the time was that they were an opportunity for the children to run riot, make a lot of noise and have some fun. When instruments were used in these classes the sound created could be painful to listen to. They really were just interactive children's shows. My children did enjoy them but learned nothing about music.

From the first Stepping Notes lesson we attended it became clear the experience was going to be very different. The first thing that was noticeable was the ratio of pupils to teacher, it was much smaller. There was a definite structure to the classes and a need for order and discipline. My Daughter and Son fell into the routine quickly. When musical instruments were used the sound was, thankfully, musical. As time went on and the classes progressed I could see a development in the skills being taught. I thought I knew what Nikhil Dally was trying to achieve but, as a non musician, I was not sure.

When my Daughter turned eight she started receiving violin lessons from Angela Dally. It was at this point that it became very obvious to me why Stepping Notes follows the developmental path it does. My Daughter was quickly able to look at a piece of music and know how it should sound. From the beginning she was able to hold a pulse and understood the relationship between the different notes, both in terms of length and pitch. The skills she had learned in her Stepping Notes classes became the foundations for her musical progress. Some of the familiar songs from Stepping Notes are used repeatedly in the exercises she practices as she is progressing. This means she is able to improve her technique quickly. My Daughter has been having Violin lessons with Angela Dally for almost a year now and is thoroughly enjoying it.



Mrs. C French