

**Junior Hoedowner**  
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**Russelle Adams Writes About Gabriel and Isaaiah Adams**

Fiddle music intertwines many rewarding aspects of life together for our family. Gabriel and Isaaiah began fiddling after two years of classical Suzuki method. It was an exciting foray into a more free and fun style of music, with new friends, new loving grown-ups, new challenges and exciting travel opportunities. I taught the children using the beginning Ludiker fiddle series, but the children quickly exceeded my ability to lead effectively as their fiddle teacher. We gave it up for a while, until we met Kian Dye, who is also classically trained in the Suzuki method. We were so impressed by his musicality, and we heard about Eileen Walters and it was exactly what we wanted to diversify our music, and to inject a lot of fun into our music program.

In the beginning Gabriel was adverse to any contesting, but I knew as a parent that if I could help him conquer the stage, it would be a boost to his ability to know what is possible and to believe in himself. Isaaiah meanwhile seemed to feel completely comfortable with the stage. To acclimatize Gabriel to the stage, we took playing in public in small steps. I encouraged him to play for family friends, and acquaintances...then we began to busk...or play on the street.

I always chose a protected environment where I could control their experience as much as possible. Outside of Whole Foods, or New Seasons... the clientele is very warm and supportive. Then they would spend part of their earnings on food treats and they would save the rest. Gabriel's body language around playing in public became more and more confident. So pretty soon we were

ready for our first contest.

Gabriel and Isaaiah had a great time on stage...Gabriel (then 7) was literally jumping up and down with the excitement and joy he felt from conquering that fear. I have worked a lot with the kids, using visualization to build their confidence on stage and to get the best stage experience possible for them. The warmth of the fiddle community, of Jeff and Eileen Walters, and of the many fiddle grandpas and grandmas, collectively have embraced the kids and made them feel very much at home.

Fiddle music has increased the kid's focus and joy in music in so many ways. Fiddle music is exciting with more built-in rewards than classical music. Gabriel and Isaaiah do love their classical music, and they approach their classical music with an appetite that is strengthened by the fiddle music. Each type of music enhances the other, so that the children are making (and enjoying) great strides in both genres.

**(Editor's Note: Ruselle is, of course, Gabriel and Isaaiah's mom. The text above is taken from a letter to Lew Holt. The second half of the letter will be published next month.)**

**Tune of the Month.** This month's tune is Father Kelly's Reel. It was composed by (no surprise here) by Father (P.J.) Kelly, an Irish priest and fiddler. The story is that he originally titled the tune "The Rossmore Jetty," after a place he went swimming from as a child. Kelly died in 2006.