

Miss Daisy Hardwick – 90-second monologue

"Now then... before we begin, fingers curved, back straight... and no banging the piano! It is an instrument, not a piece of machinery!"

I'm Miss Daisy Hardwick, piano teacher here in Korumburra. I was born in Sydney, but I've lived here since I was knee-high to a piano. My father managed the Coal Creek mine, while I preferred something a little more... *melodious*.

I studied at the Melbourne Conservatorium before returning home to teach.

People sometimes asked why I never married. The truth is that I wanted to continue my career. In those days, marriage often meant giving up paid work, and I wasn't prepared to leave music behind.

Over the years I've taught hundreds of local children, from beginners learning their first scales to talented young musicians with ambitions far beyond South Gippsland.

One of those students was Leonard Hungerford.

After studying with me in Korumburra, Leonard then went on to Melbourne Conservatorium... then New York... and before long he built an international career as a concert pianist, performing throughout Europe and America.

Years later, he returned home to perform in Korumburra. During the concert, he paused to acknowledge the people who had helped him along the way.

To my surprise, he thanked his first teacher.

It was a proud moment - not because of the recognition, but because it reminded me that good teaching and an appreciation of music can have an impact far beyond the walls of a classroom.

And for a piano teacher in a small country town, that's reward enough.