
Diary of a string teacher



...Only one more day to go. Last lessons all round – Grade Preliminary to 8. I am sure they are well prepared. I have done everything to help them, smoothing the way to the best of my ability. I have made sure that their instruments are clean, their bows rosined. I have organized the accompanist and the students have rehearsed and even had a chance to perform their pieces at my little house concert. (They loved the chocolate cake.) I have patiently

taught those tricky fingerings for the melodic minor scales for the 100th time, practised those aural tests, quizzed the students on their general knowledge, listened to those studies and pieces all the while checking that we have adhered to the objectives outlined for each level. I have encouraged, enthused and sympathized, both with students and parents. My job is almost done, however there are still a few last minute checks that I need to make before I send the candidates into the examining room. I know, from years of experience, not only as a student, teacher but also as an examiner, that these seemingly small tasks can facilitate the smooth running of the AMEB exam, ensuring a relaxed student and a happy examiner. They are as follows.

A is for Adjustors. I need to check that the adjustors/fine tuners are not wound down so far that they are drilling through the belly of the instrument. They need to be oiled and able to be wound in both directions for those last minute tuning adjustments in order to deal with different temperatures and differing pitches of the pianos in the examining rooms. How many times have I as an examiner spent 5 minutes of valuable examination time readjusting the set up of the strings? This proves to be nerve -wracking for candidate and examiner alike.

M is for Markers. I must make sure that the markers on the fingerboards and necks have been removed for all grades above Preliminary.

E is for Erasers. I must ensure that all markings are removed from the music that relate to General Knowledge. This means all key changes, translations of musical terms, explanations of composers, musical periods etc.

B is for Being Prepared- armed with all examination slips, technical work forms, and if the student is in Level 2 and above, I must ensure that they have the accompaniment score available for the General Knowledge, not just their own part.

Wendy Heiligenberg,
String Teacher and AMEB Strings Advisor and Examiner

AMEB office hours

In 2012 the AMEB office has moved to new office hours:

Monday, Wednesday and Friday 9am-5pm

Tuesdays and Thursdays the office opens from 1pm – 5pm

It is expected that this will allow some uninterrupted administrative processing and faster turnaround of examining materials.

Change of telephone number

The AMEB telephone number is now (08) 8313 8088
