

Playing it by Ear

Free Piano tuition in Parks & Public Spaces



'Saoirse' at Dalmarnock Primary School ~ by Rachel Docherty

www.GLASGOWPIANOCITY.org



Evaluation Feedback



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Evaluation Feedback . . .

1. What was good about the lessons? What did you find enjoyable/useful/ etc.

" It was very useful to have an attentive tutor who took time to understand my skill level and my aims and was able to create a learning plan structured around my personal situation & ability. "

" Grainne, the teacher has a wonderful easy manner and was always very encouraging to me. was finding it difficult and she was always kind and showed me how to learn to play step by step. The fact that the lessons were free, and in my case at a central location easy to get to in Glasgow was brilliant. "

" The lessons opened up a new world to me. Magnificent teaching, and belief in me has made learning to play possible. "

" I know my daughter really enjoyed the lessons, a highlight for her was looking inside the piano to see how the instrument worked. For her it was fascinating. I think her tutor built a lovely rapport with my daughter which in turn put her at ease in the lesson. A good teacher makes all the difference to the learning experience. She engaged my daughter brilliantly and I was surprised how at ease my daughter was during the lessons. Also, her teacher at school has commented that her flute playing has improved since she has done these piano lessons. "

" This was an opportunity for education in a subject that normally I could not consider. The availability and flexibility of the tutor to accommodate appointments was helpful. The location and venues were easily accessible and comfortable. I liked the structure of the lesson. It allowed me to look at understanding and reading music as well as learning to play. The allocated time was appreciated as an encouragement and taster. "

" The whole experience really. Music's always been very therapeutic for me in my life, so this was a great opportunity. The sessions gave me the chance to get to know the basics of how a piano works. The 4 lessons were really enjoyable and the session was very relaxing and calming after a stressful week. I looked forward to them and felt a sense of achievement. After only 4 I could play something which sounded quite good. This gave me confidence to keep going. Now they are over I want to learn more! "

" Liked the 1 to 1 attention, encouraged you to play piano. I had never had a lesson before and Grainne was really good with encouraging me and making me feel Ok. I felt myself getting better over time and remembering how to play with the keys. She put the numbers on the keys which helped me to remember. "

**A cast of thousands
enjoyed playing our pianos citywide
as we successfully offered
100 Hours of Free Piano Tuition
to 50 People.
Playing it by Ear**

" My daughter walked in and ' froze ' ~ yet after listening and re-focusing her thoughts and was allowed 'no audience' she played with Lisa. This experience is a chance for her to play on beautiful pianos with people who understand her. Thank you. . . . Gina, Emila & Madeleine "

" Such talent . . . And me still trying to master the harmonica ! "

" What a delight ! It has been a privilege to be present and hear such wonderful talent and to hear the sound of such a good piano here in St Margaret's. Thank you for coming to St Margaret's "

" Absolutely wonderful. Thanks for this fantastic experience. All the best . . . Rod "

" Did 3 pieces. REALLY enjoyed myself and am grateful for Tom's reassuring me before I went on ~ not to worry ~ and got on fine. Mana . . . P.S I love the piano ! "

" I've never played a Steinway before ! Thank you so much for allowing me to experience the sheer joy of being able to play the piano ~ my first since 5 years ago . . . Rositta "

" So great to have the opportunity to play such an amazing instrument in such beautiful surroundings. What a wonderful experience. Thank you Tom . . . Claire "

" This was SO COOL !! I loved the piano but I loved the pianists even more !!! . . . Sam "

" You know ~ I think the piano is enjoying it too ! It's good for everyone. I love this initiative for bringing all of us closet pianists out to play ~ give us some breath, some air under our wings ~ invaluable. Thanks again . . . Lorna "

" Always dreamt of playing at the Royal Concert Hall. I was given the chance IN Feb 2015 and it was great to have another opportunity today and play an amazing grand piano. Very surreal and great fun. Thanks . . . David "

" Tom, thank you for allowing me to honour my dad, Bob French who loved playing all the pianos across the city . . . Allan "



" Precious memories. Bob & Cathy French "

'Lids Open Day' Guestbook Comments

" Two lessons in and I feel the change. A positive change. Thank you . . . John Paul "

" We have been lucky enough to have lessons through the PEEK Project.

It has been a wonderful opportunity for both my children to have the chance to try playing an instrument that they wouldn't normally have had a chance to try. Previously my son (who is in P1) had not enjoyed any clubs, football, swimming, Tae Kwon Do . . .

All were a struggle. Piano has been the first thing that he wants to go to that he looks forward to and talks about going back. I would like to thank Piano City for the opportunity. Thanks. Helen"

" Thank you for inviting me along today. It was lovely to get a shot on a grand piano.

It's great to have the opportunity to play in front of others and meet other people who play the piano. Glad I found the opportunity for free lessons on the website. It's helped me get back into playing the piano and playing in front of others. Thank you . . . Caroline. "

" The Chappell has a nice ' light loose' action and the acoustic is great. . . . Alan K. "

" Lovely piano. Lovely opportunity to play it. Thank you. . . . Fiona. "

" I like playing the piano with a teacher like Grainne. It is fun learning the piano . . . Orla. "

" Thanks for introducing me to piano lessons. 40 is not too old to learn . . . Lisa. "

" Orla has been having lessons since August 2015. Orla has loved it. We bought her an electronic keyboard for Xmas and she played on her birthday in January. I was so proud of her how well she played. Grainne has been a fab teacher and Orla enjoys her lessons . . .Mags Kelly "

" I think that piano lessons with Grainne is very fun and I love to learn new songs every week. I really liked playing the grand piano. It felt so light when I touched the keys . . .Selina "

" The free piano classes initiative has been of great benefit, not only for my children but also for me. It gave me encouragement to learn something new. Thank you for the opportunity. Irina M. (from Bolivia) "

"What a fantastic opportunity to perform on the stage of the GRCH with a beautiful Steinway. I'm so thankful for all the opportunities you give me and hopefully I will perform better. Thank you very much. . . Naho Hayashi "

" The concert Hall ! WooHoo. I've made it. Thanks for making my dreams come true. . . Fiona "

" I am so grateful for this opportunity.

By far the best piano I have ever played, and what a location ! Tom, thank you so much. I admit I was nervous, like I would be if I got to drive a Ferrari, but I calmed down and it went well. Thanks again. . . Dale "

"Thank you again for another amazing day—was such an amazing experience. I would not have known Lids Open Day ever existed. Cheers again for all that you do . . . David "

" Can't thank you enough for such an amazing experience. The best 20 minutes of my life. Beth "

2. What could improve the lessons?

" The lessons were excellent, my application and home practice were what was lacking. "

"It was useful having the 4 free sessions, and this gave me enough of a taste to be confident enough to ask for more lessons.

Further locations beyond Glasgow would be great for me as I stay in Hamilton. "

" I was very satisfied with the lessons and wouldn't change anything. I would actually encourage more people to take up the lessons. "

" Of course more time.

I would love to see short courses, enough to sustain and maintain what I learned. This would bring enjoyment and leisure time for me. "

" I'm not sure they could be improved, I got everything I had expected from the 4 x sessions. Maybe more lessons? "

" The lessons were brilliant. I am so grateful! "

" Loan of keyboard to practice on at home would help the learning process and repeat funding as my daughter has really taken to it but not having the funds to continue is unfortunate for her. Emma says "big songs" she means not nursery rhymes! "



The Fred Paton Centre ~ Woodlands

3. How have the funded lessons impacted you or your life?

" As a one parent family I simply could not afford to take up lessons for my daughter. It has given my daughter a taste for learning reading music and a we are currently looking to source an affordable piano/keyboard for the house so we can both continue to practice what she learnt at her lessons. My daughter will now be teaching me, I am excited by this as I have discovered a love for the sound of the piano. Emma says "that she actually got to play on a piano!" She feels privileged. "

" Initially the fact of them had a positive impact. The actual attending & learning has developed an interest that has lead to an appreciation that being playful in this way is relaxing and good for raising spirits and improving mood In our communities. "

" Learning piano has been life-enhancing adding an expansive dimension to my life. Brings home to me the possibilities in life! "

" I am now going to purchase a keyboard and learning the piano will become a new hobby for me. Its also made me think about introducing the piano to my children too. "

" It has given me confidence to practice on my own and to show people that I can do it. It has given me the confidence to be able to play in front of a crowd if Grainne was with me. "

" I've been able to feel a lot more confident playing piano and can honestly state that I've played more piano in the last year than I had in the previous ten years. "

I feel that the funded lessons have had a big, positive impact on my life. I now have other people in my friends and family who also play the piano when they visit. "



'Custard' at the Kirkintilloch Canal Festival ~ Peel Park



24 Piano Donations in 2015



A bumper year for piano donation . . .
21 Uprights ~ 2 Baby Grand Pianos and
1 Grand Piano. 24 in total. Many thanks

Additional Feedback

" Thanks to a collaboration with Glasgow Piano City, we at Gartnavel Royal Hospital have been able to offer more live music and new art to people using mental health services.

We were able to connect the reclaiming of the piano, donated by Glasgow Piano City, with our Artists in Residence programme which takes place thanks to another collaboration with Project Ability here at Gartnavel Royal. The Artists were invited to look to the green spaces on the Gartnavel site to create new artwork, using the piano as the canvas. The result is now housed in the main entrance of Gartnavel Royal Hospital where it is frequently brought to life by patients, staff, visitors and volunteer musicians of Glasgow Piano City.

We consider our relationship with Glasgow Piano City as core in helping us challenge the stigma associated with mental ill health through a performance programme delivered by external musicians."

Fiona Sinclair . . . Volunteer Services Manager - North West Sector & Lead, 'Art in the Gart'

Mental Health Services, Upper Hub, Gartnavel Royal Hospital, 1055 Great Western Road, Glasgow G12 0XH



"Having piano lessons again, after 35 years, was pretty scary.

At age 8, I decided that piano lessons just weren't for me. I hated scales and learning to read music, and preferred just playing. So I've been playing by ear for the last 35 years.

In just four lessons, I've recovered from my fear of scales, and have seen just how useful music theory is to building a broader understanding of improvising. It's given me a whole new palette to draw from, and a much deeper understanding of music. Thanks so much. I'll definitely have some more lessons once I've applied what I've learned in these!"

" I just want to dance the piano to life. Beethoven didn't like dancing, apparently. I don't like Beethoven. Or scales. "

Martyn Clark

4. Any other comments.

" A big thanks for the effort made to bringing this opportunity to me. I appreciate and value it. Grianne was patient thoughtful and professional. I look forward to a course being available in the future. "

" Brilliant. Without this, I wouldn't have been able to think of learning to play. "

" Thank you so much for the lessons. Good luck getting repeated funding. "

" Thanks to GlasgowPianoCity for this opportunity. I wouldn't have known where to go for this type of introductory piano session. And I don't know if I would have had the budget for lessons either. I feel that I will now develop a long term relationship with the piano, my new

" Enabling access to tutors has definitely improved my skills and understanding of where I need to focus my future development. "

" I hope other people get the chance to take up the lessons and to learn piano as I have thoroughly enjoyed. "

" The free lessons were a great start from Grainne, for me as an absolute beginner, I have made my dream come true and am beginning to read music, which I could never do before. I also used Piano city to help buy a piano, and now have one at home. It had made a big difference to my mental health, as I have anxiety and the piano soothes me. Thanks to Tom and Grainne, this is a valuable project, really gave me confidence in achieving a life-long dream to learn to play piano. I hope it grows. "



'Allison' at the ' Dream Machine ' at the **Market on the Corner** ~ the Bar-



Grainne Rooney

Over the past year I have had the pleasure of teaching around 50 pupils through Glasgow Piano City. (GPC) I was delighted to hear about the project and it has been wonderful to help it flourish. I particularly liked the way that the free lessons have made learning piano more accessible. Many pupils have said that they previously felt it wasn't something they would ever have the opportunity to do. As a piano teacher it is fantastic to be part of a project which makes learning piano more inclusive. I also think that GPC have helped challenge attitudes that music is elitist and shown that everyone can get involved.

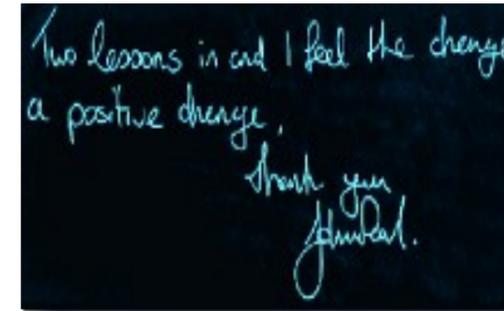
Through the GPC 'Playing it by Ear' initiative I have taught a variety of pupils, varying from children aged five to adults in their late sixties, some of whom were adults wanting to learn for pleasure, amateur singer-songwriters wanting to learn how to play and write for piano, and some were looking for a form of stress relief and relaxation.

Although I had substantial tutoring and teaching experience behind me, facilitating the GPC tuition has broadened my teaching skills, as well as the range of materials that I create to bring to lessons. Teaching such a diverse range of pupils, all coming to me with different aims and learning styles, meant I had to provide a variety of different approaches. However, having only four sessions could be limiting, so I did try to find ways to teach that allowed people to learn something meaningful within a few lessons.

Before beginning a first lesson I always asked the pupil what their aims or aspirations for the lessons were so that I could tailor the activity to suit them. I then tried to get to know the pupil and what learning style suited them. For example, I used a variety of visual stimuli in the form of music notations, written letters, pictures of keyboards with highlighted keys, as well as written explanations in the form of handouts.

The use of *Figurenotes* notation has been a real success. It has given some students the ability to learn music from reading it, when previously they had found learning music notation very difficult. Although useful for a broad range of learners it has proved especially helpful for very young children and people with learning difficulties or brain injuries.

For others, traditional notation was used in combination with the *Figurenotes* coloured stickers on the piano in order to create normal notation with colour-coded note heads. This proved a useful stepping stone, allowing them to learn more difficult pieces which they had the ability to play, but had not yet developed the skill to read the notation for. Being able to move on to more complex, advanced, or longer pieces so soon seemed to be very rewarding for the pupils.



For some pupils it was important to them to play by ear, so the focus of the lessons was how to pick out a melody, then to harmonise and arrange it. In other cases, the focus was on creating their own music through improvisation or composition. In these cases, teaching some basic theory - scales, chords and keys - gave them the skills to be able to start composing their own music or creating accompaniments on piano. Using music theory in the lessons also helped give pupils the terminology they needed to communicate their ideas, particularly when playing with other musicians.

It was wonderful to see the effects the lessons had on the pupils. Some people, although keen to learn, were nervous about going to piano lessons initially - so attending the GPC lessons through really helped to raise their confidence. For others it was about gaining the confidence to perform and play in front of people. Many of my students have mentioned that they previously avoided getting involved in musical activity, but the lessons had made them more self-assured about joining in. Almost without exception, I saw my pupils gain confidence in their own skill, as well as their ability to learn.

As a tutor, it has been so satisfying to see the effects of the lessons reaching beyond the individual pupils receiving the lessons. In one case I had the parent of a young pupil ask for recommendations of piano music to listen to at home. They got back to me to say how enjoyable and relaxing they found exploring the work of different composers - they have even since expressed a desire to learn piano themselves. In other instances, it has been the reverse: adult pupils have been asking about how to get their children involved in playing piano, or playing music. In other cases, friends, relatives, or colleagues of the pupils (or staff at partner organisations) have been keen to have a go themselves. These conversations are testimony to the truly positive ripple effect that providing piano tuition can have in people's lives.

