

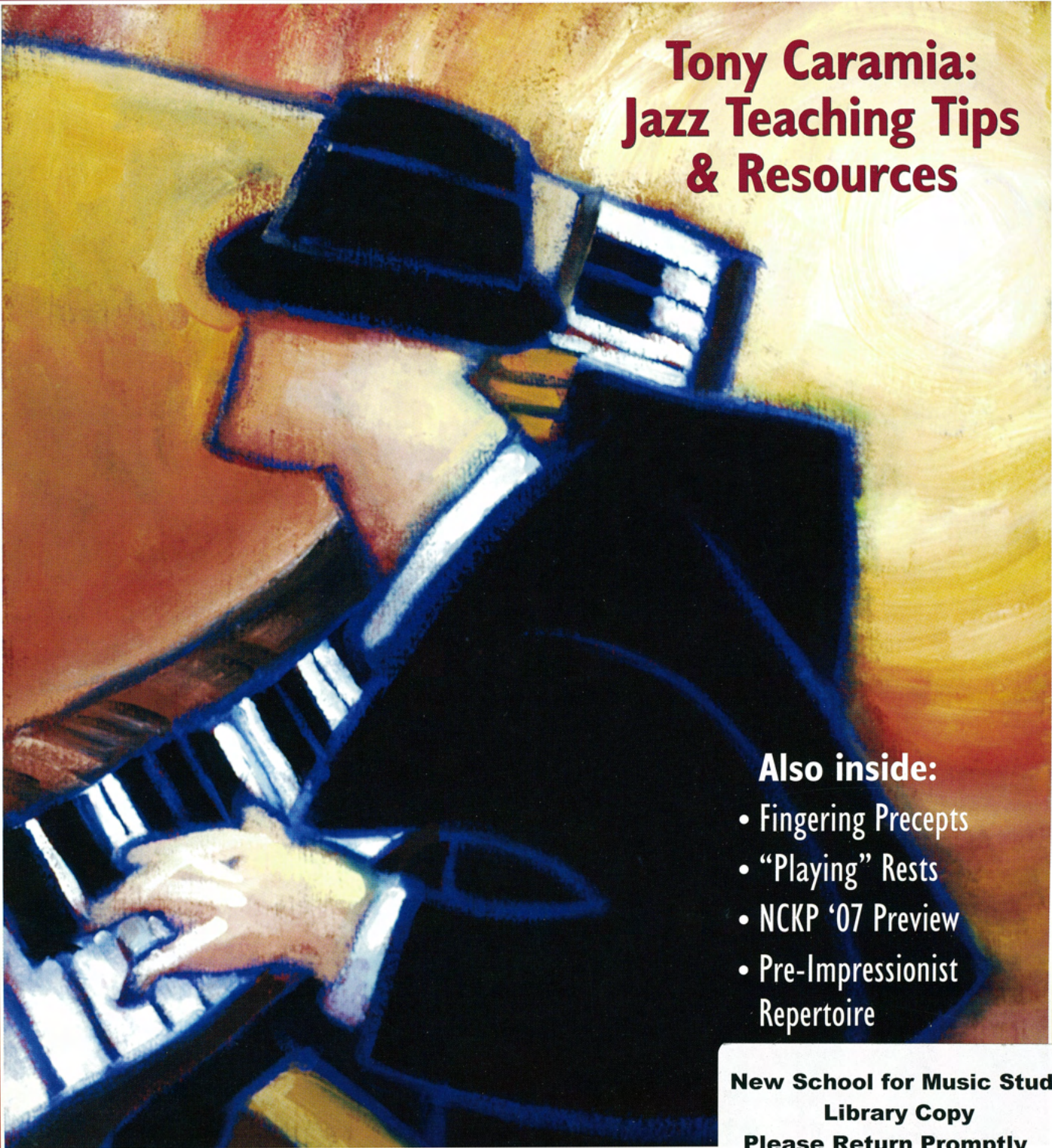


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Spring 2007
Volume 18, Number 1
Eight Dollars

A Practical Magazine on Piano Teaching



Tony Caramia: Jazz Teaching Tips & Resources

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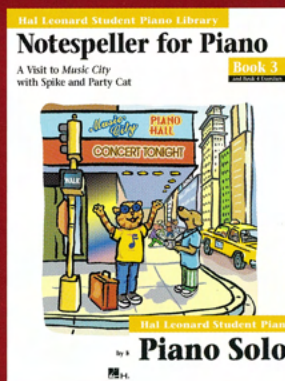
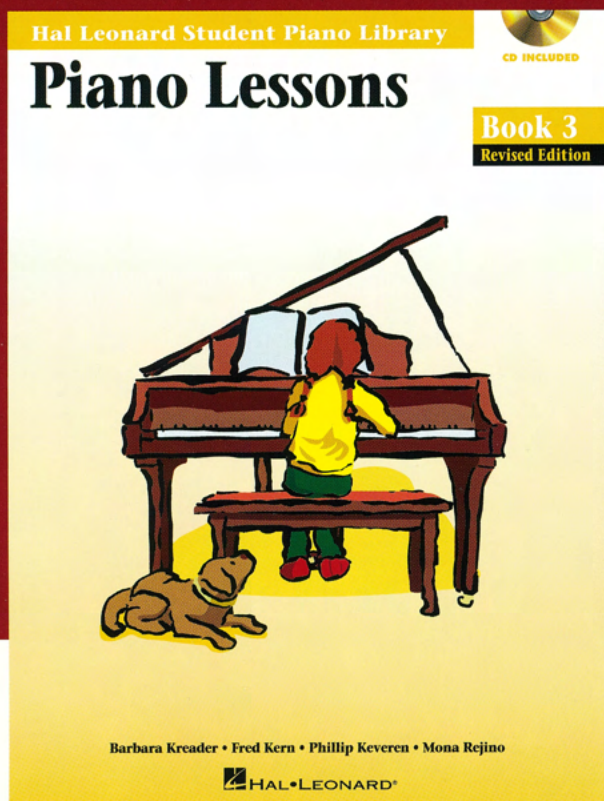
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Keyboard Companion (ISSN1086-0819), (USPS 013-579) is published quarterly — Spring, Summer, Autumn, Winter — by the *Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy*, 90 Main St., Kingston, NJ 08528. Periodicals Postage Paid at Kingston, NJ and at additional mailing offices. Printed in USA.

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Address all subscription and change of address correspondence to *Keyboard Companion*, P.O. Box 651, Kingston, NJ 08528. Telephone: 800-824-5087. Fax: 609-924-2536. E-mail: circulation@keyboardcompanion.com.

Address all advertising correspondence to *Keyboard Companion*, c/o Carmela Casipit, 6850 N. Shiloh Rd., Ste. K, PMB 136, Garland, TX 75044. Telephone and fax: 214-504-0914; Toll free: 877-282-7453. E-mail: advertising@keyboardcompanion.com.

Address all editorial correspondence to Pete Jutras, Editor-in-Chief, Hugh Hodgson School of Music, The University of Georgia, 250 River Road, Athens, GA 30602. E-mail: editor@keyboardcompanion.com.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Keyboard Companion, P.O. Box 651
Kingston, NJ 08528

PUBLICATIONS MAIL AGREEMENT NO. 41412525
RETURN UNDELIVERABLE CANADIAN
ADDRESSES TO
EXPRESS MESSENGER INTERNATIONAL
P.O. BOX 25058
LONDON BRC, ONTARIO, CANADA N6C 6A8



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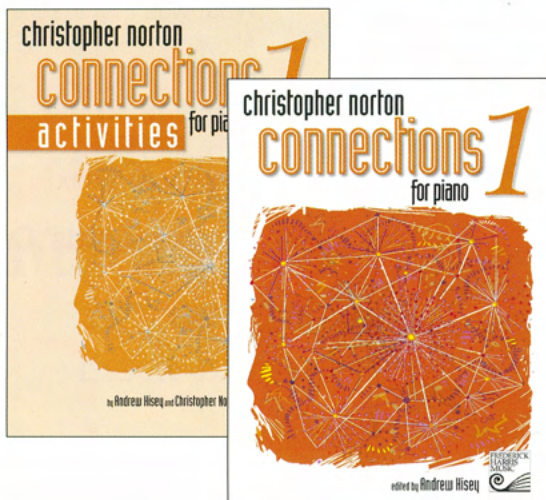
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Editor's Page

Pete Jutras, Editor-in-Chief

Hello old friend ...

... it's really good to see you once again ...

I choose these words¹ to introduce myself to you as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Keyboard Companion*, which enters its 18th year of publication with this issue. Many of you are indeed old friends, but many (perhaps most) of you I've never met. That's OK by me — I still say that as a piano teacher, musician, student, parent, or interested reader of this magazine that you qualify as an old friend.

That, in fact, is the essence of what this magazine is and what it should be — a *companion* to help bring us together. The visionary founder of this publication, Richard Chronister, was wise in recognizing that our profession can be a lonely and isolated one. We sit in our studios and see student after student, but in our busy schedules we may go for weeks on end and have relatively little contact with our professional colleagues. Contrast this to most professions where people are surrounded by colleagues and peers throughout the workday and have constant opportunities to ask questions and brainstorm with each other.

Recognizing this problem, Richard launched this magazine in 1990 and titled it *Keyboard Companion* so that it could serve as a friend, colleague, and resource for all. In the first and second issues of the magazine, he wrote:

"The aim of the editors of *Keyboard Companion* is to help teachers, parents, and students communicate with each other about the things that can make piano study one of the most pleasurable activities available today."

"We want *Keyboard Companion* to provide you with exactly what it says — companions in this wonderfully complex profession we have chosen. We want to give you lots of answers to the day-to-day questions we all encounter each year we teach."

Before Richard's untimely passing in 1999, he did a masterful job of realizing his vision and creating a treasured companion and friend for our profession. His successor, Elvina Pearce, has done an equally admirable job of continuing this magazine's tradition of excellence, leaving me some very big shoes to fill! I am honored and humbled to be associated with this fine publication and, more importantly, all of the readers who make it the forum that it is. I pledge to continue to work towards providing all of you with the companionship that you have come to know and expect from our magazine.

A partnership between writer and reader

Richard Chronister also recognized that true companionship involves communication between both parties. Part of the genius of the original design of *Keyboard Companion* was its charge to include a wide variety of viewpoints and ideas on teaching issues. In the second issue, Richard wrote that the magazine should be a "... forum for all ideas, not just those we agree with. From this kind of give and take comes fresh insights for all those whose minds are open, ready to consider new ideas — or even reconsider ideas long ago rejected."

With this in mind, we continue to strive to provide ideas and answers from a diverse mix of writers representing all areas of our field. As always, we will aim to infuse every article with practical advice and time-tested solutions to important questions and situations that we face in our profession.

It is equally important that we continue to hear from you, the reader. Your input and feedback is as important as anything we write in this magazine, and we would love to hear what you think of our articles. We hope that the topics in our magazine prompt discussion with your fellow teachers, and we encourage you to share ideas and suggestions with your colleagues. Please drop us a line with your comments and thoughts at editor@keyboardcompanion.com. I'd love to "meet" you, and all of us on the staff are interested in what you have to say. As an old friend, your thoughts are welcome anytime! ▲

Footnote

¹ From "Hello Old Friend", words and music by Eric Clapton. From the album **No Reason To Cry**, Released August, 1976, Polydor Records.

Pete Jutras, Ph.D., NCTM, is Assistant Professor of Piano at the Hugh Hodgson School of Music of the University of Georgia in Athens, GA, where he serves as Piano Pedagogy and Class Piano Specialist. Prior to his recent move to Athens, Pete maintained an independent teaching studio in Dallas, TX for ten years. His research on adult piano students has been published in the Journal of Research in Music Education, and he is a frequent presenter at national and local conferences.



Keyboard Companion News

Old friends and new friends ...

You may have read in the Winter 2006 issue and on the website that some of our "old friends" are stepping down from their roles to pursue other interests. We gratefully acknowledge their important contributions to the success of *Keyboard Companion*.

In print ...

In addition to her outstanding work as Editor-in-Chief (her Herculean efforts kept the magazine in print after Richard Chronister passed away), **Elvina Pearce** has been an "original" Associate Editor since the inaugural issue in 1990. Since the magazine's inception she has helped to produce and write 67 columns on the important subject of Home Practice, providing us with a fountain of practical advice, useful tips, and proven techniques to help us teach our students to teach themselves every time they sit down at the piano. Her contributions will be missed, and we all thank Elvina for her tireless devotion to both this magazine and the cause of good teaching.



Barbara Kreader joined the magazine as Associate Editor of the Teacher/Student/Parent department in Autumn of 1996. Since that time, she has unselfishly opened the door to her own studio in an effort to help us all understand more about motivation, communication, and relationships that make up such an integral part of our work. Barbara's poetic writing and talent for describing the everyday feelings and emotions of both teaching and learning have touched us all, and we thank Barbara for all of her inspiring insight, imagination, and advice.

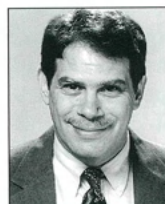


Online ...

In 1997 I attended a technology session at a national conference where the presenter confessed that the "information super-highway" at the time was really more like a one lane dirt road! At that time there were only a tiny fraction of the millions of websites available today, Netscape was the browser of choice for 80% of users, 14.4 bps modems were the common form of access (28.8 bps was the "hot" technology), and nobody had heard of Google!

Despite what now seem like serious technological limitations, in 1997 **Bruce Berr** had the vision and foresight to suggest that we take the print magazine and establish a presence on the Internet. Bruce recognized that the Internet could be used to post sound (the essence of everything we do), pictures, and video that would enhance our readers' understanding of subjects, and we owe much to his pioneering work. Today our website contains a wealth of useful multimedia, gives us important flexibility in presenting material to our readers, and (thanks again to Bruce's efforts) allows anyone to search the database of all our past articles. If you haven't spent time at www.keyboardcompanion.com, I encourage you to log on and investigate some of the wonderful resources that can be found online.

After ten years as our one and only Webmaster, Bruce is stepping down to devote more time to other interests. We thank Bruce for his hard work, technical savvy, and creative spirit — his vision has meant a lot to this magazine and its readers. We also extend a heartfelt welcome to Tim Smith, who will be assuming Webmaster duties with this issue. Thanks to Bruce's efforts, the website will continue to grow and support the mission of the magazine.



Real friends never leave ...

Fortunately for all of us, this is not the last we will hear from any of these old friends. Bruce is continuing in his role as Associate Editor of the Rhythm department, and Barbara and Elvina have been an invaluable source of advice and information during the recent transition. Both Barbara and Elvina have indicated that they may be willing to contribute to the magazine in the future, and we look forward to hearing from them. You'll notice that the Home Practice and Teacher/Student/Parent departments do not appear in this issue, but that does not mean that they won't return. These topics are both essential components of the teaching landscape, and we will continue to address them in future issues of this magazine.

In the meantime, we hope you enjoy our new friends in the Jazz/Pop teaching department (see page 8). We are thrilled to have Tony Caramia, Geoff Haydon, Phillip Keveren, and Christopher Norton joining us to provide valuable advice on this important body of repertoire, and I'm sure you'll welcome them into our circle of companionship. ▲



On the Cover

Our cover image was painted by Chuck Weber of Waukesha, WI and it is entitled "Jazz Piano II." We are very grateful to Chuck for allowing us the use of this image to launch our new Jazz/Pop Department. Information on Chuck's paintings as well as his portrait services can be found online at www.weberportraits.com, and he can be reached at chuck@weberportraits.com. ▲

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Pages 6-7.

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Faculty member **Robert Durso** will be taking the most difficult passages from the Carnaval and offering technical solutions based on the Taubman Approach.

SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTER



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Paul Roberts, author, lecturer, pianist

Paul Roberts argues for the unique qualities of Impressionist piano music and explains why it is so central to his musical outlook. This lecture/recital will suggest that an appreciation of Impressionism will enhance understanding of both the wider piano repertoire and the skills that are essential to its performance.

Applying Taubman Principles to Jazz

Faculty member **Kendall Feeney** has designed an exciting series of technique clinics for jazz pianists and pianists interested in applying Taubman/Golandsky principles to jazz.



Beginning Lessons in the Taubman Approach

Faculty member **Mary Moran** will present the latest in the Golandsky Institute Teaching Piano Technique series, "Beginning Lessons in the Taubman Approach", which discusses rotation and in and out movements.



Exploring Bach's Three-Part Inventions

Faculty member **Father Sean Duggan** will look at the fifteen Sinfonias—Three-Part Inventions—with regard to teaching and performing issues, followed by a complete performance.



SPECIAL GUEST PRESENTER

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Edward Bilous, Juilliard School of Music

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Sunday, July 15 Rachel Cheung, Hong Kong

First Prize at the 2003 International Competition for Young Pianists in Memory of Vladimir Horowitz, in the Ukraine. First Prize at the 2004 Gina Bachauer International Junior Piano Competition in Salt Lake City. Fourteen year-old Rachel Cheung has shown herself to be a pianist of remarkable artistry and maturity.



Monday, July 16 Ilya Itin, Russia

Since winning all the major prizes of the renowned Leeds International Pianoforte Competition in 1996 Russian born Ilya Itin's consummate pianism has delighted audiences on four continents. He has been praised for "his rare and exciting artistry" and "superb technique". (*Daily Telegraph UK*) "The perfect pianist" (*Der Standard Wien*)



Tuesday, July 17 Father Sean Duggan, USA

Throughout the year 2000, the 250th anniversary of Bach's death, Father Duggan performed the complete cycle of Bach's keyboard works eight times in a series of fifteen recitals entitled "Bach On the Threshold of Hope".

Thursday, July 19 Musica Ficta, Latin America

Founded in Bogotá, Colombia in 1988, Música Ficta has earned an international reputation for its passionate performances of Renaissance and Baroque music from Latin America and Spain. This brilliant ensemble's instrumentation includes percussion, baroque guitar, vihuela de mano, theorbo recorders, shawm, pipe, tabor and harpsichord.



Friday, July 20 Gülsin Onay, Turkey

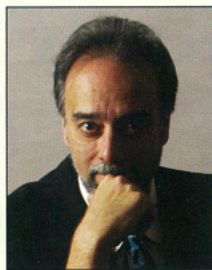
Gülsin Onay, an exceptional pianist, endowed with virtuosic brilliance and boundless energy, and an interpretive power both intelligent and emotionally sensitive, has recorded 18 albums that illustrate the breadth of her repertoire as well as her interpretive power.



Saturday, July 21 Alexander Gavrylyuk, Ukraine

In April 2005, then 21-year old Alexander Gavrylyuk won First Prize, Gold Medal as well as the Best Performance of a Classical Concerto in the internationally renowned Arthur Rubinstein International Piano Masters Competition.





Tony Caramia is Professor of Piano at the Eastman School of Music, where he is Director of Piano Pedagogy Studies and Coordinator of the Class Piano Program. In May 2004, he served as a judge, along with Kenny Barron and Hilton Ruiz, at the 6th American Jazz Piano Competition for the American Pianists Association. In May 2003, he was a guest on Marian McPartland's "Piano Jazz" on NPR.

Mr. Caramia was featured in the November 2006 issue of *The American Rag* magazine. He reviews for *American Music Teacher Magazine*, and he has written for the web site *The Piano Pedagogy Forum*. His solo piano compositions are published by the *Hal Leonard Publishing Corporation*, for whom he is also a *Keyboard Clinician and Consultant*.

Throughout 2005 he presented a multi-media tribute to composer *Harold Arlen*, on the occasion of his 100th birthday. Mr. Caramia is a member of the *Arlen Centennial Committee*.

In January 2007 he presented a paper on legendary pianist *Cy Walter* for the *International Association for Jazz Education National Conference* in New York City. In March he will discuss "The Art of Modern Recital Programming" at the *MTNA-CFMTA Collaborative Conference* in Toronto. And in June he will perform at the *Rochester International Jazz Festival*.

Mr. Caramia's new solo jazz piano CD, called *Tribute*, features the music of *Ellington, McPartland, Brubeck*, as well as original compositions. His other jazz recordings include: *Upstate Standards*, with *Mark Kellogg* on trombone, a concert of well-known popular songs by *Harold Arlen, Jimmy Van Heusen, and Alec Wilder*; and a solo jazz piano release called *Tony Caramia, Live!* These are available exclusively through Mr. Caramia at tcaramia@esm.rochester.edu (Please see ad on page 10.)

Feature Article: Jazz & Pop

Tony Caramia, Editor

Welcome to our new Jazz/Pop Department

by Pete Jutras, Editor-in-Chief

If your students are anything like the ones I've had over the years, they love to play jazz and pop repertoire. As time marches forward, it is evident that the jazz and pop genres will stand as important musical contributions of the 20th century. With that in mind, we have decided to add a regular department that will address issues related to the teaching of jazz and popular repertoire. Just like the other departments in *Keyboard Companion*, the Jazz/Pop department will provide practical solutions, ideas, and teaching advice applicable to your everyday teaching settings.

It gives me great pleasure to announce that this feature will be produced by a rotation of editors, each contributing once a year. The contributing editors constitute a true "Dream Team" of jazz and pop pedagogues. They're prolific composers, arrangers, performers, and educators, and I know you'll find their contributions valuable and useful.

The contributing editors for this department will be:

- Tony Caramia, Professor of Piano at the Eastman School of Music
- Phillip Keveren, co-author of *The Hal Leonard Student Piano Library*
- Geoff Haydon, Associate Professor of Piano at Georgia State University
- Christopher Norton, author of the *Microjazz* series and co-author of the new series *American Popular Piano*.

Please join me in welcoming this great team of writers to the *Keyboard Companion* family.

In the following article, Tony Caramia outlines some basic online and print resources for information and examples of authentic jazz styles and performances. In addition, he expertly answers some basic questions about jazz interpretation and rhythm. We hope you enjoy his article as well as future articles in this exciting department.

Taking you from "I Can't Get Started" to "Easy Melodies": Jazz teaching tips and resources

by Tony Caramia

Welcome to the inaugural article in our new Jazz and Pop Department! We'd like this feature to be very useful and inspiring for teachers. This genre of music is motivating and fun for our students, but many of the important stylistic, theoretical, and technical issues that arise in jazz and pop music are often not addressed in "traditional" music training.

It is our desire that the teacher who confesses to know relatively little about how to perform or teach jazz and pop repertoire can come away from these discussions with

a clearer picture of the nature of this unique style of music, and feel enabled to teach it with more authentic and stylistically accurate results.

Jazz resources on the internet

We live in an age of information, and for those interested in learning more about jazz the internet offers a multitude of resources. In fact, there are so many sources of information these days, it is hard to know where to begin!

Informal: www.youtube.com/

On this fast growing and popular site (ask your students about it) anyone can post videos of almost anything. While you can find many interesting videos here, be advised that the quality and content can vary. Type in “jazz piano” in the *search for* box. You’ll be amazed, delighted, amused, and overwhelmed at the diversity of approaches. Recently I found over 2,900 ‘teaching demonstrations’ on this topic alone!

Specific: www.berkleeshares.com/

Berklee Shares offers individual self-contained music lessons developed by Berklee faculty and alumni. It is free and open to the music community around the world and contains a library of MP3 audio, QuickTime movie, and PDF files, as well as a glimpse into the educational opportunities provided by Berklee.

Educational: www.42explore.com/jazz.htm

This educational site provides a comprehensive list of links to jazz sites, as well as educational information and projects for your students to complete. If you want to learn more about people from Louis Armstrong to Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald, or Lena Horne, you can link to the eduScapes companion webpage, *Biographies of Jazz Musicians*. The amount of information is astounding and there are lots of interesting weekly assignments that can be given to your students.

Visual: www.jazzvideopodcasts.com/

This site includes performances and interviews with the “giants” of jazz, including Denny Zeitlin, Sonny Rollins, Duke Ellington, and many others. It also provides a valuable glimpse into the minds and perspectives of these jazz musicians, as they discuss various issues related to jazz. Of special importance is Dr. Billy Taylor’s description of jazz and its relevance to American society titled *Conscience of Jazz*.

Informational: www.allaboutjazz.com/

This amazing site offers a virtual (pun-intended) cornucopia of information, links, historical perspectives, podcasts, CD reviews, and artist interviews.

Editor’s Note: The links mentioned in this article are posted on our website: www.keyboardcompanion.com.

Of course there are innumerable other links to jazz information, as well as traditional text books, method books, fake books, sheet music, recordings, videos, and more (a list of text resources will follow later in this article). It is daunting and certainly difficult to decide what source is perfect for one’s specific needs. Some typical questions might include:

- Which site, book, or recording will help a student perform William Gillock’s *New Orleans Jazz Styles* in a more authentic style?
- Does the printed score provide all the interpretive clues?
- Haven’t I heard somewhere (you might ask) that a good jazz pianist doesn’t try to play what’s on the page?
- Do I instruct my student to avoid the markings on the page?
- If so, then why are there markings on the page if I’m only going to change them?

In this article and future articles we will try to provide answers to questions like these as we explore this unique and popular body of repertoire.

Choosing repertoire for your students

As with any style of music, choosing the right piece for your student is an important step in leading to a successful experience. Before we discuss aspects of jazz as they relate to specific pieces, there are a few general items to consider when selecting pieces for your students to play.

When choosing repertoire for any student at any level, good teachers should consider the following points most carefully:

- **Sound:** Is it “jazzy”? Does the piece sound idiomatically accurate and would it appeal to students, teachers, parents, and an audience?
- **Feel:** Does the music fit the hand at the appropriate level? Is it pianistic?
- **Technic:** Does the music involve unnecessary or unwarranted technical problems? Is the student prepared to handle all the technical challenges, or will new techniques need to be learned for this piece?
- **Style:** Does the music teach something about a form or style (such as swing or blues)? What will the student learn from the piece? Is the piece contrived or musical?

In addition to the above parameters, I try to be mindful of other factors when choosing *jazzy* repertoire:

- What does the music teach about jazz? Does it evoke the sound of a particular artist or recording?
- Does it employ such jazzy elements as blue notes, grace notes, blues form, walking bass, etc.?
- Does the fact that it is a jazz piece contribute unnecessary or unwarranted technical problems, simply because it’s in the jazz idiom?

As with all music, playing jazz well is all about **sound**. After choosing a jazz piece for a student, it is important to become famil-

iar with jazz performance practice, as defined by performances of jazz by great artists such as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Oscar Peterson, and many others. It is these artists who created the ‘rules’, and they did so not from written scores, but from aural experiences. **It is these performances that jazz teaching repertoire tries to capture.** Jazz inescapably comes from an aural tradition, creating a different source to consult when teaching a jazz piece — not the printed page, but the actual performances and/or recordings.

“New Rules”: Jazz interpretation vs. Classical interpretation

Most of us are familiar with traditions of performance practice, style, tempo selection, and overall sound in the various style periods (Baroque, Romantic, etc..) of the “traditional” piano repertoire. In jazz, the approach is often very different. You’ll see that these next points about jazz differ considerably from classical repertoire and must be understood if one is to create authentic jazzy performances.

Tempo

You can and should use ANY tempo, from very slow to very fast. There are no tempo indications or metronome suggestions in Ellington’s *Prelude to a Kiss*. Tempo markings and especially metronome markings in a jazz teaching piece are, unfortunately, misleading. To illustrate this point, try an experiment: Find a student who has downloaded *iTunes*, or download it for free to your home computer (Mac or PC).

- Click music store.
- In the Search Music Store box, type in the song title *Autumn Leaves*.
- You’ll see that over 30 albums containing the song appear; and far more single recordings are available (you can listen to 30 seconds for free; for a small fee you can purchase the entire selection). The important point here is that if you were to listen to even half of these recordings of *Autumn Leaves*, you would **not** hear the same version, the same tempo, or even the same key.

If you were able to attend several jazz concerts in which *Autumn Leaves* was performed, the same phenomenon would occur — you would find a variety of approaches. Instrumentation might vary from solo to small combo, big bands, vocals, and many other combinations of sound; interpretations might explore multiple keys or several tempi and moods; and rhythmic treatments could range from bossa nova to waltz to ad lib.

There is no urtext in jazz. We are not obliged to follow the composer's wishes when interpreting jazz — and this performance practice aspect of jazz is the same when interpreting a jazz teaching piece. This doesn't excuse poor musicianship; rather, it *enhances* musicianship, as it invites creative and personal approaches that might possibly change what a composer such as William Gillock or Philip Keveren had in mind. This is not only good, but is actually expected and encouraged in the jazz world.

Swing rhythms

These are often written as ♪♪, ♪♪♪, or ♪♪♪♪. Unfortunately, *there is no accurate way of notating swing.* It simply boils down to a long sound followed by a shorter sound. It must be felt and performed in a relaxed manner, with an articulation that incorporates a smooth melodic line occasionally interrupted by accented sounds. The best aural models of an authentic swing sound are the recordings of John Lewis and Bill Evans.

Suggestion:

- Go to www.allmusic.com.
- Click "Jazz".

- In the GO box, type in John Lewis; underneath that box, click Artist/Group.
- Click the top name, John Lewis.
- Continue reading, but eventually click *Discography*.
- You should see a range of recordings from 1956-2006, with several available as short (10 second) excerpts. My recommendations for students (and teachers) as an aural guidance for swinging are *Evening with Two Grand Pianos* (1979), *Evolution* (1999) and any recording with his seminal group, The Modern Jazz Quartet, especially *Beginnings* (1952), *The Wonderful World of Jazz* (1960), *Kansas City Breaks* (1982), and *The Complete Last Concert* (1992).

Doing the same for Bill Evans will yield many wonderful sounds:

- Go to www.allmusic.com, and follow the procedure above, substituting Bill Evans for John Lewis.
- I recommend all of his recordings, but especially *The Solo Sessions* (1963), *Bill Evans with Symphony Orchestra* (1965), *Alone* (1969), *The Tony Bennett/Bill Evans Album* (1975), and *New Conversations* (1978) as prime examples of a truly personal jazz that swings.

Grace notes

A cursory listening to the samples from the two artists mentioned above will also give the listener many examples of the jazzy use of *grace notes*. The important point here is: jazz artists don't add grace notes because the score tells them to — they add grace notes because their ear tells them to and the style they're using, like swing, dictates grace notes. You'll hear that jazz musicians automatically add grace notes before roots, major 3rds, 5ths, and 7ths — especially if the note that is 'graced' is a longer duration, or on the beat. Grace notes are also common if the principle note is a white key and the grace note is a black key. This facilitates the sliding sound guitarists or singers often employ. Students can freely add grace notes before these principle scale degrees whenever the 'spirit moves them', as long as it doesn't interfere with the tempo or cause a technical problem. And students should feel free to add grace notes *even if the composer hasn't written them*.

Finally, we come to perhaps the most important point of all:

Jazz interpretation is defined by the rhythm


Correct interpretation and articulation of swing rhythms in a jazz piece — whether notated or improvised — is dictated by the rhythms one uses, *not* the editor, *not* the edition, and *not* what is notated. This is often the most difficult aspect for classically-trained musicians to understand. Jazz performance comes from an **aural** tradition, not a notated one. Those who compose jazz teaching literature: William Gillock, Christopher Norton, Philip Keveren, Bill Boyd, Walter Noona, Glenda Austin, Melody Bober, Catherine Rollin, Lee Evans, et al., are influenced directly or indirectly by jazz musicians *who attempted to create a different interpretation each and every time they played the same song.* Duke Ellington never played his *Satin Doll* the way he wrote it or the way he performed it the previous night! It is that world of constant experimentation that permeates jazzy repertoire, whether it is *Take the A Train* or *New Orleans Nightfall*. It must be different from the score; the idiom of jazz allows — even demands — that we alter the performance each and every time — that we seek yet another way of playing the notes.

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Now let's answer a few basic questions:

Style and interpretation

Question: I can teach students the notes and rhythms to notated pieces (like William Gillock's *New Orleans Jazz Styles* or Christopher Norton's *Microjazz*), but what do I need to know about style and interpretation in these works?

Answer: You do need to know something about style and interpretation. You wouldn't want to play Mozart in the style of Prokofiev, so you want to approach a jazz piece with a good sense of what is appropriate for that particular style or genre. As explained above, the printed score in jazz is a *point of departure* — not the goal to be realized faithfully, as in a Chopin *Prelude*. Aural support, from listening to recordings, attending jazz concerts, and watching videos (such as those found on www.jazzlegends.com/ and www.legendsofjazz.net/) can help immeasurably in understanding how to interpret the various jazz styles represented by these pieces. These and other videos can help shape the sound as you watch the hands of jazz artists and hear how they approach a song or solo.

Question: What are some of the basic jazz styles that my students should be aware of, and how do I apply them to pedagogical pieces?

Answer: A majority of the jazz teaching repertoire can be placed into the following categories: blues, ballads, swing, and Latin jazz. Each has its own particular style and approach, but there can be some overlapping characteristics.

Blues is, of course, a form (12 measures in length, with an adherence to placing the I, IV, and V chords in key points within the 12 bar framework). Blues can also rely heavily on grace notes and minor 7ths. The classic blues sound and mood is created by mixing minor 3rds in the melody against major 3rds in the accompaniment.

Examples:

- "Blues Prelude" by Bill Boyd, from *Jazz Starters I* (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 1).

Look at measures 1, 2, and 3: beat 3 in each measure has a RH B \flat over a LH B \flat , creating a typical 'bluesy' sound.

- "Midnight Blues" by Sharon Aaronson, from *Daytime/Nighttime* (Alfred) (see Excerpt 2).

A superb piece that requires syncopated pedaling, appropriate grace notes, a smooth swing feel, and careful attention to the syncopations.

Excerpt 1 Blues Prelude

By Bill Boyd

Blues Prelude, from *Jazz Starters I* by Bill Boyd Copyright © 1993 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

Excerpt 2 Midnight Blues

Sharon Aaronson

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Excerpt 3 Lullaby in Blue

Carol Klose

Tenderly (♩ = 112)

Lullaby in Blue, from *Fanciful Waltzes* by Carol Klose Copyright © 2004 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

Excerpt 4 Song for the Moment

Larry Minsky

With a wistful feeling (♩ = 104)

Song for the Moment, from *Patterns of Jazz, Level 6* by Larry Minsky Copyright © 1998. Neil A. Kjos Music Company, WP 546, www.kjos.com. Used with permission, 2007.

Ballads showcase the rich harmonic world of jazz, without necessarily observing a specific form (one can find ballads in blues style or other forms). The use of complex rhythms like swing is usually not prevalent in Ballads.

Examples:

- “Lullaby in Blue” by Carol Klose, from *Fanciful Waltzes* (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 3).
- “Song for the Moment” by Larry Minsky, from *Patterns of Jazz, Level 6* (Kjos) (see Excerpt 4).

There is no urtext in jazz.

Swing refers to both a rhythmic component in jazz as well as the prevailing style of jazz in the 1930s as played by Teddy Wilson, Benny Goodman, and Count Basie. In the jazz teaching world, one encounters swing rhythms in many compositions — it is the friction between what this rhythm looks like and what it sounds like that frequently frustrates teachers.

Example:

- “Over Easy” by Bill Boyd, from *Jazz Bits* (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 5).

This is a good piece to develop an easy, relaxed sound so necessary to proper swing. Be sure to lightly emphasize each syncopation.

Latin jazz, in the form of bossa novas, tangos, or rumbas are a welcome change from swing and other more common forms in jazz teaching pieces and can add vitality to a student’s repertoire.

Example:

- “Mango Moon” by Edwin McClean, from *Jazz Nocturnes* (FJH) (see Excerpt 6).

This excellent, well-crafted piece has much to teach about style and jazz harmonies, especially the extensive use of the E7(#9) chord. Also, pay special attention to the accent in m. 5 — this is stylistically accurate because the chord occurs before a silence. In swing or Latin jazz, any sound (chord or single note) that is on an off beat and precedes a rest, must be accented *whether notated or not*.

Excerpt 5 Over Easy

BILL BOYD

Slow Swing (♩ played as $\frac{r}{5}$)

Over Easy, from *Jazz Bits* by Bill Boyd Copyright © 1993 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

Excerpt 6 Mango Moon by Edwin McClean

Moderately fast $\text{♩} = \text{ca.} 136$

Mango Moon, from *Jazz Nocturnes* by Edwin McClean Copyright © 1999 the FJH Music Company, Inc. International Copyright Secured. Used with permission.

Excerpt 7 **Shenandoah**

Expressively ♩ = 64

Musical score for 'Shenandoah' in G major, 4/4 time. The score is arranged for piano and features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Expressively' with a quarter note equal to 64 beats per minute. The score is divided into three systems. The first system starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic. The second system includes fingering numbers 4, 2, and 2. The third system includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 1, and 1.

Shenandoah, from *Cool Folk — 7 Tunes in Jazz Styles* arr. by Mike Kocour Copyright © 1996 by Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp. Exclusive Worldwide Print Rights Administered By Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

Excerpt 8 **A Touch of Blue**

By TONY CARAMIA

Slowly and mournfully ♩ = 108-132

Musical score for 'A Touch of Blue' in G major, 4/4 time. The score is arranged for piano and features a melodic line in the right hand and a harmonic accompaniment in the left hand. The tempo is marked 'Slowly and mournfully' with a quarter note equal to 108-132 beats per minute. The score is divided into three systems. The first system starts with a mezzo-piano (mp) dynamic and the instruction 'sempre legato'. The second system includes fingering numbers 1, 2, 1, 2, 2, 4, 2, 4, and 2, 4. The third system includes dynamics 'cresc.', 'ff', and 'f', and fingering numbers 1-2 and 1-2.

A Touch of Blue, from *Six Sketches* by Tony Caramia Copyright © 1986 by Belwin-Mills Publishing Corp. Exclusive Worldwide Print Rights Administered by Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

Question: Do some of the same style issues of “traditional” music like articulation, voicing, dynamic range, and rubato apply to jazz playing?

Answer: Yes: good sounds at the piano (voicing top notes of chords, judicious pedaling, a strong sense of proper articulation, and steady pulse when indicated) are part of jazz as well as classical literature.

Examples:

- “Shenandoah” arr. by Mike Kocour, from *Cool Folk — 7 Tunes in Jazz Styles* (Belwin Mills) (see Excerpt 7). This wonderful arrangement is jazzy because of the harmonies, not the rhythms. A successful performance needs a thoughtful ear, a sensitive touch, and careful attention to pedaling, much like any Chopin *Prelude*.

- “A Touch of Blue” by Tony Caramia, from *Six Sketches* (Alfred) (see Excerpt 8).

No jazzy swing rhythms here!

Rhythm

Question: Are there any rules about when to swing and when not to swing?

Answer: I presume this question comes from a piece in which the composer has not specifically indicated that rhythms should be swung. In this case one’s ear comes into play. Some pieces can sound good either played straight (not swung) or swung, but no, there are no rules.

Example:

- “Boogie-woogie Choo-choo” by Melody Bober, from *Tunes in Transit* (FJH) (see Excerpt 9 on page 15). This is a great example of when to swing and when not to swing. Even though Melody writes *no swing*, I hear this train a -shufflin’ along at a nice slow groove. So if you want to treat this piece with a swing feel, then you must slow down the tempo considerably. This wonderfully written piece has a great sound if it’s swung in a chugging-along, medium groove; and it “cooks” at the metronome marking of 152. The point is: as long as the train moves steadily along, the train can go at any tempo the mood suggests.

Question: How would you teach “swing” to a student for the first time?

Answer: The first aspect of swing is that, no matter how it is represented on the page, it must sound long-short and smooth. It must NEVER sound as a ♩ , but more like ♩ . I divide each beat into 3, with a slight emphasis on 3; the students count 1-2-3-1-2-3-1-2-3. Think of a song like “I’ve Been Working on the Railroad”: it has a natural ‘swing’. Another song to study for its ‘swing’ potential is “Row, Row, Row Your Boat”. If you compare how it is usually written with the way everyone sings it, you’ll see that we ‘swing’ this song even though it is notated with ‘straight’ eighth notes.

Students need to *hear* swing, so duets are a good start. Bill Boyd’s *Jazz Prelims* (Hal Leonard) and Lee Evans’ *Razzle Dazzle*, *Jazzmatazz* and *Jazz Pizzazz* (Hal Leonard) are good examples. Students can hear the **swinging teacher** part and then mimic the sound of those rhythms in later pieces.

Question: Where should I place emphasis when rhythms are syncopated?

Answer: In jazz all syncopations are to be emphasized or accented, whether notated as such or not. If a chord or single note is syncopated, it is articulated with more weight than a note that is on the beat. Also of extreme importance: if a note ends on an off-beat *and before a silence*, it must be strongly articulated *whether it is notated with an accent or not*.

Examples:

- *Carefree Song* by Tony Caramia (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 10). Measures 1, 5, 8 and 9 have a two-note slur ending on the ‘and’ of beat 1 and preceding an eighth rest: the second note of the two-note slur must be emphasized.

Excerpt 9 Boogie-woogie Choo-choo

Melody Bober

Moving steadily along ($\text{♩} = \text{ca. } 152$)

Boogie-woogie Choo-choo, from *Tunes in Transit* by Melody Bober Copyright © 1999 The FJH Music Company, Inc. International Copyright Secured. Used with permission.

Excerpt 10 Carefree Song

By Tony Caramia

Happily ($\text{♩} = 116-126$) ($\text{♩} = \text{♩}$)

Carefree Song, from Hal Leonard Student Piano Library — Showcase Solo Series by Tony Caramia Copyright © 2004 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

• “New Orleans Nightfall” by William Gillock, from *New Orleans Jazz Styles* (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 11). In the “Faster” section, measures 2, 4, and 6 have a note ending on the ‘and’ of beat two and a chord on the ‘and’ of beat three: both must be accented or stressed or emphasized by virtue of their rhythmic placement.

• “Once Over, Lightly” by Bill Boyd, from *Jazz Delights* (Hal Leonard) (see Excerpt 12). All two-note slurs ending before a rest must be accented or stressed or emphasized. Notice they are *not* indicated in the score; however, their rhythmic placement dictates that they be articulated in a short, emphatic way.

Question: Are there other rules or conventions for accenting (or not accenting) specific beats?

Answer: In general beats 2 and 4 are emphasized in a swing environment.

Example:

• “Jivin’ Around” by Glenda Austin, from *Feel the Beat* (Willis) (see Excerpt 13 on page 17). Even though there’s nothing written to indicate a stress on beats 2 and 4, this piece would sound more authentic and ‘groove’ better if those beats had a slight emphasis in measures where a note occurs on the beat, such as in the RH in measures 1 and 3, and in the LH in measures 2 and 4.

Question: Is it ever appropriate to use rubato in jazz repertoire?

Answer: Of course! Jazz is not defined only by swing. Jazz pianists’ approach to ballades can be a sublime listening experience. I recommend the following albums as superb examples of the kind of gentle and sensitive musicianship jazz pianists are capable of producing:

- Bill Evans (in addition to the examples mentioned earlier)
Quiet Now (1969)
You Must Believe in Spring (1977)
- Fred Hersch
Evanescence (1990)
Dancing in the Dark (1992)
Live at Maybeck Hall (1993)
Plays Rodgers and Hammerstein (1995)
The Duo Album (1997)
Songs and Lullabies (2003)

Text and method resources

Here are some Jazz Piano Methods worth exploring:

Jazz Works, by Ann Collins; Alfred, 2000

Ann has crafted a superb book, one of the best on the market for teaching beginning

Excerpt 11 New Orleans Nightfall

FASTER, with a beat (♩ = about 160)

New Orleans Nightfall, from *New Orleans Jazz Styles* by William Gillock Copyright © 1965 by The Willis Music Co. Copyright Renewed. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

Excerpt 12 Once Over, Lightly

Fast Swing (♩ played as ♩♩)

Once Over, Lightly, from *Jazz Delights* by Bill Boyd Copyright © 1988 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

jazz techniques to intermediate and advanced pianists. She writes “this text attempts to bridge the gap between traditional piano study and advanced level jazz instruction,” and she does this very successfully. There are CD arrangements (with trio accompaniment: drums, bass, piano) and chapters that cover material including triads; 6th and 9th chords; dominant 7ths and diminished chords; and ii-V-i progressions. The appendices include a list of jazz melodies, chord spellings, and a glossary. Highly recommended!

Play-a-Long Recordings, Jamey Aebersold; Aebersold Jazz, Inc.

One of the first of its kind (originally published in 1967), it is extremely user-friendly, with more than 130 volumes currently available. Recommended order for study:

Vol. 24: Major and Minor. Covers all major and minor keys in comfortable tempos.

Vol. 1: How to Play Jazz, 1992, 6th ed.

Thorough in its preparation of the player for improvisation.

Vol. 2: Nothin’ But the Blues. Beginning-Intermediate level. 11 blues tunes in various keys and tempos.

Vol. 3: The ii-V progression. Intermediate level. This is the most important musical sequence in jazz.

Vol. 54: Maiden Voyage. 14 jazz standards at easy tempos. Includes *Autumn Leaves* and *Satin Doll*.

Vol. 70: Killer Joe. 13 Easy standards for beginning improvisers.

Vol. 76: How to Learn Tunes. Memorize melodies and chord changes for any tune, any key.

For further study, explanations, and to order online, visit www.jazzbooks.com.

IAJE/MTNA Jazz Study Guide

The IAJE-MTNA Jazz Studies Guide was designed as a resource for studio teachers who already teach jazz and as an aid to

Excerpt 13 **Jivin' Around**

Moderate swing

Glenda Austin

Jivin' Around, from *Feel the Beat!* — Pianovations by Glenda Austin Copyright © 2003 by The Willis Music Co. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

those teachers who would like to add jazz to their studio curriculum. The *Jazz Studies Guide* has already generated widespread interest in developing greater student participation in the art of improvisation and jazz. The release of the guide also has revealed the need to provide training and assistance to teachers who would like to teach or play jazz, but need some help getting started. Available through either MTNA or IAJE on their websites (www.mtna.org or www.iaje.org).

Classical Approach to Jazz Piano Improvisation by Dominic Alldis (Hal Leonard).

This keyboard instruction book is designed for the person who is classically-trained and wants to expand into the world of jazz improvisation. It provides clear explanations and musical examples of pentatonic improvisation; the blues; rock piano; rhythmic placement; scale theory; major, minor, and pentatonic scale theory applications; melodic syntax; the language of bebop; left-hand accompaniment; walking bass lines; thematic development; performance tips; and more.

The Complete Jazz Keyboard Method by Noah Baerman (Alfred).

This series from Alfred and the National Keyboard Workshop reveals secrets to playing jazz keyboard. It provides a fun way for the player with intermediate-level or above note-reading and keyboard experience to gain valuable playing and improvisational skills. Three books — *Beginning*, *Intermedi-*

ate, and *Mastering* — cover a multitude of topics from basic through advanced levels. The optional CD demonstrates examples and gives the student an opportunity to play along. The optional *Beginning* DVD offers instruction so any keyboardist with basic keyboard skills can dig right in and begin learning jazz right away.

Hal Leonard Keyboard Styles Series. Book & CD (Hal Leonard).

The Hal Leonard Keyboard Styles Series consists of a variety of books by different authors for the keyboardist at the early-advanced level or above. The books related to jazz are:

BeBop Jazz Piano by John Valerio provides essential, detailed information for bebop and jazz pianists on the following topics: chords and voicings, harmony and chord progressions, scales and tonality, common melodic figures and patterns, comping, characteristic tunes, the styles of Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk, and much more. The accompanying CD features many of the examples in the book performed either solo or with a full band. Also included are combo performances of five of the tunes featured at the end of the book.

Stride and Swing Piano by John Valerio focuses on styles such as classic ragtime, early blues & boogie woogie, New Orleans jazz, stride, and swing. It teaches left and right-hand techniques including chords, bass runs, patterns and more.

Key players of these styles — Scott Joplin, Jimmy Yancey, Pete Johnson, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson, Fats Waller, Teddy Wilson, and Art Tatum — are prominently referenced. Includes 14 full songs to play, and an accompanying CD.

Blues Piano by Mark Harrison explores scales and chords, left-hand patterns, walking bass, endings and turnarounds, right-hand techniques, how to solo with blues scales, crossover licks, and more.

How to Play Chord Symbols in Jazz and Popular Music by Lee Evans & Martha Baker (Hal Leonard).

This book instructs the student on playing chord symbols simply and effectively more than any book available. It only deals with keys up to one sharp or four flats in a key signature. Divided into two parts, the first part outlines basic chords, from triads up to and including 7th chords and altered chords, one key at a time. Part two covers extended chords: 9th, 11th, 13th chords and additional altered chords. This book is intended for the intermediate level pianist looking for a way to learn chords, improvise, play by ear, and read lead sheets.

The Jazz Piano Book by Mark Levine (Sher Music Co.)

Over 300 pages with complete chapters on intervals and triads, the major modes, ii-V-I, 3-note voicings, suspended and phrygian chords, adding notes to 3-note voicings, tritone substitution, left-hand voicings, altering notes in the left-hand, stride and Bud Powell voicings, block chords, comping, and more.

Essentials of Jazz Theory by Shelton Berg (Alfred)

Alfred's *Essentials of Jazz Theory* is designed for jazz enthusiasts and musicians who want to have a better understanding of the language of jazz. To successfully navigate this all-in-one jazz theory course, one should be versed in basic music theory concepts. Concepts covered in Book 1 include: swing feel, swing eighth-notes, syncopation, chord changes, voice leading, modes, pentatonic scales, grace notes, blue notes, blues scales, and more. Includes a glossary and index of terms and symbols.

Before reading any text (and before teaching any jazz), I urge you to find aural examples to listen to and study. They are readily available on the Internet, on recordings, on the radio, in a library, and best of all, in live concerts and clubs. Happy listening and happy teaching! ▲



Independence Day: Music Reading

Craig Sale, Editor

Craig Sale is Director of the Preparatory and Community Piano Program at Concordia University/Chicago in River Forest, IL where he also teaches courses in piano pedagogy. He holds degrees from Northwestern University and the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, as well as a Professional Teaching Certificate from The New School for Music Study where he received his pedagogical training from Frances Clark.

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Mary Brostrom Bloom is the Head of Music Education and Piano Department Chair at Neighborhood Music School in New Haven, CT. She has been active with the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, where she was a featured teacher at the 2003 conference, and with the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts. She studied pedagogy with Frances Clark, Louise Goss and Sam Holland, and piano with Phyllis Lehrer and Ena Barton.

How much in-lesson assistance do you give students in learning new repertoire?

I think most teachers would agree that independent learning is an important goal of teaching music reading. I believe, however, that we fall short of that goal if, once a student can satisfactorily read music, we begin to simply assign repertoire to be learned independently. When we do this, we cease to be a guide and facilitator during the first readings of a piece and simply provide corrections and fine-tuning later on. As teachers, we should know the “ins and outs” of the repertoire we teach. Sharing our insights and experience with students as they begin new reper-

toire can better enable them to make the score come alive through efficient practice.

Susan Osborn and Mary Bloom share in great detail the ways in which they assist students in learning new repertoire. In both cases, these teachers are acutely aware of the musical and technical demands of the piece at hand, and they are able to communicate that knowledge to the student in a direct and practical manner. The result is that the student leaves the lesson ready to tackle not just a collection of new notes, but with a clear musical goal. ▲

My approach is to present highlights and potential pitfalls

by Susan Osborn

Proper presentation of a new piece is crucial to that piece's future performance. Preventive steps taken in these early stages can prevent hours of practice correcting errors. Even when learned errors are corrected, they are not always safe from relapse. A former teacher of mine once informed me that for every passage learned incorrectly, one must practice that passage 17 times correctly in order to “rewrite it” on the brain. To illustrate this concept, he told of a time in which he had learned a piece with one fingering, later deciding to change it. Years after securing this new fingering, he performed the piece. To his horror, he unconsciously shifted back to the original fingering in the heat of the performance — a very scary moment!

How can we help our students avoid experiences like these and teach them to use their practice time as economically as possible? My approach is to present each new piece so that the student recognizes both its *highlights* and *potential pitfalls*. Time constraints of average lessons don't allow us the luxury of rehearsing every detail in advance. But we should have time to point out the piece's most important characteristics.

Highlights

When we introduce a piece, we want to find both the “story” and the important musical elements that are behind its expression: a particular rhythm, melodic line, unique harmony, or recurring pattern.

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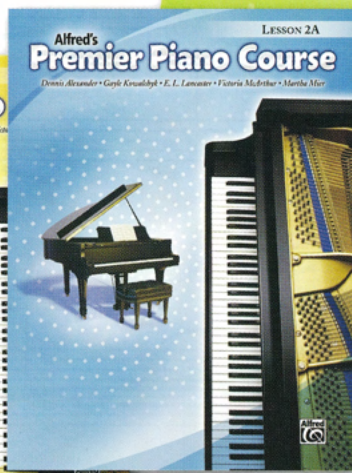
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Recognition of these highlights can help guide initial readings and provide students with an important sense of musical direction.

“Bourlesq” by Leopold Mozart, shown in Excerpt 1, is a well-known, delightful piece written by a father for his young musician son. It is a joyful romp of broken octaves in the left hand, accompanying a melody of small, dancing phrases. Since there are many repetitive elements to this piece, I would first outline what is most basic. The whole piece is based upon the material of the first four measures. Measures 5-8 and the final line are direct repetitions of this material. Measures 8-10, which borrow material from the previous measures, are directly repeated in measures 11-13. If the student learns measures 1-4 and 8-10, that student will have essentially learned the entire piece.

Next I would break down the technical features. The heartbeat of this piece belongs to the left-hand octaves. First, I would have my student block the octaves of measures 1-4, working for smooth transitions from one to the next. I would demonstrate ways in which my student can graduate to playing the broken octaves as written. This might include slow practice and also impulse practice through varied rhythms to secure the leaps. Second, we would map out the basic moves of the small phrases of the right hand and see how there is a basic stepwise structure behind it. After securing the proper fingering, I would demonstrate the down-up motion of the hand and arm necessary for a musical approach to the melody (see markings in measures 1-4, RH).

Potential pitfalls

The next step is to highlight potential pitfalls. This is particularly important when we don't have time to go over lots of details. Every piece has pitfalls — the rhythm you *know* the student will play incorrectly, the surprise rest that will be missed, the unusual chord that will be practiced incorrectly. By briefly rehearsing these spots, we can save our students (and ourselves) endless frustration.

At first glance, “Musette” by Felix Le Couppey, shown in Excerpt 2 on page 21, seems to be a very pattern-oriented piece, with what my students and I call “The Left Hand on Vacation” (i.e. the left hand plays only one open fifth the whole time). The entire piece grows out of two melodic components — the “A” theme in measures 1-4 and the “B” theme in measures 9-12. The tricky passagework in measures 11-12

Excerpt 1

Bourlesq

from *Notebook for Wolfgang*

LEOPOLD MOZART
(1719-1787)

Allegro

f

sempre staccato

1 4 3 4 4 4

4

8

p

“Bourlesq” by Leopold Mozart is from *Beginning Piano Solos compiled and edited by Paul Sheftel*. © 1984 by Carl Fischer, Inc. Used by permission.

(varying slightly in its restatement in measures 15-16) requires slow and careful practice, with emphasis on proper fingering and good arm/hand rotation. Students often overlook the half-note rhythm both here and at the end of the piece, as well as the tied notes. Therefore, when I present this piece, I start by having students clap and count the rhythms of themes “A” and “B”, followed by playing each right hand part with proper rhythm and fingering. Finally, the student slowly plays the “tricky spots” of measures 11-12 and 15-16. This way, we have attacked both the main structure of the piece and all potential problem spots.

And if time runs out ...


Finally, we all experience the lesson that just runs out of time, whether it results from an unexpectedly full session on another activity or simply poor planning. When this happens and we send our student off to practice a barely-touched-upon piece, can we hope for a good result? The good news is that all is not lost. There are other ways to help ensure precision with a new piece.

First, we need to teach our students to *practice systematically* from Day 1, whether they are 8 or 80. Having a practice plan for every new piece will encourage students to get into the habit of analyzing a piece and breaking it down into manageable parts.

Young students can learn to:

- Think about the *character of the piece* and how they want it to sound
- Mark the *form*
- Count the *rhythm* — clapping, tapping, swinging, etc.
- Look for *position shifts*, silently mapping them out
- *Practice slowly* hands separately, and ultimately, hands together

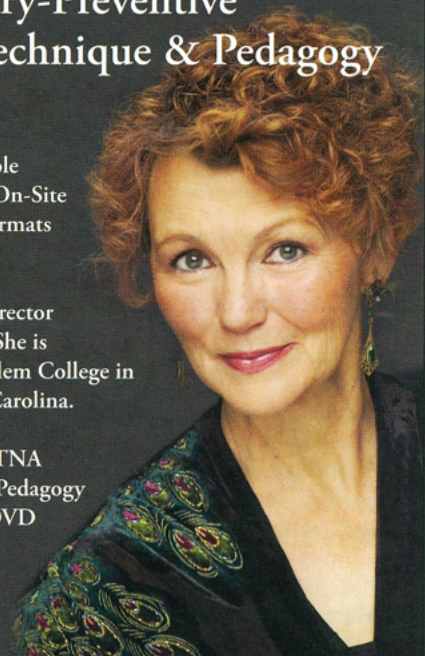
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Excerpt 2

Musette

FELIX LE COUPPEY
(1811-1887)

Allegro

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More advanced students can be taught to build upon these basic steps, analyzing form, rhythmic patterns, melodic cells, and harmonic motion.

Second, *consistent technical study* will help a student to identify patterns both visually and kinesthetically, expediting the learning process.

Finally, *regular sight-reading and rhythm exercises* will help to sharpen observation skills, thus allowing for more successful learning of the new piece.

Our ultimate goal is to produce students who can learn a new piece successfully, with or without us. As we strive towards this goal, our consistent guidance along the way is essential. ▲

I find it critical to work out new repertoire in detail

by Mary Bloom

Fluent music reading is a complex art acquired over a long period of time, and it is inseparable from the ability to navigate the keyboard, to feel rhythm, and to interpret harmony, articulation, and dynamics. In training students to read thoroughly and fluently, it is essential that these parts intertwine and proceed as a *whole*. Because of the complexity of this task, I find it critical to work out new repertoire in detail. It is our greatest opportunity to help each student see beyond the notes right to the whole of the piece.

Beginning and Elementary students

From the very beginning, I want to help my students see the "whole" of the piece before getting caught up in the details. I feel a tremendous responsibility to clarify and simplify what is true of the whole piece before breaking down the parts. This sets the stage for developing a curiosity to understand, and for reading all the information on the page in order to satisfy that curiosity.

Regular practice steps, which are always practiced together enthusiastically in the lesson, encourage much more than good practice habits. Working through practice

steps in the lessons and clearly outlining steps for home practice gives students a framework by which to live and become completely aware of what the page is communicating. Here are sample lesson and home practice plans for the piece "Hal-

I am assuring that my student is seeing every mark on the page, and is able to respond accurately before leaving the studio. This is how good reading habits are nurtured.

loween" from *Time to Begin* by Frances Clark and Louise Goss (Warner Bros./Alfred) shown in Excerpt 3 on page 23.

Lesson plan:

- Read title. Discuss expectations of the sound.
- Read the words together out loud in rhythm. Act out with dynamics.

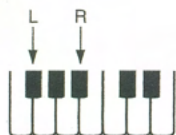
- Teacher plays. Did it live up to your expectations?
- Point and count the rhythm.
- Tap and say the hands, with dynamics.
- Find the position and practice the move to the lower group of notes.
- Play and say the hands, with dynamics.
- Play and sing.
- Play and listen, thinking about the words.

Practice plan:

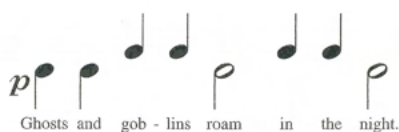
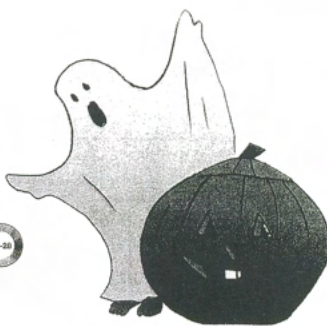
- Think about the piece and how it will sound.
- Practice the rhythm:
 - Speak the words in rhythm.
 - Point and count.
 - Tap and say your hands.
- Find the position and practice the moves.
- Play three times or more.

It is critical that no sign on the page is ever overlooked. Consider the piece "Rocket Ship", also from *Time to Begin*, shown in Excerpt 4 on page 23. The moment most students read the title, they recognize the notes are going up, or taking off! They are beginning to develop an expectation of how the piece will sound. The words lend more excitement and offer the perfect opportunity to prepare for the phrasing, dynamics, and mood.

Excerpt 3

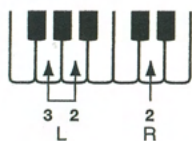


Halloween

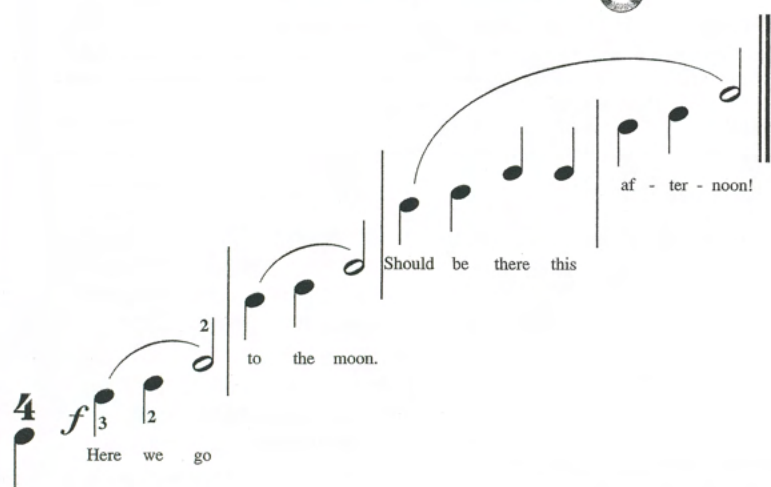


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Excerpt 4



Rocket Ship



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continued on page 25

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Speaking the words out loud, in rhythm and with the indicated phrasing immediately connects the feeling of the rhythm and phrasing with the student. Before the student gets to the details of the piece, he/she is “owning” two elements, half notes and slurs, which are frequently overlooked at this level.

This is a great time to play the piece for the student, first having them speak the words along with me, then simply listening to the sound and remembering the words. By tapping and counting, the student further refines the details while reinforcing the rhythm and phrasing. This is particularly tricky in this piece as it is the first time the student is asked to play a slur that continues through a move to a different position. When the phrasing is secure while tapping, it is time to get that connection into the fingers. It’s a wise idea to have the student play the finger numbers on the keyboard cover first, until fingers and phrasing are secure, then to find the position on the keys and practice the moves before playing.

To my student, we are simply practicing a new piece with our practice steps. For me, I am assuring that my student is seeing every mark on the page, and is able to respond accurately before leaving my studio. *This is how good reading habits are nurtured.*

Intermediate students

Even though reading skills and practice habits are pretty well developed at this stage, it is amazing how quickly students can slip backward if left on their own with new repertoire. In addition, there are more complex challenges at this level — musically, stylistically, technically, and harmonically. Here is a sample lesson and practice plan for Beethoven’s “Eccossaise in G” shown in Excerpt 5.

Lesson plan:

- Discuss title. Is there anything on the page that makes the piece look dance-like? (Hopefully the student will notice the LH accompaniment pattern and, even better, the RH syncopations.)
- Have student block root position triads in G Major (I, IV, and V) and then find these chords in the piece and play them.
- Teacher plays the piece pointing out melodic notes that are not part of the harmony: the E in measure 2 and 6, and the A# in measure 4. Also notice how

Excerpt 5

Écossaise

Allegramente (♩ = about 104)

Ludwig van Beethoven

“Eccossaise” by Beethoven from Piano Literature Book 2 by Frances Clark and Louise Goss © 1954 Summy-Birchard Music. A Division of Summy-Birchard, Inc. Exclusive Worldwide Print Rights Administered By Alfred Publishing Co., Inc. All Rights Reserved. Used by Permission.

Beethoven sets us up through these notes to actually be surprised when we hear the G in measure 8!

- Play together! Have the student improvise the I, IV, and V chords while teacher plays as written.
- Practice the rhythm (incorporating articulation and dynamics).
- With each hand, practice fingering moves silently before playing. When playing, set a tempo slow enough for the student to be in control.

Practice plan:

- Think about the musical elements that make this piece a lively, spirited dance: syncopations, articulation, melodic “wrong notes” with accents on them.
- Practice the rhythm and articulation: tap and count until it feels easy.
- With each hand, practice fingering moves silently until secure.
- Play slowly, hands separately, until absolutely secure before hands together.

Even with pieces that have no obvious harmony, there is usually a tonal thread that gives the piece structure. Consider

Hide and Seek

With spirit Alexander Tcherepnin

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Alexander Tcherepnin's wonderful piece "Hide and Seek" shown in Excerpt 6.

It is a marvelous, tension-filled game of hide and seek where the "hider" is hiding on *D4*, the final note of the piece. Students love the challenge of being asked to find the "hider". They can usually figure it out after hearing the piece while following along with the score. The path of the "seeker" (and the reader!) is easy to track if the octaves are blocked. The two penultimate notes before *D4* present the biggest reading challenge, and depending on the temperament of the student, I either simply help them in the lesson (lowest black, highest A), or send them home to figure out the mystery on their own. Understanding how the game occurs immediately makes

the reading of this piece manageable and the playing so much more informed!

The ability to read with understanding and attention to detail is developed over a long period of time. It is one long and tough path to bring a student to enlightenment! But the rewards along the journey are richer, long lasting, and more beautiful when traveled by teacher and student together. ▲

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Scott McBride Smith is Executive Director of the International Institute for Young Musicians in which capacity he directs summer programs involving some of the nation's top artist-teachers and students. He has been a contributing editor of *Piano & Keyboard* magazine and has recovered from his early bad practice habits to become a well-known clinician and private teacher in Southern California.

This issue's contributor:

Paul Wirth received his B.M. in Piano Performance from Temple University, and his Master and Doctorate degrees in Piano Performance from Indiana University, where he was teaching assistant to Sidney Foster. Dr. Wirth co-founded and is now Artistic Director of the Central Minnesota Music School in St. Cloud, MN, which currently enrolls over 250 students taught by a faculty of over 18. Chosen as the 2004-05 Distinguished Teacher of the Year by *Thursday Musical*, twenty-one of his pre-college students have given over fifty solo performances with orchestra.

Let's Get Physical: Technique

Scott McBride Smith, Editor

Is fingering an important part of technique?

I was recently sharing thoughts with a respected colleague after a long day at a piano conference. Yes, if you must know, we were in the cocktail lounge.

"I've given up on checking students' fingering," he said. "I've decided that if it sounds beautiful, it doesn't matter what fingering they use." He paused and looked furtively around the room. His voice took on a slightly bitter tone. "They don't pay any attention to my markings anyway."

I felt his pain. Most of my students are conscious, to a certain extent, of note accuracy. "I didn't hit one wrong note, Dr. Smith," they proudly tell me after a recital. Rhythm? Tone quality? Or ... fingering? These items don't intrude on their collective consciousness too much without a lot of cajoling (and threatening) from me.

Maybe my friend is right, I mused to myself later that night. It would certainly save a lot of nagging during piano lessons.

And, if the performance is really beautiful, does fingering matter?

I wish I could say I answered "no." My teaching life would be a lot easier. But (sadly, perhaps, for my blood pressure) I am in full agreement with this issue's author, Dr. Paul Wirth, about its importance. I don't think you can have a beautiful performance without attention to fingering.

His opening statement "fingering is EVERYTHING!" couldn't be stronger. I agree. I believe that bad fingering leads to a multitude of other problems. For me, many of what we call *memory slips* or *technical lapses* in performance are in fact caused by faulty or inconsistent fingering — to say nothing of tonal unevenness, messy passagework and poor tone.

So I was fascinated to read Dr. Wirth's many useful suggestions. I learned a lot, and think that you will, too. ▲

Ten precepts of good fingering

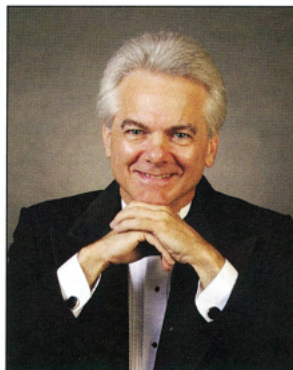
by Paul Wirth

Fingering is EVERYTHING! Right there, from the very beginning, if we don't get it right, it can become the single most insidious stumbling block to successful playing. So many great composers, pianists and teachers — among them C.P.E. Bach, Beethoven, Chopin, Paderewski, Godowsky — have stressed its importance. Yet how many of us as teachers have been "stressed out" by students who underestimate that importance?

I personally like to identify these students as "finger blind," as there is no other explanation for how they manage to miss

those little numbers we so carefully pencil into their scores. I actually go and get an examination light, shine it into their eyes and make the dreaded diagnosis: "You have finger blindness, Emily, and the performance prognosis is, well ... bad." If only they could visit the great music conservatories of the world and see how those students share their teachers' fingerings like medical interns excitedly discussing the latest surgical techniques!

There is no other aspect of piano playing more important to the making or breaking of a performance than that of fingering. It's



where the rubber meets the road; where the musical content in our hearts and minds meets the material world of the instrument, transforming matter into “music in the air!” And it’s also one of the least written-about subjects in piano pedagogy, no doubt because it’s so complex and controversial — so many different sized hands, varying techniques, and musical approaches can be intimidating even to the bravest of would-be “experts.” Despite our individual differences, there are general principals of fingering that can benefit all pianists. I’d like to share with you the following ten “precepts” of good fingering:

1. Use standard, pre-learned fingerings for familiar patterns such as scales, chords, arpeggios, ornaments, and glissandi where possible. How much easier it is, especially in music of the 18th and 19th centuries, if we have a strong grounding in these basic fingerings! Our hands just “know” what to do in so many instances, falling into these pre-learned patterns. Standard fingerings for scales and four-note chord fingerings should be well known to all students by the end of the intermediate level of study, before taking on advanced pieces. (See Examples 1a and 1b.)

Example 1a

Scale Fingerings (Major and Harmonic Minor)

C Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321	A Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321
F Major:	RH - 12341234 LH - 54321321	D Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321
B-Flat Major:	RH - 41231234 LH - 32143213	G Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321
E-Flat Major:	RH - 31234123 LH - 32143213	C Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321
A-Flat Major:	RH - 34123123 LH - 32143213	F Minor:	RH - 12341234 LH - 54321321
D-Flat Major:	RH - 23123412 LH - 32143213	B-Flat Minor:	RH - 41231234 LH - 21321432
G-Flat Major:	RH - 23412312 LH - 43213214	E-Flat Minor:	RH - 31234123 LH - 21432132
B Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 43214321	G-Sharp Minor:	RH - 34123123 LH - 32143213
E Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321	C-Sharp Minor:	RH - 34123123 LH - 32143213
A Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321	F-Sharp Minor:	RH - 34123123 LH - 43213214
D Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321	B Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 43214321
G Major:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321	E Minor:	RH - 12312345 LH - 54321321

Example 1b

The Chord Chart

5 5 5	5 5 5	5 5 5	
3 4 4	3 4 4	3 4 3	
2 2 2	2 2 2	2 2 2	
1 1 1	1 1 1	1 1 1	
Root 1st inv. 2nd inv.	Root 1st inv. 2nd inv.	Root 1st inv. 2nd inv.	b f# c# g#
C G F F#	D A E B		b# c# g#
a e d d#	D ^b A ^b E ^b B ^b		b ^b f c g
1 1 1	1 1 1	1 1 1	
2 2 2	2 2 2	2 2 2	
4 4 3	3 4 3	4 4 3	
5 5 5	5 5 5	5 5 5	

2. Strive for simplicity, seeking solutions that are comfortable for the music, fingers and mind. A good example of this can be found in the first movement of Beethoven’s *Moonlight Sonata*, Op. 27 #2. (See Excerpt 2.)

Maintaining a simple four-note diminished right hand chord fingering (1-2-3-4-5) for each half-measure pattern from measures 32-37 would be more straightforward than all the published fingerings for this passage. It also adheres to the next precept.

Excerpt 2: Beethoven Sonata in C-Sharp Minor Opus 27, #2 (the “Moonlight”) Mvt mm. 32-36

3. Cover as many keys as possible in one hand position and prepare fingers. Both of these concepts are observed by taking the right hand F-sharp in measure 31 of the Petzold Minuet in G Major (BWV Anh.II.114) with the 4th finger. (See Excerpt 3.)

This eliminates an abrupt switch of hand position in measure 32 and graciously teaches the young student this precept. Yet while this and the other precepts are usually prudent, the following is almost certainly in the realm of an overriding principle.

Excerpt 3 - Petzold Minuet in G Major, mm. 31-32

4. The musical effect always takes priority. Choose fingering which best articulates the phrasing or musical goal. As a case in point, the two-note slurs of mm. 19-23 in the last variation of Beethoven's 32 Variations in C Minor, WoO 80 (See Excerpt 4.) are best articulated by using 2-3, 2-3, 2-3 etc., interestingly contrary to the above third principle!

Excerpt 4 - Beethoven 32 Variations in C Minor WOO 80, Variation 32, mm.18-19

5. As long as the musical integrity is maintained, redistribute where needed. Why redistribution is a pariah in some studios is really baffling, especially considering all of the numerous videos of great artists like Horowitz, Rubinstein, Ashkenazy, and others which show playing that is full of what some would call "cheating tricks." If these videos are telling us anything at all about fingering, they're saying that it's better to cheat the distribution than to cheat the audience out of a beautiful performance — whatever it takes!

Redistribution can be divided into two categories:

- A. For necessity because of small hands
- B. For judicious technical facility

A. For students with small hands, a lot of repertoire is often ruled out which students could otherwise play very well using redistributions. This was demonstrated over a decade ago when elementary-aged pianist Helen Huang performed Mozart's *Concerto #23 in A Major*, K. 488 with orchestras all over the world: her playing was full of many necessary redistributions wisely added by her teacher.

This is the Mozart concerto which I've taught the most to my students, and there are numerous changes which can make this wonderful piece accessible to smaller-handed people, starting with the first phrase of the piano entrance, where the thirds in the right hand can be split up in measure 69 for easier voicing of the top notes. (See Excerpt 5.)

Excerpt 5 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, mm. 69-70

Further along, there are some left hand octaves at mm. 95-97 where the top notes — or thumbs — can be eliminated without losing too much of the sonority. In fact, when I saw a videotape of Helen Huang play this at age ten, I saw she was doing this at times throughout the piece: you wouldn't have noticed if it hadn't been captured by close-up camera shots! (See Excerpt 6.)

Excerpt 6 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, mm. 95-98

The same principle can be applied in the recapitulation at mm. 225-227. Also in the exposition and corresponding recapitulation at mm. 108, 110, and 112 there are some broken octaves that can be taken in both hands. (See Excerpt 7.)

Excerpt 7 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, mm. 108-109

Toward the end of the exposition is another awkward spot for smaller hands — the right hand passage in mm. 131-132. As the left hand isn't busy for much of it, the left hand can help out here — taking every other pair of 16th notes. (See Excerpt 8.)

Excerpt 8 - **Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major**, K488: Mvt I, mm. 131-132

Musical notation for Excerpt 8, showing a right-hand passage with fingerings and a left-hand accompaniment. The right hand has fingerings: 2 4 5 (2 1) 2 3, 2 3, 2 3, 2 3, 2 3, 3 4 2 1 2 3 1 (2). The left hand has fingerings: 3 2, 3 2, 3 2, 3 2, 3 2, 3 2.

One of the most helpful redistributions is found in the development section at mm. 158-159 and at 162-163 where the right hand must use a rotation technique for the octave stretch. Taking the right hand thumb notes with the left hand solves this problem for little hands! (See Excerpts 9a and 9b.)

Excerpt 9a - **Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major**, K488: Mvt I, mm. 158-160

Musical notation for Excerpt 9a, showing a right-hand passage with fingerings and a left-hand accompaniment. The right hand has fingerings: 1 2 3 5, 4 5 1 3 5 4, 5 4 5 3 4 3 4 2 3. The left hand has fingerings: 3 1 4 1 3 1, 3 1 4 1, 3 1 4 1 3 1 5 1 3 1, 4 1 3 1 5 1 (4).

Excerpt 9b - **Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major**, K488: Mvt I, mm. 158-160
(Rewritten to reflect the redistributed fingering)

Musical notation for Excerpt 9b, showing a right-hand passage with fingerings and a left-hand accompaniment. The right hand has fingerings: 1 2 3 5 4, 5 1 3 5 4, 5 4 5 3 4 3 4 2 3. The left hand has fingerings: 3 1 4 1 3 1, 3 1 4 1, 3 1 4 1 3 1 5 1 3 1 4 1 3 1 5 1 (4).

Another spot in the development illustrates where right hand rotation is necessary for “stretchy” octaves, at m. 188. The solution here is to take the first notes of the second and fourth beats into the left hand. (See Excerpt 10.)

Excerpt 10 - **Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major**, K488: Mvt I, m. 188

Musical notation for Excerpt 10, showing a right-hand passage with fingerings and a left-hand accompaniment. The right hand has fingerings: 5 1 5 1, 4 1 4 5 1 5 1, 4 1 4. The left hand has fingerings: 1/3, 1/2, 1/2, 1/4.

Ten Precepts of Good Fingering

1. Use standard, pre-learned fingerings for familiar patterns (scales, chords, etc.).
2. Strive for simplicity, seeking solutions that are comfortable.
3. Cover as many keys as possible in one hand position and prepare fingers.
4. The musical effect always takes priority.
5. As long as musical integrity is maintained, redistribute where needed.
6. Strive for consistency — similar passages fingered similarly.
7. Obtain legato with finger substitutions, crossing over and under, and sliding.
8. Use the strongest fingers on the notes requiring the most strength.
9. Test all fingerings in full tempo.
10. Stay with the same fingering — especially before a performance.

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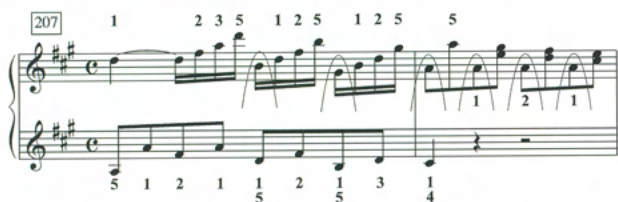
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The next notable helpful fingering is in the first theme of the recapitulation, where Mozart varies the theme with some tricky, “skippy” arpeggiations in mm. 207 and 208. Again, the left hand can come to the rescue by taking the first notes of the third and fourth beats in m. 207 — and EVERY first note in m. 208. (See Excerpt 11.)

Excerpt 11 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, mm. 207-208



There’s a “quantum leap” in the right hand sixteenth-note passage at mm. 270-271 which causes quite a problem for tonal evenness. This can easily be smoothed out by taking the first sixteenth

of the first and second beats in m. 271 with the left hand, remembering to make it sound organic to the rest of the right hand notes by not playing the single left hand notes too loudly. (See Excerpt 12.) That illustrates an important principle in redistributions and in all technique: beware of inadvertent bumps!

Excerpt 12 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, m. 270-271



At the end of the recapitulation, in the buildup to the cadenza, the right hand has a few more problem areas for small hands, the first of which is the diminished chord arpeggiation in m. 278, where the left hand can take the first and third sixteenth of every beat, beginning on the second beat. (See Excerpt 13 on page 31.)

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Excerpt 13 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, m. 278

This is one spot where with some extra practice it could be played well with just the right hand, so it's a close call. The following passage in m. 281, however, is a no-brainer. Here the left hand can help by taking the second half of the second and third beats. (See Excerpt 14.)

Excerpt 14 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, m. 281

Finally, in the second, fourth and sixth measures of the cadenza, the left hand is a great help in taking all the right hand thumb notes! (See Excerpt 15.)

Excerpt 15 - Mozart Concerto #23 in A Major, K488: Mvt I, Cadenza, m. 2

That characterizes most of the redistributions needed to successfully play this movement with small hands. Of course, the musical and technical challenges that go beyond fingering are the same that any pianist would encounter when expressing this movement.

B. The cases of judicious redistribution for technical facility are nearly ubiquitous. Some of my favorites are in the music of Chopin, beginning with the *A-Flat Polonaise*, *Op. 53* where the stretchy right hand trills in m. 27 (see Excerpt 16) are strengthened by taking the bottoms of the octaves on the third sixteenth of the second and third beats into the left hand.

Excerpt 16 - Chopin Polonaise in A-Flat Major, Opus 53, m. 27-28

Chopin's *Etudes* offer countless examples, such as the right hand passage at mm. 29-30 of the *Etude in C-Sharp Minor* Opus 10, #4 (see Excerpt 17). Taking the quarter notes on the second and fourth beats into the left hand improves accuracy and ease. And at the end of the piece in m. 79, the left hand can also take the first sixteenth note on the second, third, and fourth beats, increasing power in the ascending right hand fortissimo arpeggiation (see Excerpt 18).

Excerpt 17 - Chopin Etude in C-Sharp Minor, Opus 10 #4, mm. 29-30

Excerpt 18 - Chopin Etude in C-Sharp Minor, Opus 10 #4, mm. 79-80

Chopin's *Prelude in D-Flat Major*, Opus 28, #15 has a reverse case of the right hand helping the left. In measure 9 (see Excerpt 19), the right hand can take the F from the left hand — still rolling the left hand chord if that was indeed Chopin's intent (the manuscript has no written roll).

Excerpt 19 - Chopin Prelude in D-Flat Major, Opus 28 #15 (the "Raindrop"), mm.9-10

In the *G Minor Ballade* Opus 23, the right hand ascending *leggiere* scale passage at mm. 158-161 is prudently quickened by taking all the E-flats into the left hand (see Excerpt 20). If that passage is lightly "bubbling up" to the contrasting downward sweeping scale to follow, this fingering really helps!

Excerpt 20 - Chopin Ballade in G Minor, Opus 23, mm. 158-161

6. Strive for consistency — similar passages fingered similarly. Helpful consistency can be achieved in the right hand passages of Chopin's *G Minor Ballade* at measures 146-149, which can be fingered as in Excerpt 21. Recapitulations of sonata-allegro first movements also often benefit from this precept.

Excerpt 21: Chopin Ballade in G Minor, Opus 23, mm. 146-149

7. Obtain legato with finger substitutions, crossing over and under, and sliding. Having studied the organ as a youth, Chopin was particularly deft at these skills. His *Etude in E Major*, Opus 10 #3 is a study in legato fingering, using substitutions as in Excerpt 22.

Excerpt 22 - Chopin *Etude in E Major*, Opus 10 #3, mm 3-5



8. Use the strongest fingers on the notes requiring the most strength, as in Chopin's *B-Flat Minor Scherzo*, Opus 31 at measures 5, etc. where the left hand thumb is both accurate and strong (see Excerpt 23).

Excerpt 23 - Chopin *Scherzo in B-Flat Minor*, Opus 31, mm. 117-121 etc.



9. Test all fingerings in full tempo. The repeating thumb in the left hand used by most students in the third movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata* from measure 131-132 seems fine — until the full tempo of quarter note = ca. 160 is performed with both hands! Using the fingering in Excerpt 24 works better at the performance tempo.

Excerpt 24 - Beethoven *Sonata in C-Sharp Minor*, Opus 27 #2 (the "Moonlight"), mm. 131-132.



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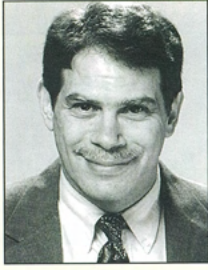
10. Stay with the same fingering — especially before a performance! Changing well-practiced fingerings shortly before a performance is dangerous! In fact, in the Young Artist Piano Camp at the University of Minnesota-Duluth, we now have a policy of not changing them in the short week we have with our 60 campers. As a general rule, fingering changes should not be made later than a week before a performance!

Fingering is no doubt a controversial subject. Yet it is so intrinsic to artistry that to ignore sharing it in our professional interactions is a worse fate than suffering the expected criticism from those with other viewpoints. Our goal is to leave no path unexplored in our pursuit of great playing — and who knows — we might all learn a thing ... or ten! ▲

* With heartfelt thanks to my colleague Gregory Theisen who helped prepare the musical examples in this article!

In the next issue:

How do you teach choreography to young pianists?



Bruce Berr has been an independent teacher and university professor of piano and pedagogy for a long time. He is known nationally as a clinician, educational composer and arranger, and author on a wide variety of topics related to teaching, music, and piano.

The Heart of the Matter: Rhythm

Bruce Berr, Editor

How do you get students to really play the rests in their pieces?

Introduction

This same question appeared in the Rhythm Department almost nine years ago in the Winter 1997 issue of *Keyboard Companion*. Three excellent teachers — Linda Poquette, Steven Rosenfeld, and Mary Jane Clarke — presented insightful ideas, and a lot of ground was covered. I invite you to look (again!) at those essays in your library of back copies of the magazine, or you may access them on our website, keyboardcompanion.com. I remember at that time wishing that there was more room in the Department so I could throw my two cents in on this broad subject. I also recall that the late Richard Chronister (then the Editor-in-Chief and the founder of this magazine) was enthusiastic about the question and its wording, as well as the fact that it

was the first article explicitly about rests to appear in KBC.

Here indeed are my two cents — perhaps slightly more due to inflation. These are observations I've made and approaches I've developed over the years to help students become more proficient in their playing and musicianship from the perspective of rests. I also invite readers to share some of your most effective and interesting strategies by sending them to our Rhythm Post-Box (write to the editor or e-mail us at editor@keyboardcompanion.com).

I have included some audio clips of my students practicing and playing some of the elementary examples in this article. To hear these while you are reading the article, please log on to *Keyboard Companion's* website at keyboardcompanion.com. ■

Article by Bruce Berr

“Play” rests? Is that really the right word for it?

I believe it is. While some rests are produced by a resting motion or mindset, many are not, because they require active motions and attentive listening, as do notes. In some situations rests are even more dramatic than the tones surrounding them.

I believe there is an advantage to referring to anything and everything we do at the piano as “playing.” When I ask a seven-year old in his first year of lessons, “Are your feet ready to play?” he knows that I'm not asking him to throw off his wheelies and perform a circus act at the keyboard! (At least not after the *first* time I say this, when we might enjoy a moment of laughter together). That question becomes internalized and spurs him to adjust his posture on the bench himself in his home practice so

that his feet are flat on the floor and his body well balanced. The same thing happens when I ask an eight-year old whether her ears are ready to play. She knows this means that while she plays her two-page character piece with huge and sudden dynamic changes, she should be listening closely to the sound she is actually producing.

The sooner these separate elements and processes are brought under the rubric of “play,” the sooner that the student experiences that playing is indeed all one thing — listening, technique, and music. “Play” connotes more of what motivates us to be at the piano in the first place, and it sounds a lot more fun and interesting than “practice”!

More than many other elements of music, rests need to be incorporated into the whole as soon as possible in a student's

lessons. Unfortunately there are many forces at work opposing such integration, including the misnomer of the term “rest” itself. Our standard notational system is a bit to blame. Look at almost any piece of mid-elementary music. A dozen or so rests might be sprinkled throughout the page, and many of them inadvertently condition students to ignore rests! How many of them does one actually notice in performance? There may be a few that separate melodic phrases (those are easy to hear), but there are also probably many in succession in a few measures in the left hand where there is no accompaniment for a while. We don’t really notice the “sound” or the effect of those rests. They are there because there is a notational convention that every measure in each hand’s part must contain x number of beats. Therefore, the unwitting message sent to early level players by these *inessential* rests is that *all rests* can be ignored! Wouldn’t the lack of accompaniment be notated more easily and accurately by simply having *nothing* in those LH measures, as is frequently done in many early-elementary pieces? Then the only rests appearing on the page would be *essential* rests — the ones we hear, and thus play.

Rests are also perceived as second class citizens sometimes because of how and when they’re introduced in the critical first years of study. In some elementary music, the only rests that occur are at the end of the piece, after the last note. While an advanced player might be able to execute that gesture and appreciate its meaning at the end of a long sonata movement, it is unlikely that it makes much of an impact on a youngster in the first year of music study. Also, some method series wait for many months before even introducing rests, presumably so that continuity of music can be experienced first with only sound, not silence. Some students might require such a cautious approach, but I have seen firsthand that most are able to competently handle both the technical and musical aspects of rests right from the beginning. The sooner that students experience that rests are the siblings of notes, and that they both function toward expressing larger structures, the better.

My strategies for teaching rests have evolved over the years to include the following:

- I introduce and treat rests and notes in virtually the same way.
- I choose materials for elementary students that introduce and reinforce rests in dramatic ways so that their musical importance can be experienced right away.

- After inessential rests are introduced in the method series, I have the student first find the essential rests (the rests we “hear”) in each new piece to help them differentiate those from the ones that are merely filling out empty measures.

Just because a rest represents an absence of sound does not mean it represents musical silence.

- I evoke students to be *physically active* in playing audible rests, as well as listening closely for the effect. They count rests out loud for a while in a variety of ways which reinforce that physicality.
- I help students of all levels understand the *musical meaning* of rests in each situation. Just because a rest represents an absence of sound does not mean it represents musical silence. I also focus students on how rests bolster or hinder the

flow, and how they help communicate the color and structure of the music.

Here are some specifics on how I implement these strategies. The groundwork for teaching students about rests, like many other things, occurs during the elementary years of study, but I have also included a few examples from the intermediate and advanced levels.

Beginner and Elementary examples

The different method series I currently use all introduce rests in their first book. When this happens, I have students focus on three things:

- the feeling of letting the key up with the entire hand, wrist, and arm — *feeling* the rhythm of the rest
- quietly counting or doing something verbal or physical at that moment, which reinforces the feeling part
- listening for the effect of the rest

By the time a student plays the following piece from the Hal Leonard Student Piano Library, three other pieces with quarter rests could have already been played (see Excerpt 1).

Excerpt 1

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Let's Get Silly" from the Hal Leonard Student Piano Library. At the top left is a keyboard diagram with fingerings: R.L.H. 1 2 and R.R.H. 2 3 4. To the right is a cartoon illustration of a male teacher pointing towards two female students. Below the illustration is the title "Let's Get Silly!" and the author's name "Barbara Kreader".

The score is written for piano and includes lyrics: "Come play in the yard with me; laugh and twirl a round. Tick - le all our fun - ny bones; fall down on the ground." The score is divided into two systems. The first system has a right-hand part (R.H.) and a left-hand part (L.H.). The R.H. part has a 4-measure phrase and a 3-measure phrase. The L.H. part has a 2-measure phrase and a 3-measure phrase. The second system has a 4-measure R.H. phrase and a 3-measure L.H. phrase. A callout box titled "HALF REST" explains that a half rest fills the time of two quarter rests and provides a counting example: "1 2" rest - rest.

At the bottom, there is a section titled "With accompaniment, student starts here:" with a tempo marking of quarter note = 130 and a dynamic marking of *mf*. The accompaniment is written in bass clef and includes a fermata over the final measure.

Let's Get Silly from Hal Leonard Student Piano Library, Piano Lessons Book 1 by Barbara Kreader. Copyright © 1996 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved.

Notice how the rests in this piece (as in the first three in the book) are just written-in *breaths between phrases*, something students can easily hear and understand. I have them either whisper “rest” or breathe in through the nose at each rest; in other pieces I might also have them grunt, click, or nod the head slightly. This provides a variety of ways to respond to rests depending upon the musical context and the personality of the music (and of the student!).

Please log on to *Keyboard Companion’s* website to hear one of my five-year old beginners, Rachel, practicing this piece. If you listen closely, you can hear her breathing on the rests.



In the following week, counting out loud on long notes was eliminated, the piece was sped up, it became more flowing and less vertical-sounding, but the breathing on the rests remained. Rachel could then more easily listen to the *silly stuff* that happens in the teacher accompaniment when we play together!

Near the end of the first book in this same series is an attractive piece that has only one rest in it, but it’s a doozy (see Excerpt 2).

This rest is a *punctuation mark* (perhaps an exclamation point) that interrupts the flow of the previous phrase. This is unquestionably a musical situation where the absence of sound is not silence (musically speaking) but is quite “loud” in its effect! To help get that point across, after students learn this piece by whispering “rest” or breathing at the rest, we go further. Since this is a pirate piece (and look at the lyrics right after the rest), I have some students yell out “HO!!” when they play that rest. This reinforces the physicality of releasing the previous key, as well as the rest’s “loudness” when the student performs the piece later with no verbal sounds. It is also a lot of fun!

Please listen to six-year old Greyson play this piece with the CD accompaniment arranged and realized by Phillip Keveren. You won’t have to strain to hear his “HO!!” but if you listen closely at the end, you can hear that he accidentally reverted to whispering the rests at the end of the piece. That’s the kind of “mistake” I can easily live with.



One of my favorite pieces for reinforcing rests at this level is from *Piano Adventures*, Lesson 1, the second book in the series (see Excerpt 3).

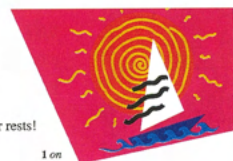
Excerpt 2



Pirates Of The Sea from Hal Leonard Student Piano Library, Piano Lessons Book 1 by Janet Feldman. Copyright © 1996 by HAL LEONARD CORPORATION. International Copyright Secured. All Rights Reserved

Excerpt 3

Sailing in the Sun



Caution! Be careful of the quarter rests!

Words by Crystal Bowman

DISCOVERY How many measures have this rhythm [quarter note] [quarter rest] ?

Sailing in the Sun, from *Piano Adventures*, Book 1. Music by Nancy and Randall Faber, lyrics by Crystal Bowman. Copyright © 1993 The FJH Music Company, Inc. Used with permission.

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The power of imagination

Many thanks to Donald Draganski, a composer and retired music librarian, for supplying this cartoon.

These rests are *catch-breaths* in the middle of a phrase. The music itself suggests that, but if there is any doubt, the lyrics bear it out — these are indeed two measure phrases. Young students have experienced catch-breaths in their life: when they're — super excited — trying to — tell you about — something that just happened — at the playground!!

This is a musical situation in which I do agree that initially playing and hearing only sound helps the student perceive the continuity within each phrase. To accomplish that, I have students first ignore the rests, and instead substitute a note in their place — the note following each rest. Then they play each two-measure phrase by itself a few times, with attention given to the legato so that students feel the LH passing the melody to the RH at the bar line. Then they start to combine phrases. Finally, when we put the rests back in, the student can hear and feel for themselves the excitement of each rest helping to propel the

music forward. In adult lingo, they are *feeling the musical line going through the rests!*

I also enhance the physicality of the catch-breaths by helping students pianistically breathe — a pronounced upward movement with both wrists, which then blends seamlessly into the smooth drop in the RH. Notice that the musical effect of these rests, like that in the pirate piece above, is also somewhat loud. I sometimes even write an accent sign above the rests for students who are hesitant to feel them physically as complete gestures.

The piece's last phrase presents an interpretive bonus. It is four measures long, not two, and so I help students experience that the rest in the longer phrase must be played even bigger/stronger/"louder" than the rests in the shorter phrases. Rests do not function in a vacuum — they are related to the surrounding musical elements.

The score suggests to be "careful" about these rests. I explain to my students that just means to be sure to notice them and do

them. However, I don't want students to be careful about *playing* them. These rests represent expressive gestures that most children enjoy doing with abandon, especially when they can hear and feel their purpose in the music.

An Early-Intermediate example

Students who learned "Sailing in the Sun" (mentioned above) in their first year of study may already know how to handle the rests in this *Mazurka* by Tchaikovsky (see Excerpt 4). The recurring rhythmic gesture in the RH is so standardized in its notation (with a sixteenth rest, rather than the first note being a dotted eighth note) that it is commonly referred to as "the mazurka gesture" by many players and teachers: the light upward movement on the first note, which is the beginning of the breath that leads to the next notes being played in one downward impulse. The "dance" of the playing mechanism surrounding and during the rest automatically affects nuances of rhythm and shaping. I still find it fascinating that a gesture as artistic and sophisticated as this can be taught in miniature to elementary level students if appropriate repertoire is chosen.

An Early-Advanced example

By the time students are playing early-advanced music, they usually know that the interpretation of rests, like all other elements and gestures, is context-driven and therefore requires thoughtful examination. For instance, it is common in advanced literature for some rests to represent actual silence, whereas others are pedaled and thus do not. A typical example is found in the opening measures of Debussy's "Les collines d'Anacapri" from Book 1 of his *Preludes* (see Excerpt 5).

Excerpt 4 Tchaikovsky: "Mazurka", Op. 39, No. 10, from *Album for the Young*, mm. 1-8.



Excerpt 5 Debussy: "Les collines d'Anacapri", from *Preludes, Book I*, mm. 1-4.



Throughout his piano works, Debussy indicated pedaling mainly through implication: tied chords or bass notes held over

line); commas to indicate release of pedal, etc. Notice in m. 3, the sixteenth rests represent silence due to the comma at the previous bar line. However the quarter rest in m. 4 does not, since the comma at the end of that measure implies that some sound from those two measures should be pedaled until the end of the measure.

several measures that would be physically impossible to sustain with the hands; French slurs (a misnomer — these are not slurs at all but ties that extend from one note into empty space, often across a bar-

A situation like this begs a question from perceptive students: if the final chord in m. 4 is sustained by the pedal, why is it not written as a dotted quarter note (or an eighth note tied to a quarter)? The answer to that question requires another piece of information about the notation of piano music that is so important that it deserves frequent re-visiting: *Generally speaking, the longer the note duration, the louder the composer intended it to be played.* Although this is not always accurate, it is often true, especially in *cantabile* and *sostenuto* passages. This is probably because most of the time the piano's sound, like that of all non-legato instruments such as guitar and harp, begins to diminish once it has been initiated; therefore longer tones need more starting sound to persist. (For a brilliant discussion on this subject as well as countless others, please consult

Rests are sometimes
dynamic indications as
well as rhythmic ones.



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Dynamic Dolphin

Joan Last's *Interpretation in Piano Study*, p. 4. Hammond Textbooks, © 1987 William Elkin Music Services. This masterpiece by one of Britain's leading pedagogues should be required reading for every piano pedagogy or performance student. It was out of print for many years but happily has been re-published. Recently I was able to obtain some copies from MusicRoom.com).

For instance, classical period slur endings that are notated with an eighth note-eighth rest (rather than simply a quarter note) communicate that the last note should be played with an especially light touch (as well as being slightly shortened in a rounded-off way), even more lightly than what we would do otherwise. This example from Debussy follows the same convention. The rolled eighth-note chord needs to be "tossed" off with a feathery touch. If it had been notated as a longer note value, the implication would be to play it slightly louder, and even perhaps with a little more time preceding it. Rests are therefore sometimes dynamic indications as well as rhythmic ones.

This flipside of this occurs when the A section returns later in the piece (see Excerpt 6).

Since the chord is louder and all will be sustained for several more measures (indicated by the French slurs), this chord similar to the one in m. 4 is now notated as a long note. Interestingly, these same two sixteenth rests do not indicate silence as they did previously, but in this passage merely provide the timing of the entrance of the soprano voice.

This article just scratches the surface on the topic of rests, but I hope that it has



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helped further the viewpoint that students can indeed learn to *play* rests accurately and meaningfully right from their first few lessons and thereafter.

If so, I rest my case! ☺

In the next issue:

What have I learned being an editor of the Rhythm Department?

Excerpt 6 Debussy: "Les collines d'Anacapri", from *Preludes, Book I*, mm. 66-68.



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Rebecca Grooms Johnson, Ph.D., NCTM, serves on the Conservatory faculty at Capital University (Columbus, OH) as the Director of Keyboard Pedagogy and is the Director of the Community Music School. She recently completed a term as the National Chair of the MTNA's Pedagogy Committee, and she publishes a tri-annual feature titled "What's New in Pedagogy Research" in the American Music Teacher.

This issue's contributors:

Chad Baker is a 2004 graduate of Capital University with a Bachelor of Music degree in Keyboard Pedagogy with an emphasis in church music. He currently teaches piano and organ on the faculty of the Capital University Community Music School and is an active accompanist around Central Ohio.

Amber Redoutey received the Master's Degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from Ohio University and the Bachelor of Music degree in Music Education from Millikin University in Illinois. She studied pedagogy with Gail Berenson, Dr. Susan Cobb, and Alejandro Cremaschi. She resides in East Lansing, MI with her husband and is an active pianist and teacher.

Kathy Winston Rabago has her DMA in piano pedagogy from UT-Austin. She has worked in many facets of the pedagogical world, including interning for the director of education at the Kennedy Center, and leading a team of software designers for an internet-based music company. She currently runs a private studio in Cedar Park, TX, and incorporates technology aspects such as MP3 recording, computer aided improvisation and visual score analysis in all of her lessons. Her research on 20th century intermediate piano repertoire can be found on the web at www.pianorep.com.

Issues and Ideas:

Perspectives in Pedagogy

Rebecca Johnson, Editor

How did your pedagogy degree best prepare you for your current teaching situation? How could it have prepared you better?

When pedagogy professors get together, they often compare notes on the content and structure of their courses. But what do the students think? How do they and their learned professors know that they are getting the information and experiences that will truly prepare them to be successful piano teach-

ers? I have asked three former pedagogy students to tell us about how well they were prepared for teaching in the independent studio. Each author majored in either Piano Pedagogy or Piano Pedagogy and Performance: Chad Baker earned a Bachelor's degree, Amber Redoutey a Master's, and Kathy Rabago a Doctorate. ▲

Preparing students for success

by Chad Baker

The value of a mentor

In my first two years of teaching after graduation I have been blessed and challenged by a studio of great diversity. My students range in age from five to ninety-two, and they have a wide variety of experience and skill. In my studio I have beginners, church musicians who have held positions for years, and even conservatory faculty who are learning a new instrument. Each of them has their own strengths and weaknesses along with their own goals for studying piano or organ. This great diversity has led to many wonderful challenges and opportunities that I never could have predicted as a college pedagogy student.

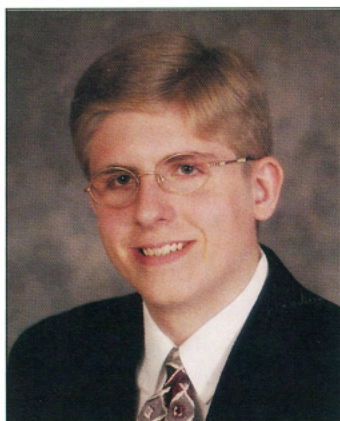
One of the most challenging students in my studio is one I have been teaching since my student teacher days.

As a part of our undergraduate organ pedagogy class we were required to teach two beginning organ students. One of my students just happened to be the director of the keyboard pedagogy department, my piano teacher, the director of the community music school, and, yes, also the editor of this column. To say that I was nervous about teaching this student would be an understatement, but I have truly grown and continue to grow as a teacher at every lesson we have. There are many days I feel like I learn more than I actually teach. Now that I have

Learning does not stop with a diploma — the education of a teacher never ends!

graduated, Becky still takes organ from me and I still take piano from her (sans jury and a grade ... thank goodness), but often my lesson turns into a great question and answer session about my week of teaching. Most of the topics we discuss were talked about in our pedagogy classes, but these topics take on a whole new meaning now that I face them in actual teaching situations. Sometimes she has the perfect answer, sometimes she presents a few options to try, and sometimes we both remain puzzled. I couldn't imagine facing my first years of teaching without having the opportunity to think and reflect over my studio issues with someone else.

Many of our great question and answer sessions revolve around the topic of transfer students. In my studio I have a wide variety of students who have studied with



Chad Baker

other teachers before me. They have come to my studio for a broad range of reasons. Some have studied for years and then taken a break, others have been students of teachers who have moved, and some have just been seeking a different approach to doing things. At our initial interview I try to get as clear a picture as possible of their musical history and where they would like to go in the future, but charting their course of study is always a challenge. We spent some time on transfer students in our pedagogy classes, but I am finding that I wish we had spent much more.

Preparing for success

One of the most important things that I have taken from my undergraduate pedagogy training is the concept of preparing students for success. As a part of our student teaching experience we were required

to fill out lesson evaluation forms; one of the questions on that form required the teacher to evaluate how they prepared the student for success. Each time I introduce a new concept or skill to a student I try to prepare them for success as best I can. Each time they return, whether successful or not, I try to reflect on how my preparation with them was helpful and how it could have been better and more efficient.

That magic triangle

As a part of my traditional piano pedagogy training we were required to observe Suzuki teachers. The most valuable thing that I gained from these observations is how important the role of the parent can be in giving a younger student the most effective lessons possible. The parents of my students choose to take on a number of roles in my studio. I encourage parents to

sit in on every lesson so they can directly see what we are doing and how they might be able to aid in their child's practice at home. Parents who do this always tell me how much they learn themselves and/or how much they are surprised by what they remember from their own childhood musical training. I always tell these parents that they are free to ask questions and give me feedback on what is going on at home. For many of my students piano lessons and home practice become one of the special things that they get to do with mom or dad all by themselves.

In conclusion, I think the most important thing that I have found since graduating is that learning does not stop with a diploma. The education of a teacher never ends — just the grades and the tuition payments! ▲



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Teaching students to practice between lessons has been a constant struggle

by Amber Redoutey

Reflecting back ...

Having been out of school and in “the real world” teaching for two years, writing this article has provided an excellent opportunity to reflect back on my pedagogy classes. As I look back at my college and graduate school training, I realize how much helpful wisdom and knowledge my teachers passed on to me.

Observing myself and others

One of the best ways that I learned to apply classroom concepts and techniques was through observation. I was required to observe many hours of experienced teachers giving lessons. This gave me an opportunity to see ideas taught in a variety of different ways that I could take back and use with my own students. The most beneficial aspect of my pedagogical training, however, came from observing myself after being videotaped teaching both group and private lessons. I discovered many important



Amber Redoutey with her students.

things in my teaching, realizing that my pace was sometimes a bit slow, or that I spent too much time talking rather than demonstrating and listening to the student. I wish that I could say I have continued observing myself on a regular basis. Perhaps it is time for another date with my video camera!

students will not reach their full potential if they do not know how to spend their time resourcefully. This past year our local MTNA chapter chose to discuss *The Practice Revolution* by Philip Johnston (© 2002, PracticeSpot Press). This has been the most helpful book I have read for providing fun and practical ideas to help students practice. For example, the “Seven Stages of Misery” is one of the entertaining, sometimes torturous, games from the book that I have assigned to several students. The goal is for the student to make it from Stage 1 to 7. They choose a section in their piece to test, and if they play it without errors they move on to the next stage. If there are any errors, they must move back a stage. The students who complete this game show more confidence at their next lesson. I would strongly recommend it for implementation in any pedagogy program.

Continued professional development

Fellow colleagues are a constant reminder that I am not alone in any teaching circumstance. My past teachers have set wonderful examples by their involvement in professional development, and they have always encouraged me to stay involved in MTNA. CAMTA, our local MTNA chapter, brings in speakers to discuss current topics at monthly meetings and provides performing opportunities for both myself and my students. I also find it important to take advantage of the local, state, and national conventions and workshops. For me, conventions are the finest ways to reconnect with familiar faces and discover what is new in pedagogy.

Building my own studio was a scary prospect upon graduation, but I am now blessed with over 30 students who are each completely unique and special. It is my job to stay current on how to teach individuals with different needs. What type of repertoire will they enjoy? How do I make each lesson fun and enjoyable for the both of us? I know from my own experience the learning process is not complete when you finish your final exam or graduate recital. These relationships and resources that I have gained along the way have continued to help me grow as a teacher. ▲

A thorough knowledge of repertoire

Most of my students are beginners in their first two years of piano study. All the time spent examining the different beginning method books in school has proved itself useful. I spent a great deal of time understanding the content and pace of each method available. Knowing which method to choose for each skill level is important, as is an understanding of what supplementary material is required to cover what is not included in the method. An equal amount of time should also be given to discussing how to supplement ear training or technique that may be lacking in method books. Additionally, it is important that the transition out of method books and into intermediate literature be addressed, as it frequently gets overlooked.

Preparing for practice

Teaching students how to practice between lessons has been a constant struggle. As teachers, we know our

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I thank my professors who knew that real learning came by doing

by Kathy Rabago



Kathy Rabago with son Julian.

A wish list

I recently got a prank call from a young girl claiming to be a representative from Steinway. She stated that Brahms was going to be in town next week to give a concert. As I mentally went through my head of my students who were having slumber parties that weekend, imagining 7 year-old giggling girls, I became very flattered. One of my students was thinking of me, and she knew the name of a prominent piano maker and composer. I giggled too as I went back to bed. I was doing my job.

Starting a full time studio from scratch after completing my DMA was, at first, a simple job. I certainly had the qualifications to teach, with 3 degrees in piano. My studio filled up within a couple of months. I soon learned, however, that even though I was a “Dr.,” my expertise was nowhere near complete. Now, three years after completing my doctorate, I can look back and summarize my educational wishes in the following ways

A balanced emphasis on repertoire, please

I sometimes wish I didn't know the method books forward and backwards. It's quite ironic that at three different universi-

ties, I studied method books in each pedagogy class that I took. Granted, these are important tools of our trade, but unfortunately, so much time spent learning about those method books takes away from many other important aspects of our field. This year, I have a full studio (I teach 20 hours a week), yet only three of my students are in method books. Unfortunately a third of my educational experience in pedagogy class was spent studying beginning methods.

I wish more time in my classes had been spent on becoming familiar with beginning and intermediate repertoire outside tradi-

I wish more time was spent on repertoire outside the method books.

tional method books. I remember projects in which we analyzed intermediate pieces, but I was never exposed to a wide variety of repertoire. I was fortunate to write my dissertation on 20th century intermediate repertoire (www.pianorep.com), allowing me to become familiar with that genre. However, now as I teach, I am constantly choosing new repertoire for students and I think to myself: why was I never shown that this collection even existed? I'm sure that someone with a doctorate in English can name the entire works of Shakespeare, yet I can guarantee that pedagogy students cannot identify all of the pieces that Bartok or Burgmüller wrote for children without consulting a reference book.

The right stuff

On a positive note, I thank all of my professors who knew that real learning came by doing, and who had me actually teach. They observed my teaching, instead of lecturing on “how to teach,” delegating an art to a dry inaccurate science.

I also thank those that planted the technology bug in me, giving me tools for engaging my students in ways that delight teenagers who text message faster than they play scales. I'm proud to say that I give all of my technology-savvy students a run for their money on such things as MP3 conversions and website design.

Having it all

Finally, I wish that at least one week of class had been spent covering the business aspects of running a studio — taxes, income sources, recordkeeping, insurance, etc. Also, I wish that at the doctoral level in pedagogy, the emphasis on finding academic positions would be replaced with more focus on entrepreneurship. To this day, I have yet to interview for a university position in which I was not asked a question pertaining to my husband (“would he move for your job?”) or my family (“do you plan on having children?”). This makes me wonder if equality really has passed through the ivory tower. Instead of fighting family and politics at the university level, as a married woman with a child (and let's face it, that describes most of us in this field), I feel empowered as a self-employed businesswoman. As I drop my infant son off with the babysitter and greet my first student, waving her iPod ready to record a MP3, and my next student, bringing in his full recital program to prepare for college auditions, I know that I truly do have it all — prank calls included. ▲

In the next issue:

Take Two Music Lessons and Call Me in the Morning: An interview with Karl Bruhn about the benefits of Recreational Music Making



Michelle Conda is the Coordinator of Secondary Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She also teaches an adult piano class for the university's Communi-versity program. She received her Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma. Adult learning is her focus, as she heads the Adult Learning Committee for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy.

This issue's contributor:

Jacqueline S. Wright is a retired law librarian and lawyer. She took piano lessons for one year in junior high school. Most of her music education and performance has been in choral music. She sings with her church choir and with the Arkansas Chamber Singers, an auditioned choral group under the direction of Prof. John Erwin.

It's Never Too Late:

Adult Piano Study

Michelle Conda, Editor

The Third-Age Piano Class: Challenge, fun, and satisfaction for mature students of the piano

Adult students never cease to amaze me. Just last week two of my adults volunteered to play for a student recital as part of the Southwest Ohio Music Teachers Fall Festival. This would be incredibly nerve-racking to most people, but both have asked to do it again! For years I have been preaching to leave recitals out of adult piano curriculums. I guess some things I have preached should be thrown out the window!

In my defense, it takes special people to do special things. The people in the follow-

ing article have found a place to share their talents at the University of Arkansas Little Rock. Jacqueline Wright, the author of this article, is a long-term member of the "Third-Age Piano Class." I hope you enjoy her insights.

Many thanks to Pamela Pike for starting this extraordinary ensemble! Dr. Pike has shared her photographs of the group, as well as video files of the group's performances. Visit our website at www.keyboard-companion.com to see and hear this extraordinary group! ▲

The Third-Age Piano Class

by Jacqueline S. Wright

The Third-Age Piano Class at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock is open to "mature" students. Anyone who is age 50 or above or who is at least semi-retired is eligible for the class. The course design encourages an informal group setting for studying the piano. We meet once a week for two hours either in a keyboard piano lab or in any available space with seven portable electronic keyboards provided by the University of Arkansas Little Rock (UALR) Music Department.

Our professor, Dr. Pamela Pike, has a special interest in teaching piano to seniors. Her first piano student was an adult, and when she operated a private studio a quarter of her students were adults. She realized that there is a need to understand the special needs of the older (or "Third-Age") adult if teachers are to be effective with this age group.

The students bring a variety of musical skills to the class. Some have never touched a keyboard, but have always wished to play.

Others have studied for several years as youngsters and play quite well. While some participants have played regularly through the years, others left the keyboard for other adventures, only to return in this chapter of their lives to dust off long-dormant musical skills.

Each of us brings a sense of adventure and a desire to accomplish something beautiful. This said, the backgrounds of the participants vary greatly. Bill played violin as a child and was familiar with the treble clef, but he knew nothing about the bass clef. Bob and Jackie had sung with choral groups, so they knew how to count. Jim took piano lessons twice a week for several years as a youngster. When he was big enough to play football he kept up with his piano lessons until one day he came to his lesson with two of his fingers taped together because of a football injury. The teacher told him to go home and not come back until he quit football. Of no surprise, he never went back to his piano lessons, but he has always loved "muddling" on the keys.

The challenge

Most of the repertoire is scored for piano ensemble. Some of it has an orchestral-type arrangement that allows us to use the various sounds available on the electronic keyboards. Others use the piano sound that, if played correctly, gives the impression of multiple pianos or one piano played by someone with a mastery of the instrument.

The degree of difficulty varies from piece to piece, and also within the individual parts. Sometimes we rotate the parts, giving everyone the choice of which level of



much fun! The Third-Age Piano Class offers a unique kind of fellowship because our learning is truly a group effort. This is exemplified by Shirley's excited cry "I got it!" when she mastered a troubling musical phrase. Only in an ensemble class would the entire group care whether Shirley "got it!" Of course, only in an ensemble class would we need to transport seven electronic keyboards. Margaret painstakingly packs up the boxes of wires and connections when the class hauls seven electronic keyboards to an off-campus run-out site.

The off-site performances are great fun, even though they are cumbersome to arrange. When we give a recital on the portable keyboards, they are all attached to one set of speakers. Therefore, if someone makes a mistake, no one can tell who did it — even the one who makes the mistake can't tell. This in itself helps us all to relax and enjoy the experience.

Left: Members of the Third-Age Piano Group perform in Riverfest, an annual Memorial Day festival held in Little Rock, AR.



The Third-Age Piano Group is pictured after a winter recital. Students mentioned in the article include Bill (standing 2nd from left), Margaret (next to Bill), Jim (6th from left), and Shirley (9th from left). The group's director, Dr. Pamela Pike, is standing 4th from right, and the author of this article, Jacqueline Wright, is seated on the far right.

difficulty they'd like to play. We've found that even the most skilled of the students has something to learn, as none of us have ever played piano in an ensemble before joining this class. We learn to play together, sometimes five or more parts, often two at one keyboard, and this is a real challenge.

The fun

One of the characteristics that draws us together is our love of participating in group activities. Bill stated that he didn't think private lessons would be nearly as

The satisfaction

The longevity of the participants points to the satisfaction we've obtained from the Third-Age Piano Class. Many people, including Betty, Mary, Shirley, Bob, and Jim, have been in the class for five years, since it first started. We are fortunate that UALR and the music department support this program. The University encourages seniors to be involved in the academic program by waiving tuition for students over sixty years old.

Music used by the class

Alfred Ensembles: "Alfred's Basic Piano Library: Piano Ensemble Book"

We use "Level 1" (though these aren't as musically satisfying for older learners) and Complete Levels 2 & 3. My class especially enjoys the Complete Levels 2 & 3 book. Written by Palmer, Manus, Lethco; Ensembles arranged by Kowalchyk & Lancaster. Published by Alfred. These books are geared for younger beginners but work well for the older students.

Lyke Ensembles: "Ensemble Music for Group Piano" by James Lyke & Geoffrey Haydon. Published by Stipes Publishing Company.

There are mostly duets in the first half. Section 1 contains mostly 5-finger melodies in the primo with nice accompaniments that are more difficult in the secondo (great for a class like mine where there are varying levels of ability). Section 2 contains original works and arrangements for piano duet and Section 3 has ensemble arrangements of Classical works for 2 to 6 keyboards (or pianos).

So what keeps us all together year after year, with others always waiting to get in the class? The diverse backgrounds of the class members make an interesting mix. We have a lot of fun together. We enjoy the group action taking place on the keyboards and the feeling of accomplishment when we master a new technique or theory.

The most important glue that holds us together is a positive attitude, both by teacher and student. Negative behaviors are not found, including whining, crying, threatening, demeaning, or just plain acting disgusted! A positive, "you can do it" spirit has pulled us through some pretty difficult musical passages, making us eager for more.

Jim's teacher, who told him not to come back until he gave up football, would not cut it with this class. She would find herself teaching to an empty room. ▲

In the next issue:
Are adult piano students
willing to self-teach?



Putting It All Together: Repertoire & Performance

Nancy Bachus, Editor

Nancy Bachus is a graduate of the Eastman School of Music and has taught for 27 years at the college and university level. She is the author of Alfred Publishing's "Spirit" series: the Baroque, Classical, Romantic, and Beyond the Romantic Spirit piano anthologies. Certified as a Master Teacher by MTNA, she currently maintains an independent piano studio in Hudson, OH.

This issue's contributors:

Joyce Scheel teaches piano in her home studio in the foothills west of Denver, CO. She also plays piano and organ for worship services, is an adjudicator for the National Guild of Piano Teachers, and teaches children's choirs. Each month her students, other instrumentalists, singers, puppeteers, and storytellers share music with senior friends in recital at the nearby Life Care Center. Concluding the program, all generations share in the joy of making music together by ringing hand chime accompaniments as they sing the seniors' favorite songs.

Kelly Marquis Freije holds a M.M. in Piano Performance and Piano Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma, and a B.M. in Piano Performance from Western Michigan University. She is an Adjunct Piano Professor at Indiana Wesleyan University, maintains an independent piano studio at her home in north-central Indiana, and serves on the board of the Indiana Music Teachers Association. Her teachers include Dr. Jane Magrath, Marvin Blickenstaff, Lori Sims and Dr. Silvia Roederer.

Bernadine Johnson is active as a teacher, pianist, adjudicator, clinician and composer. She is the creator of A Night at the Ballet, A Night at the Opera and Finger Food (Alfred); and co-author of the Keys to Worship Series (FJH). A graduate of Indiana Wesleyan University and a certified MTNA teacher, she resides and teaches in Fremont, MI.

What are your favorite "pre-impressionistic" pieces to help students develop color and imagery and to prepare for the music of Debussy and Ravel?

One of my favorite composers has always been Claude Debussy. I still remember the day I discovered his *Preludes* and recall playing the *La fille aux cheveux de lin* (The Girl with Flaxen Hair) over and over, being fascinated with the harmonies and the magical effect the piece had on me. I found my fingers playing in a different way as I intuitively created new tones and colors. Years later when I began to teach the music of Debussy, I was surprised that the unique sounds needed for this style did not come easily to most students, even when all the notes and rhythms were correct.

I believe imagery is a powerful tool in teaching Debussy and the preparatory "pre-impressionistic" style, and I find it helpful to show students paintings by

Impressionist painters, such as Claude Monet and Pierre-Auguste Renoir. Monet's *Impression: Sunrise*, with the sun appearing through the morning mist in a harbor, is the work that gave the name to the entire art movement. His *Houses of Parliament* again shows the sun filtered by mist and water vapor while Renoir's *Boating on the Seine* "shimmers" with the reflection of the light on the water. These visual images can help students better create "sound pictures" of mist, fog, and water, which are a part of numerous titles of teaching pieces.

Students need experience with creating magical and "liquid" sounds early in their piano studies. Fortunately there are many wonderful pieces at all levels that provide stepping-stones to the masterpieces of Debussy and Ravel. ▲

Music to inspire

by Joyce Scheel

Helping pianists to creatively express images through sound at the piano is a great delight in my teaching. I have found that students like to play with expression from an early age. From the beginning lessons they are intrigued by their own sound, have a natural curiosity for the many sound and color possibilities they hear, and are eager to learn the techniques necessary to produce them. As students become engaged in the process of shaping their sound to express changes the composer indicates, keener listening to their own playing also emerges.

Here are some of my favorite early teaching pieces that encourage imaginative playing with impressionistic sounds.

"**Snowflakes Gently Falling**" by Dianne Goolkasian-Rahbee, from *Pictures*, Op. 3. In *Keyboard Literature 3* (Summy Birchard/Alfred). This piece depicts the snowflakes' gentle descent by playing alternating hands in whole-tone patterns over three octaves of the treble staff. The whole tone scales suggest spacious, floating sound. Phrases dovetail with the hands playing together on beat one as one motive

ends and the next begins. Musicianship develops as students read flats and play in three treble octaves, notated on two treble staves. The tender nature of the subject allows a relaxed tempo, the use of two pedals, and time to hear the snow gently fall one flake at a time. Rubato should be added as “a whirlwind changes the direction of the snow,” and voicing individual fingers in the motives can help change the color.

“**Starfish at Night**” by Anne Crosby. In *Freddie the Frog: Celebration Series — Introductory Level* (Frederick Harris). Impressionistic sounds are created as the melody

chords in three octaves with alternating left and right hands. The piece sounds more difficult than it is.

Fountains in the Rain by William Gillock (Willis). This work provided talented, dedicated ballet student Amber the opportunity to create an expressive sound picture of the fountains splashing at various heights and changing colors as the water reflects in changing light. To help Amber define the various heights of the fountains, I played, and Amber “danced” by the piano. She choreographed the movements and heights with her body. Feeling the



Houses of Parliament
by Claude
Monet
(1904)

flows from left to right hands in stepping ascending patterns and descends with alternating hands in thirds. The piece employs simple rhythms, all accidentals are notated, and the damper pedal is sustained throughout the 18-measure composition. The right hand dramatically uses whole measure black key glissandos, as if to move the starfish. Whole tone scales and a five-octave range give a spacious sound to this very early level piece, and we feel almost like we're beneath deep water.

“**Chimes through the Mist**” by Bernice Frost. In *Summy Piano Solo Package #301*, (Summy-Birchard/Alfred). This is a beautiful depiction of chimes in G-flat Major. In the A section, the right hand uses three black keys while the left hand crosses from bass to treble clef to “ring the chimes.” Pentatonic and whole tone harmonies create the mist suggested by the title. The B section employs seconds and thirds to form

movement as she danced enabled Amber's interpretation at the piano to better display the colors she envisioned while playing this descriptive piece.

A Hermit Thrush at Morn, Op. 92, No. 2, by Amy Beach. In *Amy Beach Piano Music* (Dover). This piece has an exact notation of a hermit thrush song, notated in the original keys but one octave lower. It is a quasi-lento waltz in D minor. The birdcall and its variations descriptively lead the listener as if we were following the bird through the woods. In the middle section, one hears shimmering sounds in stepwise moving chords. The hands remain in close position to each other, often moving in parallel motion. In the middle and ending it is as if we hear the bird change locations and fly to other areas within the woods.

These teaching pieces develop many of the skills useful for playing impressionistic-style music: playing longer phrase lines,

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continued on page 51

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voice leading within a phrase to shape the direction of the line, discriminatory listening and voicing decisions when two harmonies are heard simultaneously, experiencing and creating tonal colors with pentatonic and whole tone scales, and playing a wide range of the keyboard. But most important is the joy and confidence students experience when playing descriptive, beautiful sounds on the piano. ▲

“Pre-impressionist” choices

by Kelly Marquis Freije

Impressionism shares certain characteristics with other musical styles. However, it is unlike any other musical style to play, and when a student is preparing to study impressionistic music, it is important they understand its origin. The term was first applied to a style of French paintings created between the 1860's and 1900. Although Impressionism shared the Romantic influences of art and nature, it

simple one-line, whimsical melody in the right. The character of this piece is reminiscent of Debussy's *Girl with the Flaxen Hair*.

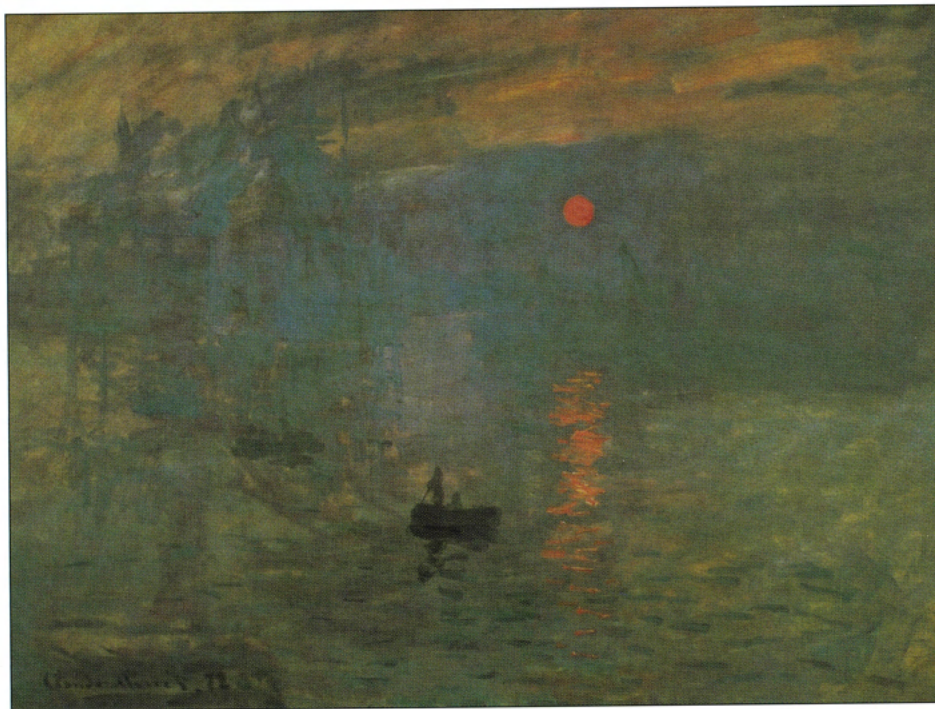
Other choices for early level students can be found in Dennis Alexander and Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield's series, *Keys to Stylistic Mastery* (Alfred). This series is a wonderful pedagogical tool. I find Book 2 to be especially useful in preparing students to play

Other favorites are collections by William Gillock and Dennis Alexander. Gillock has composed a number of pre-impressionistic pieces, including “Drifting Clouds” and “Summer Clouds” from *Collected Short Lyric Pieces for Solo Piano* (Willis); and “French Doll” and “Mission Bells” from *Accent on Gillock* (Willis). Dennis Alexander also wrote a set of *24 Character Preludes* (Alfred). This is a wonderful collection in general, but “Castle in the Mist” specifically captures the opening atmosphere of Debussy's *La cathédrale engloutie* (The Sunken or Submerged Cathedral). Although the collection is for late intermediate to early advanced students, this piece is short in length (only one page) and not difficult.

Another wonderful collection that offers pre-impressionistic music is *Spotlight on Impressionist Style* by Catherine Rollin (Alfred). A set of seven original pieces for the intermediate pianist, Rollin specifically wrote this book to provide students with interesting and motivating music using impressionistic devices which prepare students for the music of Debussy and Ravel. I am personally thankful to composers and pedagogues who work hard to provide teachers and students with gems like this. The entire collection is in the spirit of Debussy with English/French instructions throughout, and “Debussy-esque” titles.

Lili Boulanger, sister of the famous French pedagogue Nadia Boulanger, composed a set of three impressionistic pieces for solo piano entitled *Trois Morceaux pour Piano* (G. Schirmer/Hal Leonard): “D'un Vieux Jardin,” (Of an Old Garden) “D'un Jardin Clair,” (Of a Clear Garden) and “Cortège.” These pieces are for the early advanced student and are wonderful to use prior to playing Debussy and Ravel, or along with the study of these “Impressionistic Greats.”

These are just a few of the many pieces available for increasing a student's tonal sensitivity, listening skills, and musical imagination. ▲



Impression, Soleil Levant (Sunrise) by Claude Monet (c. 1872-73)

moved in a different direction, focusing more on mood and atmosphere than a true depiction of a scene. Creating this sense of mood and atmosphere on the keyboard demands the use of color, imagination and a sensitive ear. Here are some collections and pieces I like to use as “pre-impressionistic” repertoire.

For the younger student, I like *Touches Noires* (Black Keys) by Darius Milhaud (Carl Fisher). It is easy to read and stays within a two-octave span. The piece consists of open sixths in the left hand and a

impressionistic music. In this book, there are three pieces composed by Dennis Alexander in impressionist style: *Les nuits mystiques*, *Farewell*, and *Le reve interrompu*. Information about the style period is included, and at the beginning of each piece there is a section entitled, “Keys to this piece.” The “Keys” contain specific information for the performer to think about for each one, including color, blurred harmonies, and pedaling. The three pieces in this collection are well written and use French instructions in the music.

A close-up, artistic photograph of the hammer action of a piano. The image shows several hammers with their felt tips, positioned over the strings. The lighting is warm and golden, highlighting the metallic surfaces and the texture of the felt. The background is softly blurred, focusing attention on the intricate mechanical details of the instrument.

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64 ways to color sound

by Bernadine Johnson

Since Impressionism was an era highly rooted in art, we must think of it as an era of “color.” Teaching color and imagery can be one of the most enjoyable experiences teachers have with students. Give a child a coloring book along with a new 64-pack of crayons and they seldom question what to do. Some color inside the lines and some color out of the lines. Some like to do shading while others love to boldly scribble. With crayons in hand, colorful results of all types are possible. Ask young students (less inhibited than older ones) to act out something in their imagination and hang on for the ride!

The same imagination and creativity is possible on the piano, but students will not realize the possibilities unless they are shown, have listened to examples, and are given music that encourages colorful liberties. Thank goodness we have access not only to our creative imaginations, but also to some great teaching materials! We do not have to wait until a student has been studying piano for many years before introducing the “world of color and imagery” that will clear the pathway to understanding Debussy and Ravel. I count it a joy to share some of my favorite materials! As Julie Andrews (while portraying Maria von Trapp) sang, “Let’s start at the very beginning.”

Elementary repertoire

Earth Sounds by Nancy Telfer (Kjos): “Sea Life” (Primer/Level 1), “Garden Creatures” (Level 2/3), and “Wild & Free” (Level 4).

This is a series of activity books that explores the sounds of the keyboard with such titles as “Garden Snail” and “Grizzly.” This material will allow students to use their imaginations to play more musically.

In My Garden by Linda Niamath (Frederick Harris).

These 12 short solos convey a variety of garden sights and activities. Students in their beginning years of study will enjoy

the contrasting moods, touches, and textures of these solos that span the entire keyboard. Titles include “Bumblebees,” “Spider’s Web,” and “Ladybugs.”

Late elementary-early intermediate repertoire

Keys To Stylistic Mastery, Book 1 by Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield and Dennis Alexander (Alfred).

Dennis Alexander has composed four pieces in the impressionistic style that are delightful and whet the musical appetite for more. Two pages on the style period are included.

Intermediate-early advanced repertoire

Keys To Stylistic Mastery, Books 2 and 3 by Ingrid Jacobson Clarfield and Dennis Alexander (Alfred).

Book 2 has three pieces by Dennis Alexander composed in the impressionistic style, while Book 3 features one piece by Alexander and original easier compositions: Mompou’s *Pajaro Triste*, Debussy’s *Album Leaf*, and Ravel’s *Prelude*. Two pages on the style period are again included.

Spotlight On Impressionist Style by Catherine Rollin (Alfred).



Boating on the Seine by Pierre-Auguste Renoir (c. 1879-80)

A Zoo for You by Linda Niamath (Frederick Harris).

Although not written to be impressionistic in style, this book allows students to bring the ten animal caricatures to life with sensitivity and imagination, thus being educated to the idea of using color when playing. Some featured animals are “Giraffe,” “Peacock,” and “Penguins.”

Rollin’s intention with this book was “to create pieces accessible to the intermediate pianist that capture the style of the Impressionist Era, since most of the music of that era is not technically or musically accessible until late high school or college.” She has magnificently fulfilled that aspiration with such pieces as “Iberia,” “Under the Sea,” and “Water Lilies,” reminiscent of great impressionist keyboard pieces.

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Les Petites Images by Jennifer Linn. The impressionist style of this collection evokes detailed images of the titles. Younger students will sound very accomplished as they perform solos that sound hard, but are easy to play. Early intermediate students will also find these pieces enjoyable to learn. Late Elementary. \$6.95

Desert Suite by Carol Klose. Impressionistic sonorities blend with hints of Native American flute melodies in this beautiful collection, creating a tightly woven, finely detailed desert landscape. Intermediate. \$6.95

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"Dans Le Jardin" by Timothy Brown from *In Recital*, Book 6, Volume 1 (FJH).

This is a lovely piece that captures the essential beauty of what we call Impressionism. The suggestion to use the sostenuto pedal allows students the opportunity to develop this skill while playing an easier, yet stunning composition.

Mazurka in A Minor, Op.17, No.4 by Frédéric Chopin (various publishers).

In *Masters of Impressionism* edited by Maurice Hinson (Alfred), Dr. Hinson writes, "Debussy was a great admirer of Chopin, was able to assimilate Chopin's style into his own and although Debussy's harmonic language is very much his own, many of his stylistic characteristics came directly from Chopin." The beginnings of the color and expression so vital to Impressionism can be found in this mazurka.

These are only a few choices from the great "64-Pack" of our vast "pre-impressionist" keyboard repertoire. Happy coloring! ▲

In the next issue:

What is the role of "etudes" in a pianist's development? Which ones do you use and when?



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George F. Litterst is a pianist, music educator, and music software developer. He has pioneered new technology in music education and performance, and has co-authored the intelligent, score-following software, Home Concert Xtreme and the electronic blackboard program, Classroom Maestro.

This issue's contributors:

Kathy Maskell is the artistic director of MusicWorks, Inc. in Tewksbury, MA. She teaches class piano at Regis College and is the organist at Old Cambridge Baptist Church in Harvard Square. She has presented sessions on technology at both MTNA and NCKP conferences.

Michelle Gordon, NCTM, is an independent piano instructor in Mattapoisett, MA. She has presented Technology Sessions for NCKP and MTNA, and has written technology articles and media reviews for publications including American Music Teacher and Keyboard Companion.

Sam Ecoff divides his time between teaching piano, theory, and composition at the Waukesha County Conservatory of Music in Hartland, WI, and composing electronic music for TV programs such as West Wing, Access Hollywood, America's Most Wanted, and many more.

Tomorrow Today: Technology

George Litterst, Editor

What have you done to improve your personal technology skills?

Back in the early 1990s, I had the opportunity to assist a number of teachers as they made their first computer purchase. In each case, the teacher was taking a big step and spending a lot of money in the process.

I can remember nearly every one of those teachers telling me that they wanted to choose their computer wisely, because it was *the only one* that they planned to purchase. Little did they know that by 2006 that they would probably have purchased several!!!

The challenge to keep up

With technology-based products changing so fast, it often seems like it is hard to keep up with new developments. For

myself, however, I have found that staying current is not so difficult so long as I can conceptualize what I am doing when I use a technology-based tool.

For example, if I follow the instructions without any understanding of what I am doing, I am doomed to be a slave to every manual that comes with a technology product. On the other hand, if I take the time to understand how these tools work as I acquire them, I find that new tools, as well as revisions to the old tools, do not take a lot of study. In fact, I often find that the new tool (or revision of an old tool) is even easier to learn!

Below are three interesting perspectives on this important subject. ▲

A multifaceted approach

by Kathy Maskell

Delving into the world of music technology can open many new and exciting options that assist our teaching. As technology inevitably changes, the need arises to keep up with the flow of information. This is not unlike the situation that physicians face, needing to stay current in their knowledge of prescription medicine. As teachers, we also want the best for our "patients."

Taking a fresh look

After using a tried-and-true technology for a long time—such as the music software program *Music Ace* (www.harmonicvision.com)—I can become matter-of-fact in my use of it. When this happens, I look for opportunities to use the tool in new ways.

For example, within the context of group

teaching in my studio, I have started a *Music Ace* competition by posting progress charts, using bright copy paper and encouraging stickers. Students can then see how they measure up to their peers. While this may not be a new concept, it does validate the continued use of this marvelous program for students of all ages.

Upgrading: Is it always a good idea?

It is impossible to keep up with every change and upgrade that happens in the world of music technology. I am always intrigued by the new and innovative features that publishers add to their products. However, I often question the value of spending money on every upgrade option that comes my way.

For instance, I use *Cakewalk Home Studio 2004* (www.cakewalk.com) for all of my sequencing. When *Sonar 5* (the new generation program from Cakewalk) came along, I was initially excited by its improved graphics and streamlined layout. Not sure whether to upgrade, I sat down and listed the ways in which I use this software, and then I realized that the upgrade was not critical at this point.

On the other hand, I knew that I needed an upgrade for my notation software. Learning any notation program is a challenge. Years ago, I started out with *Music Time* (www.gvox.com), graduated to *Rhapsody* (now discontinued), then *Encore* (www.gvox.com), and finally switched to *Sibelius* (www.sibelius.com). The decision to upgrade took some serious consideration. What would be the direct benefit?

I was attracted to the new version of *Sibelius* because it offered worksheet templates as well as other new features. Taking into consideration the fact that I would still need to have the manual close by, I decided to plunge ahead and learn the new program on my own. My first project was creating original theory exercises for my class piano students at Regis College. There is nothing like an important project to get you up and running with a new program!

Digging a little deeper

Although I can take time to learn new products on my own, I often find that it is nice to take a class. For example, this past June I attended the International Association of Jazz Educators (www.iaje.org) Teacher Training Institute at the University of Delaware.

My motivation was to find new ideas for my ensemble classes through the use of jazz band charts. As an added bonus, there were sessions on technology, including one on the *Band-in-a-Box* software program (www.pgmusic.com). Up to that point, I had only been using *Band-in-a-Box* as a tool for creating improvisational exercises using the myriad of style choices available. I did realize that I could create lead sheets for my jazz-inclined students, but I had not yet explored this feature.

My class was taught by Dennis Mauricio. His presentation was so clear that I now feel confident about creating my own jazz

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charts for multiple keyboard groups. As a result, I am now using the notation feature of *Band-in-a-Box* to enable students to view a programmed bass line or an arpeggiated guitar line. This use of the software gives my students a new perspective on the music.

On a more personal note, I recently purchased a Kodak EasyShare camera (www.kodak.com), complete with printer dock. Since my husband is a professional photographer, I really hadn't seen the need for me to have a camera as well. However, it

has been great fun to be able to take candid photos of my students and to print copies for both my students and me. I am even learning how to get rid of red-eye!

The joy of making music comes from the never-ending discoveries. Whether we learn from our students or from our peers, we should never shrink from a new opportunity to gain insight that might retain or inspire even one student. ▲

Taking a new and unexpected direction

by Michelle Gordon

Avoiding the dinosaur syndrome

I enjoy using technology. However, it is very easy for me to become quite fond of a couple of new things, and then, after a while, find that I've gotten stuck in a rut. It's a lot easier and quicker to get stuck in such a rut with technology than with anything else because it changes so quickly. It seems that each time you learn how to do something, there is suddenly a newer, quicker, faster, and better way to do it! Your old way quickly becomes obsolete and cumbersome!!!

Last year I decided to rethink my approach to learning new technologies. Not wanting to be thought of as a dinosaur and yet not wanting to spend my last pennies on new toys, I decided to see what new things I could do with the products that I already have. What features or applications had I not explored? What skills or knowledge did I already have that I was not putting to good use?

Studio management via the Internet

I started by thinking about the Internet and what it could do for me. I already knew of lots of wonderful educational websites that my students could use in my studio's technology lab. I knew that there were lots of groups that I could join (and I did join some of them). These groups connected me with people who were interested in the same things.

After thinking about these Internet groups, I realized that I already had a large group of people (my students) who were all interested in learning the piano and were already connected through my piano studio. All I needed to do was to organize them using the Internet. So I set up a prototype Yahoo group (www.yahoo.com) for my piano studio. What I soon realized was that Yahoo could easily be used as a studio website, and I wouldn't have to go through the process of learning to use a website authoring program!

It was easy to get my students involved with my new group. All they needed was a free Yahoo email account. This enabled them easily to become members of my web group and to access it whenever they needed to.

Yahoo makes it simple!

It was also easy for me to take advantage of the Yahoo features. For example, I found that I was able to upload my studio files: my studio policy, important information, swap list, and other things my students may need to access. I added links to terrific websites and even posted my studio calendar. Looking further through the options, I could see that if I used the "poll" feature, I would be able to question my students online regarding important studio issues that come up.

It is true that all of this material is listed on a public site. However, the moderator/ group owner (who happens to be ME!) can restrict membership and choose to limit membership in the group. So, I limited access to my own students and didn't worry about who could see my student-only studio information.

This year I'm in the process of perfecting this group website, and next year I plan to require all students to become members of the group. This will help them access important studio information online and stay up to date with studio policies, news, and events.

Managing my group is fun as well as useful

One of the fun features is the ability to upload photos. Now we can post photos of recital highlights online. I also plan to post the monthly newsletter online instead of sending it to the printer and handing it out at lesson time.

I recommend that teachers look into this opportunity. You can create an almost paperless studio as far as policies, newsletters, handbooks, swap lists, and calendars go. The possibilities are endless!

I am enjoying my exploration of the opportunities that come with having my own Yahoo group devoted to my piano teaching studio. And, I continue to grow more comfortable with the technology that I already have. Although I can continue to purchase and learn new programs and gadgets, I much prefer learning how to use the technology with which I am already comfortable in order to enrich my professional life! ▲

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Finding the right resources

by Sam Ecoff

The right attitude

I believe that the most important thing one must consider when improving technology skills is the attitude one has toward music technology. Rather than treating technology as though it is a separate discipline from musical practice, it is useful to consider that learning about music technology is very similar to studying another musical instrument. Skills must be conceptualized and practiced regularly before mastery can occur.

For example, you can teach students sayings like “Every Good Boy Does Fine” to help them identify notes on a staff, but being able to use these sayings doesn’t make them proficient at reading music. They must practice reading the notes over and over again. The same holds true for music technology skills. Reading about how to record a student’s performance in a software manual is good, but to master the skill you must practice it regularly with the same diligence with which you practice the piano.

Sources of information

Finding resources to help improve music technology knowledge can be difficult when you are new to music technology. Books quickly become obsolete as technology marches on. Trade magazines such as *Keyboard* (www.keyboardmag.com), *Electronic Musician* (www.emusician.com), *Mix* (www.mixonline.com), and *Sound on Sound* (www.soundonsound.com) constitute excellent alternatives. Magazine subscriptions are typically \$20-\$25 annually, and the cost can be written off as a business expense. Many publishers even offer free subscriptions to educators. Don’t worry if the magazines seem to be written in a foreign language at first; the longer you read them, the more they will make sense.

Getting hands-on instruction

Periodicals can be very helpful, but if you are a hands-on learner, you may find that you will have greater success if you engage someone who is very knowledgeable about music technology as a coach or teacher. Salespeople in music stores where music technology is sold are often open to the idea of being hired for a limited number of private music technology lessons.

The advantage of paying for a salesperson’s time is that he/she will be less likely

The skills you use are
the skills you keep!

to try to sell you something, and you can feel free to ask even your most rudimentary questions without feeling guilty. I have, however, come across several such people who were willing to spend two to three hours with me for free, knowing that I would eventually make purchases from them that would make it worth their time.

If you feel a need for a deeper immersion into the world of music technology, there are many schools dedicated to music technology that have sprung up all over the United States in the past few years. For example, the Recording Workshop in Chillicothe, OH (www.recordingworkshop.com) offers programs that range from one to five weeks. These programs can take you from novice to music technology guru, making the experience an incredible summer opportunity for those seeking continuing education.

Several schools offer associate degrees in music technology subjects, such as recording and production. Often referred to as

“The Harvard of Recording Schools,” Full Sail Real World Education in Winter Park Florida (www.fullsail.com) is one of the longest running and best-established schools, offering several two-year programs in many different music technology subjects. Having attended Full Sail after completing my bachelor’s degree in music, I can attest to the thoroughness of the training one receives at a school of this caliber.

Improving one's skills by teaching

An important step in the mastery of any skill is teaching that skill to someone else. One of my biggest motivations for developing new music technology courses at the conservatory where I teach is that by preparing to teach the courses, I am forced to make sure I have no gaps in my knowledge of the subject matter.

You don’t have to teach music technology lessons to benefit, however. The simple act of recommending a great piece of educational software to a colleague or teaching a student the basics of entering music into a notation program will help you to solidify your own technology skills. Remember: The skills you use are the skills you keep! The more creative ways you find to employ your technology knowledge and share that knowledge with others, the more you will be motivated to learn new skills and the easier it will be to maintain the skills you currently have. ▲

In the next issue:
Three generations of
teachers on teaching
with technology

Tech Tips

George Litterst, Editor

Please submit your Tech questions c/o pianobench@aol.com.

Q: How important is it to upgrade my computer software? What is the difference between an update and an upgrade?

A: As we all know, publishers of music and other software programs continually provide updates and upgrades for their products. Sometimes these new versions are free; other times they cost money. How important are these updates and upgrades?

In a perfect world, all of us would have plenty of money to purchase a new computer every year and pay for new versions of all of our software programs. This “perfect” scenario would provide technology developers with a necessary revenue stream and provide us (the customers) with the thrill of continuous enhancements to our products.

Unfortunately, most of us cannot upgrade our computers every year, yet we must be concerned with issues of compatibility between the current or new version of a particular software program and the computer that we have.

In most cases, it makes sense to take advantage of any free “updates” that are provided by software publishers.

In most cases, it makes sense to take advantage of any free “updates” that are provided by software publishers. More often than not, these updates contain bug fixes as well as modest enhancements. Increasingly, publishers make these updates available on their websites as free downloads. Accordingly, it is good practice to visit the publishers’ websites periodically to see if there are updates available.

When taking advantage of an update, it is a good idea to read the description that comes with the update before proceeding with its installation. For example, an update to a music notation program may change the way in which its files are saved, making newly saved files incompatible with early versions of the program. This may not be a problem if you are updating the software on all of your computers. But if you have a lab of computers of mixed vintage or you have students who bring in files

from home, you do need to be concerned with the issue of file compatibility. In these cases, it may make sense to avoid an update or upgrade until you (and perhaps your students) can update all of your computers.

Upgrades involve more substantial changes to the software and usually cost money. The upgrade price helps to keep the publishers in business and (hopefully) provides you with lots of important new features. However, if you have a lot of software, paying for every upgrade when it comes along can be expensive. Therefore, it is important to choose the upgrades wisely.

Sometimes you really have no choice about whether to purchase an upgrade. For example, if you purchase a new computer that has a newer operating system than your old computer (i.e. Windows XP vs. Windows 95 or Macintosh OS X vs. System 9), you may find that some of your old software does not work and must be upgraded. In some cases upgrading is necessary due to poor programming on the part of the software author. In other cases, the creator of your computer’s operating system (Microsoft or Apple) has made substantial changes that require software developers to rewrite their code.

Sometimes Microsoft and Apple provide free updates to your computer’s operating system. These free software updates are generally recommended. In many cases, they contain software improvements or “fixes” that enhance the security of your computer.

My personal rules of thumb are:

- If a software update or upgrade is free, I get it and install it. The only exception comes in the case of an update or upgrade that introduces a file or system incompatibility that requires further upgrading for which I am not prepared.
- If a software upgrade costs money, I look closely at the feature enhancements to see how important they are. Sometimes they contain necessary compatibility enhancements required by a new computer or operating system that I have acquired, in which case the upgrade is mandatory. ▲

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The World Around Us: News & Views

Helen Smith Tarchalski, Editor

Helen Smith Tarchalski teaches in her independent studio in Gaithersburg, MD, on the faculty of Anne Arundel Community College, and at the U.S. Naval Academy. She has authored articles, entries for textbooks, and educational software, and also presented workshops throughout the U.S. on a variety of pedagogical topics. She is a graduate of Peabody Conservatory where she studied with Fernando Laires, and she holds the Master Teacher Certificate from MTNA.

This issue's contributor:

Joselyn Cross Makowski is an independent teacher of piano in Silver Spring, MD, and is a frequent lecturer on pedagogical issues. She is currently the President of the Maryland State Music Teachers Association and serves on the board of the National Society of Arts and Letters.

What was that teacher *thinking* allowing a student to perform like that?

Nearly every teacher has uttered those words. And nearly every teacher has shuddered through one's own student performing poorly, wondering all the while if someone else is passing judgment. As the aphorism goes, "...until you walk a mile in another man's shoes"

Sometimes a teacher presents a poorly prepared student simply because of limited teaching experience. Sometimes a teacher must make a judgment call based on extenuating circumstances that the unassociated observer cannot detect. And, of course, sometimes a remarkably poor student performance has little or nothing to do with the teacher's skill, judgment, or decision-making.

In an independent studio, we often have the luxury of canceling a performance we feel is doomed. In an institutional setting, we can advise that a student delay a performance, but the decision is often out of our hands. Ready or not, in an institution the student often must eventually go forward with a performance to receive credit.

Keeping in mind that there are no guarantees in the performing arts, the *real* questions we must wrestle with are: Is it ever warranted to allow a student to perform when we expect that he will not meet our standards? What can we do to minimize the risk of a public student performance so

problematic that it leaves people wondering why the teacher allowed it? And if *we* are asking the question, what should we as compassionate listeners and colleagues consider?

A few years ago, a talented boy in my studio missed participating in several consecutive performances. Up until that year Billy had been an exceptional performer, was always ready and willing to participate in student events, and had won many com-

petitions. Extenuating circumstances developed in his life and he had not adjusted well. I chose to think of his situation as a temporary hump we needed to collectively conquer. His father chose to think of it as a series of failures and threatened to withdraw him from lessons. One more missed performance would have likely pushed that father over the edge. I swallowed my pride

and allowed Billy to participate in a performance that, under other circumstances, would have been better missed. Fortunately, it was not a disastrous performance to the untrained ear, but it certainly was disappointing and felt as though he was skating on thin ice. Billy's father, however, was satisfied that his son was no longer "failing," Billy's mounting anxiety began to resolve, and he got past his temporary hump. So, *this* teacher was thinking she wanted a very talented student to not lose piano lessons through no fault of the stu-

What can we do to avoid placing ourselves in these situations?

dent or the teacher. We certainly took a gamble (so far as that one performance was concerned), but none of us went into the arts expecting a “sure thing” every time!

Sometimes a student or parent simply does not grasp our warnings about the importance of advance preparation — they may not even understand what “prepared” actually means. Early in my teaching career, I was stunned by a parent’s incredulous response when I told her that, based on the group performance class, her little Eugenia was not prepared and should not perform that weekend: “But she’s all ready! We just picked up her new dress, and her aunt and best friend’s parents are coming!” Young students routinely study on Wednesday or Thursday night for a Friday afternoon spelling test. Why would they think they should be prepared several *weeks* ahead for a piano performance? Eugenia’s mother didn’t appear ruffled at all by the news that her budding pianist had missed many musical nuances (again), and that her performance was severely under tempo. Apparently *I* had failed in preparing the student *and* parents to understand what “prepared” means and what is involved in meeting that goal, including a preparation timetable. Since I apparently *had* failed in communicating some vital points, did I have the moral right to deprive them of a festive occasion they had planned for, regardless of whose idea of “readiness” Eugenia was approaching in the performance?

Another student in my early teaching years, Mimi, shocked me with not only the most lack-luster performance I had ever heard her produce, but she also appeared to be so out of touch that she became almost irretrievably lost halfway through her performance. How could this happen to a highly capable, well-prepared student? Surely she was ill and perhaps had been given some type of medication, I reasoned. At the following lesson, Mimi’s mother sheepishly admitted that she wished she had listened to Mimi’s grandmother, who had implored her to understand that a sleepover party the night before the recital was a very bad idea.

How can we avoid falling into the trap set by unapprised, overzealous, or overly judgmental parents and students who push us into allowing performances we know should not take place? What if the student *does* “pull it off” and manages to perform well, despite poor advance

preparation? What lesson has the student learned? Even if he gets away with it now, surely the day will come as he advances when a fugue or some other complex work simply cannot be learned and digested in a short period of time. And the more times that the student manages to squeak by, the more negative and even damaging the experience is when life finally catches up.

What can we do to avoid placing our students and ourselves in these situations?

- As usual, many answers to studio dilemmas go back to agreeing on expectations

Provide guidelines for successful preparation, including a detailed written account of the non-musical elements related to successful preparation.

up front: we must acknowledge the importance of a printed studio policy statement and initial interview. We should address such elements as required performance preparation, requiring students to notify the teacher of any upcoming performances, the potential for long-term damage from a poorly-prepared performance, and the teacher’s ultimate responsibility to be the one who decides whether or not a student performs. We should also acknowledge that even the most dedicated students have lapses in progress from time to time — sometimes as part of the natural

growth process, and sometimes because of extenuating circumstances. Parents should be directed to be patient and help encourage the student through these rough times. Our students often teach us a great deal; Billy, Mimi, Eugenia, and several other students are directly responsible for many clauses in *my* studio policy statement!

- Either as part of the studio policy statement or as a separate document, provide guidelines for successful preparation, including a detailed written account of the non-musical elements related to successful preparation (plenty of rest, proper diet, parental cooperation in preparing the student to focus).
- Provide performance preparation classes.
- Require several successful trial performances.
- Set firm “Performance Ready” deadlines.
- Clearly communicate with students and parents regarding expectations in a timely manner.

We do not have control over our students’ lives and what goes on outside of the studio. We cannot anticipate every extenuating circumstance or unacceptable choice, and we cannot reduce the process of preparing for a performance to an exact science. I do *not*, however, advocate relaxing standards for our students. Through experience, organized planning, deductive and comparative reasoning as we evaluate student personalities, and hearing one another’s sometimes hair-raising anecdotes, we *can* decrease the chances of a disappointing performance, and we *can* look at less than optimal student performances with a more compassionate and open mind. The likely end result is that we will participate in encouraging more life-long music makers and appreciative audiences. ▲

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by
Leigh Kaplan

We are hearing one performance, and we have no idea of the history behind the performance

by Joselyn Makowski

The longer I teach and the older I get, the clearer it becomes to me that in music and teaching, clearly almost *nothing* is clear! I adjudicate a large number of events each year — mostly competitive, but some are adjudicated non-competitive or studio evaluation events as well. I hear a variety of repertoire presented by performers of all ages and levels. Most of these performances are delightful and show a blossoming musical maturity that is exciting to hear. But sometimes a performance is marred by a plethora of incorrect notes, creative rhythms, questionable pedaling, and lengthy or numerous memory lapses. Should the teacher be drawn and quartered, or could there be other factors involved that we don't know about? This question has caused me to recall unhappy memories of a few less than stellar performances *my* students have turned out, and raised the question, "What was I thinking on those occasions? Why did I allow those performances ... or did I?"

I know I *didn't* allow a performance that comes to mind by a student in a state concerto competition — the performance in which he decided the night before the competition that a few random sections just (in his words) "sound a lot better if you slow way down and feel them a lot more Romantic-like?" At the rehearsal the preceding day, I honestly felt that he had a very fine chance to be chosen as a winner! I made the mistake, however, of telling him so while complimenting him on the good work he had done, apparently creating an overly confident *artiste*. His critiques indicated that he had thrown in a generous amount of physical gestures to make certain everyone knew just how passionate he was about this Haydn concerto. Last-minute decisions such as this one have plagued a few other performances by other students over the years. I've learned to chalk it up to immaturity, hoping that those who judged the students will not have also judged the teacher as being poor or without merit.

I remember a wonderful young teenage student who came to me many years ago after she was dismissed by her former teacher because she didn't perform well. That teacher allowed public performances only by the students who "produced" (read: won competitions). The girl felt stigmatized and less worthy than her peers. She suffered from such severe anxiety that she was receiving medical treatment. She vomited after every test in school, after every oral report, and after piano performances — initially even at studio performance classes. She was a beautiful, sensitive pianist who paid attention to the details

Could there be other factors involved that we don't know about?

and nuances in all her music. She was working as hard at overcoming her emotional problems as she was at the musical ones, and yes, I not only allowed her to play as frequently as possible, but cheered with her as we saw that her therapy was working. The performances she produced were nowhere close to her capability, but she, her parents, and I viewed each performance as a solid First Place. We elected to disregard much of the criticism she received if it was related to anxiety. I treasure an essay presented at her graduation recital:

One of my greatest fears was to not measure up or to fail while others watched. There were numerous times at competitions when I was forced to confront this great fear. Playing my piece in the wrong octave, forgetting my piece completely, and forgetting to bow were just a few of the struggles I went through as I grew in musical ability. These struggles, while depressing at the time, increased my confidence as time went on. With every piece I played correctly,

with every line of beautifully phrased music, my inner confidence continued to grow. Soon, I forgot to worry about how I would play, and instead let the music flow through me. There are still times when I am disappointed with my performance, but now that is not my main focus ...

As an audience member or a judge of our young people, we must keep in mind that we are hearing *one* performance, and we have no idea of the history behind the performance that could explain a great deal.

What about parents? Aren't they sometimes a convincing, but possibly misdirected influence on the decisions a teacher makes? When I was a less experienced teacher, I was so eager to please that I sometimes found myself succumbing to parental pleas for more difficult, flashy music for little Johnny, or to allow Susie to enter some of the higher level competitions in our state. Against my better judgment, I folded. In my last such lapse, I very grudgingly allowed a completely unprepared student to perform in our state's annual High School Examinations for Recognition of music study. The grade is entered on the permanent school record and is an important event for high school students. I informed the unprepared girl that it would be ludicrous for her to take the examination since nothing was completely memorized as late as three days before the exam. Her mother called me later insisting that her daughter participate and suffer the consequences of her habitual last-minute preparation. I countered that the girl faced certain humiliation as well as a poor grade, and that being withdrawn was punishment enough for her since she would be the only one in the studio who had to do so. But the mother insisted, stating that she had paid \$20 to enter the girl and she *would* be at the center, and that she *would* play. The performance went as predicted, and the only person who appeared to be satisfied that day was the mother. The student was devastated, I was humiliated by my lack of spine,

and the judges were forced into a painful position of finding some kind way of critiquing this poor performance. They elected to give the student no grade at all for that year, as if she had not been examined. *I no longer give in to this kind of pressure.* My students and their parents now know from the beginning that the final say is mine, regardless of non-refundable entry fees or parental whims.

Sometimes our students have a performance day when things don't go well, in spite of having prepared well, and I accept that, knowing I have not sacrificed my professional integrity. In other cases they may decide at the last minute to redesign the wheel. Some of my students do what I believe is their very best at this point in their study, and their very best won't

astound anyone. But they enjoy preparing, dressing up, participating with other students and learning from them, and are overjoyed when they receive an occasional Honorable Mention ribbon. Some, as I

We are all professionals
and deserve one
another's respect and
support.

mentioned, have special issues behind their performance that a judge has no way of knowing. There are many colleagues who

feel differently than I do, and they present only students who are very polished performers. That is certainly their choice and right. I make the same choice for some high-level events designed only for advanced, seasoned performers. I try to be more generous in choosing students to perform in lower level festivals, non-competitive events, and adjudicated musicales and recitals so they can hone their performance skills more frequently.

When I am judging, I use my own teaching situations as a guide, and am not quick to adversely judge the teacher of the performer. We are professionals and deserve one another's respect and support. We, as well as our students, should always be learning and growing. ▲

News: NCKP '07 Preview

National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy

Thursday-Saturday, August 2-4, 2007 in Oak Brook, Illinois
Pre-Conference Seminars on Wednesday, August 1

Entitled *Tradition and Transformation: Learning, Playing, and Teaching Outside the Box*, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy 2007 is designed to offer inspiring, innovative, and challenging experiences for keyboard music teachers at the luxurious, fully-renovated Doubletree Chicago-Oak Brook.

Each time the conference has met, participants have said, "this is the best conference ever." In planning for 2007, the Frances Clark Center has sought to elicit that same response from everyone who attends.

In the coming months, you will have the opportunity to learn the details of an unusually varied and exciting program that features outstanding presenters from both inside and outside the profession of music teaching. As a *Keyboard Companion* subscriber, you should have received a brochure/catalog earlier this year. Watch this and other magazines for news and ads and, for the most up-to-date information, visit www.francesclarkcenter.org/National-Conference.html regularly.

• **Keynote addresses** will be presented by visionary and charismatic speakers including Angela Myles Beeching, Barry Bittman, Robert Duke, Martin Marty, and Marianne Uszler.

- Tony Caramia, Richard Kogan, Carol Leone, Spencer Myer, Phillip Keveren, and the national winners of the MTNA piano competitions for 2007 will perform **live concerts**.
- **Workshops** will provide the opportunity to interact with James Goldsworthy, Joyce Grill, Jane Magrath, Kathleen Riley, Catherine Rollin, and Karen Zorn.



- **Demonstration teaching**, both live and on videotape, will feature nationally-known teachers Janet Johnson, William Westney, and Paul Wirth.
- In addition, state-of-the-art **technology sessions, discussion groups, poster sessions, and student recitals** will be among the events that are available each day.



Conference Artist
Richard Kogan

Every facet of the conference is dedicated to the motto: *Extraordinary results with every student.*

Back by popular demand, music publishers will exhibit and showcase their latest materials. The NCKP Store will feature books and recordings by presenters including autograph opportunities and other memorabilia.

Pre-Conference Seminars on the afternoon of Wednesday, August 1, 2007 will feature four specialized tracks — one for independent teachers, one for students and young professionals, one for college pedagogy teachers, and one for those wishing to immerse themselves in new technology.

Scholarships, reduced rates, and other forms of assistance are available for students and young professionals just embarking upon their career. Graduate and/or continuing education credit will also be available for the first time.

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*The National Conference
on Keyboard Pedagogy
2007*

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For more information and to register

Both enrollment and hotel space is strictly limited, so early registration is advised. **Those who register by May 1 receive a substantially reduced registration fee.**

For more information and to insure that you receive up-to-date news, contact:

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Spring 2007

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Word Find

Hidden words:

- Bach
- Bartholdy
- Compose
- Conduct
- Conservatory
- Dream
- Fanny
- Felix
- Goethe
- Hamburg
- Leipzig
- London
- Mendelssohn
- Mozart
- Orchestra
- Queen
- Schumann

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A E I P Z B H C C X X R N O M P
R M H O A I N E E T Q C D N A Q
T Q A R R N G O E M A E R D N U
H M C I T C O M P O S E L O N E
O R C H E S T R A G R U B M A H

Find these hidden words that tell us about the life of Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy, our featured composer in this issue. Then read the story about his life on page 2. Tell your teacher how each person, place, or activity is important to Mendelssohn's life story!

Words can be found across, down, backwards, or diagonally.



Goethe



Queen Victoria



Mozart



Conducting Baton



J.S. Bach

History

Events in 1809, the year that Felix Mendelssohn was born

Born: American author Edgar Allan Poe, American president Abraham Lincoln, and French inventor Louis Braille (inventor of the Braille system of reading for the blind)

Died: Franz Josef Haydn

Invented: First version of Double Escapement action by piano maker Sebastien Erard



Did you know ...

that practicing the piano improves your memory? A study conducted at the University of Hong Kong tested something called *verbal memory* (remembering words) of 60 college students, half of whom had at least six years of music lessons before the age of 12. They were divided into two groups, were read 12-word lists three times, and asked to repeat what they could remember. The college students who had taken music lessons remembered a lot more words than those without any music lessons!

Meet the Composers

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy

Jakob Ludwig Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy (called Felix), who lived during the Romantic period in history, was born on February 3, 1809 in Hamburg, Germany. His family moved to Berlin when he was three years old. Felix Mendelssohn came from a wealthy Jewish family who later became Christians. (His father then decided to add "Bartholdy" so that they would have a more Christian sounding name.) Felix was a devoted Lutheran the same as his musical hero, Johann Sebastian Bach. Felix had an older sister, Fanny Cécille; a younger sister, Rebecka; and a younger brother named Paul. "Felix" means "happy" in Latin, and he did live a happy life.

His parents got the children up by 5 a.m. to begin their studies. He kept this early habit his whole life. He loved drawing, watercolor painting, dancing, playing chess, and playing billiards (a game similar to pool). The Mendelssohn children performed home concerts on Sundays and invited many famous people, but Felix's parents did not want him to become a professional musician.

Felix was polite and well-liked. He had a very happy marriage to Cécile Jeanrenaud, daughter of a well-known French clergyman. They had five children.

Felix's first piano lessons were with his mother. He was called the greatest musical child prodigy since Mozart. He played his first concert at age nine, and his first composition was published when he was thirteen. He had an amazing memory! He was able to play all of the keyboard music of Bach known at that time, and all nine Beethoven symphonies on the piano! Mendelssohn was an excellent pianist and conductor and also played the violin and organ. He is thought to be the first to

conduct using a baton. His compositions were popular with audiences during his lifetime, but then were not appreciated enough for most of the 1900s. He did not like the new harmonies used in the Romantic period very much. He was an especially skilled composer for orchestra.

When he was only twelve years old, he became friends with the famous poet Goethe, who was 72. Goethe was amazed by Felix's playing and sight-reading, and tried unsuccessfully to stump him by asking him to read messy musical manuscripts.

When Mendelssohn was an adult, he also became friends with Queen Victoria and Prince Albert, who loved his music and hearing him play the piano. To his delight, Queen Victoria sang one of his songs for him. If you have ever been to a wedding, you may have heard Mendelssohn's famous "Wedding March" from *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Its first performance at a wedding ceremony was in 1858 for Princess Victoria, his friends' daughter.

Mendelssohn started the Leipzig Conservatory. Robert Schumann taught there with him. Mendelssohn was the conductor of the Gewandhaus Orchestra in Leipzig, where Bach had lived. Mendelssohn helped to make Bach's music popular again, and he conducted Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* after it had not been heard for about 100 years. Bach's music was a great influence on Mendelssohn's composing. Mendelssohn's great-aunt was a student of Bach's son, Wilhelm Friedmann Bach.

Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy died broken-hearted at the age of 38 on November 4, 1847, six months after the death of his beloved sister Fanny.



Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy



A closer look at Keyboard Kids' Companion

1. Review your Winter 2006 issue of *Keyboard Kids' Companion*. Tell your teacher four things that Mendelssohn had in common with Mozart.
2. Listen to a recording of Mendelssohn's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Who wrote the play by the same name?
3. Listen to recordings of *Rondo capriccioso*, *Octet in E-flat*, and one selection from *Songs Without Words*. Which instrument or instruments do you hear in each of these compositions?
4. You read that piano maker Sebastien Erard invented the Double Escapement. Look up Double Escapement on the internet. How does this invention help us to play the piano?

The National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy 2007

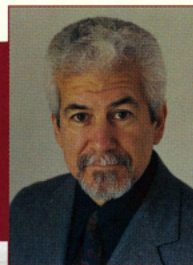
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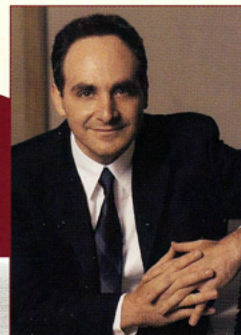
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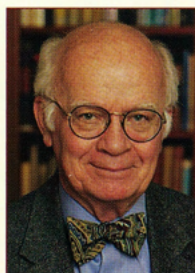
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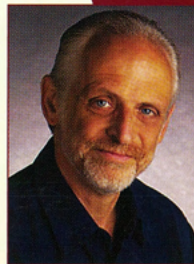
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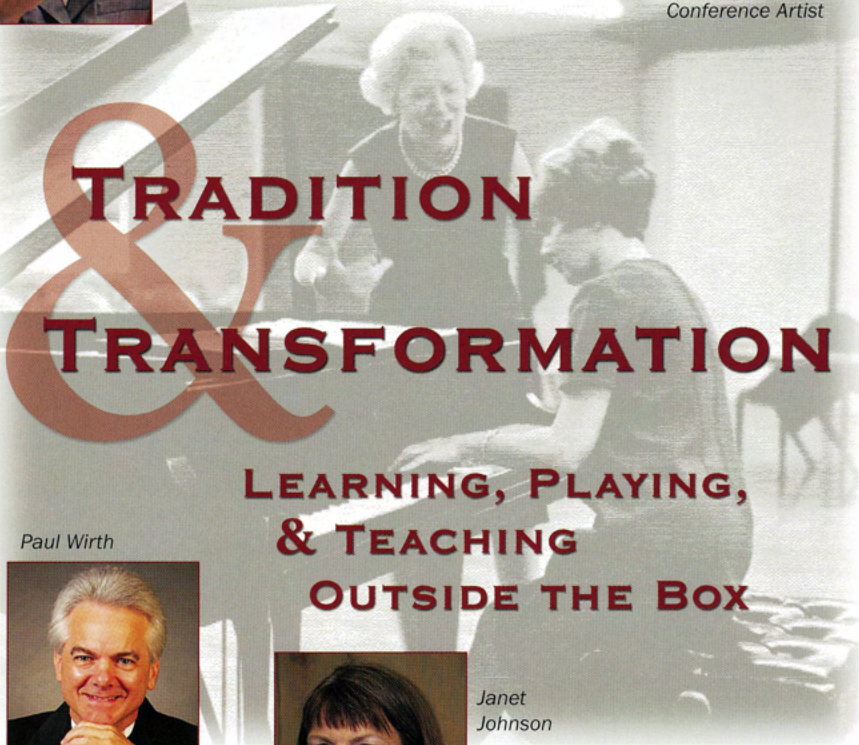
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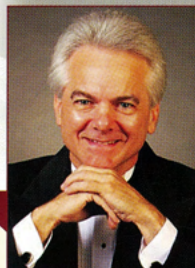
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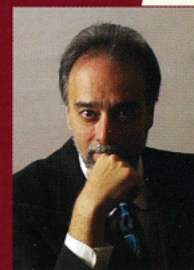
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