

Since we've moved to Spokane I've been searching for a clone of Lisa Kato. Unfortunately, none are to be had. When I state that I'm searching for a piano teacher who is gentle but firm, kind but professional, conducts recitals on a regular basis, involves her students in nationally recognized competitions and festivals, and strives to produce Guild and Certificate of Merit winners, I am met with a dropped jaw and a rather panicked look in the eyes.

Lisa is truly a virtuoso, not only as a pianist and musician, but as a muse and instructor. She has gifts I have never experienced before in any teacher. When I was searching for a piano teacher for my daughter, I came across Lisa's information on the website of the Long Beach Chapter of the MTAC. I was impressed by the professional quality of her website and the credentials mentioned there. Lisa stated on the website that she explicitly wanted to supply a wide range of experiences for her students and did not want them pigeon holed into pre-ordained roles (classical vs. jazz, etc.). I appreciated this thought and other aspects of her philosophy and program so I wrote her an e-mail. Before long I found both my daughter and myself enrolled in piano.

My daughter was new to piano, a clean slate ready to be written on. I, however, came from a life-time of on-again, off-again uninspired piano lessons. In one month, under Lisa's tutelage, I learned more than I had ever learned in years of lessons. Great gaps in my education were filled and for the first time ever, I felt truly proud of my progress.

Emma, my daughter, took to Lisa immediately. Lisa knew how to capitalize on Emma's gifts but also how to encourage her in areas where she didn't excel (home practice!). The first year with Lisa, Emma and I came away with Guild certificates. We were so pleased with ourselves, but most of all, with Lisa.

The last few months we lived in Long Beach were rough for us. However, through all the missed and forgotten lessons and inconsistent practice, Lisa held firm in her support. I can honestly say that she and lessons were what I would miss most about moving. This has remained true. I came back to Long Beach recently for a graduation, and my heart was no longer in California, but I still miss Lisa and the beautiful, life-affirming gifts she gave us and our finger tips!

If you are so lucky to have Lisa for a teacher, I believe your life will be blessed!

Jennifer Bortz