

Hear it, play it, enjoy it

Christine Morris says that when she learnt to play the piano, she “felt trapped within the pages of a book”.

“When people learn the guitar, they can pick up any guitar and start strumming. I could not do that with the piano.”

If there was no music to read, she couldn't play. And for 20 years she didn't.

Morris now teaches piano from her Hughes home. The turning point, she says, was discovering Simply Music.

Simply Music is a piano and keyboard teaching method developed by Australian Neil Moore. Morris says in contrast to the traditional reading-based learning, Simply Music is a playing-based method that doesn't introduce reading music till much later.

In that way, it is similar to the Suzuki Method, an aural learning program developed by Shinichi Suzuki in Japan with a philosophy that “any child who is properly trained can develop musical ability just as all children develop the ability to speak their mother tongue”.

Morris echoes that sentiment, saying that just as children discover language and freely talk for years before learning to read and spell, Simply Music teaches students to play music before they are required to read it.

Morris likens it to learning to play *Chopsticks*. Most of us know how to play it on the piano, though we have never seen the



Hughes piano teacher Christine Morris says learning to play piano can be fun.

Photo: KARLEEN WILLIAMS



music written down. “Simply Music taps into that concept,” she says.

It also means students remember the music they have learnt to play. “You might not have seen a piano for 10 years, but you can still walk over to it and reproduce music,” Morris says.

Supporters of the program say it redefines who is capable of successfully playing and even teaching music. It also can enable children and adults with special needs such as autism, Tourette's, attention deficit disorder and other cognitive, behavioural and physical

challenges to play when they previously might not have been able to grasp methods.

Whereas Suzuki Method places an emphasis on repetitive listening and technique, Simply Music immerses students in the experience of playing, distilling entire pieces into simple shapes, patterns and concepts that students can clearly see, and easily play.

Morris says one of the most enjoyable and fun aspects of the method is that the music return is instant. In traditional teaching methods, “You are restricted in what you can play by what you can read.” Simply Music students are learning songs from their first lesson, and can have a repertoire of dozens of pieces before they can read music.

This is another distinction between Simply Music and Suzuki – Suzuki students focus on playing fewer, classical pieces, in a more

technically correct fashion. “We focus on one thing at a time, and add layers. We use cross-pollination. What you learn in one song you can use in another. Playing then becomes automatic,” Morris says.

Simply Music's overriding goal is that students acquire and retain music as a lifelong companion.

Morris decided to teach the program after taking her daughter, Allison, now 10, to lessons in Sydney. The family moved to Canberra, there was no Simply Music teacher, so Morris decided to take the plunge. Morris considers music a part of general wellbeing and says it can be an important outlet for people “who are unable to express themselves verbally very well.”

■ For more details, visit www.simplymusic.com and www.suzukimusic.com.au

Eggscellent eating in a shell



A dozen eggs stored in the fridge is the most convenient of protein foods, always on hand for a quick omelette, frittata or simple supper of scrambled eggs on toast. Eggs appeal to all ages from babies to older folk who find them soft and easy to digest. Unfortunately, the good name of the egg has been marred since the '70s, when its cholesterol content gained it a reputation as a trigger for heart disease.

These days, we realise it's the saturated fat rather than the cholesterol content of food that's the culprit.

In fact, eggs have recently gained the Heart Foundation Tick, since the majority of their fat content is made up of healthy monounsaturated and polyunsaturated fats. Older analyses set the cholesterol content of an egg at a hefty 250mg, but more recent figures reveal the average egg contains about 190mg of cholesterol, making them less of a worry than previously thought.

Only a small proportion of the population (15-25 per cent) need to stay away from eggs completely.

These people, known as hyper-responders, “overreact” to cholesterol in their diet, putting them at greater risk of heart disease.

Generally, if you don't have a cholesterol problem and eat a diet low in saturated fat, two eggs a day isn't a problem. If you do have high cholesterol, however, limit eggs to three or four a week, avoid other cholesterol-rich foods and keep saturated fat to a minimum.

Eggs are incredibly nutritious. They supply every vitamin except vitamin C, as well as a number of key minerals, including selenium, iron and zinc, which are vital for a healthy immune system. They are a good source of lutein and zeaxanthin, antioxidants that may prevent the loss of eyesight with age. Two medium eggs provide about 13g protein, 10g fat (of which 3g is saturated), 375mg cholesterol and no carbohydrate or fibre.

There are many healthy ways to serve eggs, ie, poached, boiled or scrambled with wilted spinach on wholegrain

toast. They're wonderful hard-boiled and sliced or mashed with mayonnaise on rye bread with salad leaves. Or stirred raw through hot pasta with baby spinach, crumbled ricotta and black pepper.

■ Catherine Saxelby is a nutritionist and author of *Nutrition for Life*. Get more healthy eating tips at www.foodwatch.com.au

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