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Building Blocks to Effective Sight Reading

by Barbara Fast

Sight reading for pianists remains a special challenge. While every other instrumentalist reads music horizontally, primarily one line of notes on one staff, pianists routinely read as many as four to eight notes vertically at one time, and on two different staves. The greater complexity of note reading at the keyboard, particularly vertical reading, demands more specialized development of sight reading skills for pianists.

The purpose of this article is to examine the research on sight reading, extrapolating important findings that can become building blocks to improved reading ability.

Basics of Eye Movement

It is helpful to understand how the eye functions when working to improve sight reading. There are several surprising facts to note. While musicians often feel as if they are staring in a fixed manner at a piece of music, in reality the eye is constantly moving very rapidly, performing large and small movements, about 4-6 per second. The eye takes snapshots, similar to a camera, and the brain hooks these snapshots together, so that it seems that our eyes function like a movie. (Lehmann, Andreas, McArthur 2002).

Secondly, with these frequent small and large movements, the eye moves ahead in a score, but also returns to current or even previous material. This fact runs counter to the practice of improving sight reading by covering current notes students are playing in order to force the eye to read ahead. This can be helpful in some circumstances, but should not always be utilized. The eye movements of better sight readers not only travel further ahead in the score, the eye constantly moves around, including returning to the current point of performance (Young, 1971).

In addition, better sight readers have a larger vertical span, grabbing outer notes rather than simply reading "in the middle" of the two staves. Studies that track eye movement when pianists are reading a score, dramatically demonstrate that good sight readers possess more frequent eye movements, more vertical movements up and down, more movements away from the current notes, and greater ability to move to the highest and lowest notes in the score. Poor readers on the other hand have fewer eye movements, tend to hover in the middle of the score or on no specific note, have fewer movements away from the current notes, and frequently the eye is rather static, rarely attempting to reach the highest and lowest notes. (Waters, Townsend, Underwood, 1998; Young, 1971).

This demonstrates the importance of vertical eye-span for pianists and reinforces the need to expand the treble to bass reading ability of piano students. Certainly early reading of both staves simultaneously should be encouraged, and an over-reliance on learning music hands separately, or only one staff at a time, should be avoided. Also, in the group piano curriculum, working on choral and instrumental score reading becomes a helpful aid in

developing greater vertical eye-span in students.

When working on reading, it's helpful to remember that studies show that chords arranged in thirds are more easily recognized than inversions or chords with other arrangement of intervals (Ortmann, 1934). Thus, intervals of a fourth and sixth need more drill than thirds and fiths and first and second inversion chords need more emphasis than root position chords. It's helpful in the first year of piano study to encourage students to scan for and then circle intervals of the fourth and sixth, as these are frequent stumbling blocks in reading.

It's also helpful to know when working on sight reading that good sight readers perceive phrase units. Better sight readers have a perceptual span of 6-7 notes of a single line melody, while poor readers have a 3-4 note span. This span increases or shrinks, depending on phrase boundaries (Sloboda, 1984; Bean, 1938; Jacobson, 1926). Knowing this information, teachers should be encouraged to add phrase markings in elementary music when none exist. Phrase markings help organize the music for students.

Rhythmic Importance in Sight Reading

Research frequently shows that rhythm errors outweigh all other types of errors when sight reading. (Hardy, 1995; McPherson, 1994; Elliot 1982). Emphasis given to previewing music by tapping and counting the music before actually playing at the keyboard is enormously helpful to students. Even with adult students, closing the keyboard cover and tapping the rhythm of the piece hands together not only insures rhythmic accuracy, but also helps to develop coordination before tackling the actual note reading.

In one study, sight reading improved for instrumentalists when students were allowed to tap, clap, or mark the beat while playing (Boyl, 1970). Band students are frequently taught to tap their feet as a means to feel the pulse. A flutist or violinist, when performing, has great freedom to move, feeling the natural pulse of the music. Pianists on the other hand, are frequently taught to not pump the arm to the musical beat. Also, feet are occupied on the pedals, not on tapping the rhythm, and in general there is less freedom for pianists to overtly feel the pulse of the music in the body. Because of this lack of externalization of the pulse, young piano students should be encouraged to participate in rhythmic activities away from the piano. Dalcroze or eurthythmic type classes can be particularly helpful to a young students overall development of rhythm.

Pianists can borrow another technique from instrumentalists: the “slash” technique. Sight reading improved the most for instrumentalists when students located primary pulses in a measure and made other notes subordinate (Lemons, 1984). The “slash” technique, where students literally draw a line through the primary beats of the measure is frequently taught to band students and is widely used by professional orchestral musicians. Pianists who are poor sight readers are frequently unaware of this technique and can benefit enormously by marking or “slashing” the primary beats within the measure. It's particularly important to be precise in the slashes, as one then learns to read from slash

mark to slash mark, or beat to beat.

Studies also show that following a definite, steady beat was a helpful aid to sight reading (Lemons, 1984). While pianists don't have a conductor, they can make use of metronomes, CDs and the accompaniments that are included with much educational music. At lessons, it can be helpful to have the student clap the rhythm while the teacher plays, or in classes to have the group clap while one or several students perform. It's particularly revealing to have the student point to the music and count while the teacher performs the music. The student's ability to track the music, or read the music, is clearly revealed.

Ensemble Playing in the Curriculum

Studies have shown that in piano performance majors, a predictor of sight reading proficiency was the number of hours in accompanying activities and size of accompanying repertoire. Hours of piano practice or a large solo repertoire did not predict good sight reading (Lehmann, Ericsson, 1996). While this fact is common knowledge among piano teachers, it's easy to forget to include ensemble playing in a student's curriculum. Again, if we refer back to instrumentalists, a trumpet or cello student is automatically playing in an ensemble such as band or orchestra from the very beginning.

Piano teachers must consciously include ensemble playing from the very first piano lesson. It's important to insist on well-written duets in a students beginning music. As a student advances, their curriculum should always include ensemble playing. This can be in various formats: teacher and student at the lesson or partner lessons (duet, two-piano, concerto), and group classes (keyboard ensembles, three-at-one piano, piano quartets). It's also helpful to encourage accompanying activities as part of a student's curriculum.

Harmonic Understanding Puts it All-Together

In group piano, theory grades were the strongest predictor of improvement in sight reading, rather than previous piano experience (Micheletti, 1980). The importance of harmonic understanding was demonstrated in a second study: students who memorized most quickly, memorized visually (hearing the music “in their head” and understanding harmonic structure) while looking at the score. They were composition students, not pianists (Nuki, 1984). Because of the complexity of note reading in keyboard music, these studies reinforce the importance of students understanding how music is put together harmonically. Theory study remains an important component of a piano student's curriculum.

An extension of harmonic understanding, pattern recognition or “chunking,” the ability to process individual notes as a unit, is one of the strongest predictors of good sight reading (Waters, Townsend, Underwood, 1998; Sloboda, 1984). Blocking broken chords, including alberti bass type patterns, is very helpful in building facile reading skills.

Ear Training Matters

Harmonic understanding includes the ear and ultimately affects good sight reading. Proofreader's error (oversight of a mistake in a highly familiar word), also applies to music. In one study, a piece of familiar music had several notes altered by a step. The better sight readers unintentionally corrected the altered pitches to match their expectation while the poor sight readers played the altered note, although it sounded incorrect (Sloboda, 1984). In a different study, erased notes were inferred more correctly by better sight readers (Lehmann, Ericsson, 1996). It was even found that auditory skills (the ear) and prediction skills (able to anticipate harmonically or hear in one's head what is "coming up") are stronger indicators of skilled sight reading, over and above basic pattern recognition (Waters, Townsend, Underwood, 1998).

All of these studies point to the power of the ear to aid in effective sight reading. Teachers have to very consciously work to include ear training within lessons. Group classes or partner lessons are an easy format in which to include ear training activities.

Fluent Technique Precedes Good Sight Reading

Obviously, students cannot sight read beyond what they technically can play. In wind players, the strongest indicator of good sight reading was good rhythmic reading. Almost an equally strong indicator was good technical proficiency. (Elliot, 1982). The technical fluency that is necessary for fluid sight reading is developed through careful choice of repertoire, allowing the student to be successful while always providing a challenge that is attainable. The difficult aspect of piano technique, the coordination between two hands of complex movements, is primarily developed through repertoire. Consequently, it's imperative that teachers carefully choose music that is both attainable, yet constantly challenging.

It is helpful to know that the research shows that good sight readers conform to the prescriptions of classic fingering in literature. Also, novices tended to avoid squashed and stretched finger transitions, while master performers employed these quite readily (Sloboda, Parncutt, Raekallio, 1998). Teachers should carefully prepare hand extensions and contractions, as students will not intuitively use these hand movements.

Preview, Preview, Preview

In a study of expert pianists who spent two minutes scanning music before sight reading, they focused on meter, complex rhythms, and time signature (Waters, Townsend, Underwood, 1998). Numerous studies such as this have shown that better sight readers spend time previewing and evaluating musical material. Guiding students to identifying key and time signature, the form of the piece, and familiar patterns as well as difficult spots, is particularly effective through the use of thoughtful questions that require the student to discover how the piece is constructed.

Just Do It!

Sight reading requires careful planning to consistently incorporate into a student's curriculum, as it's one of the easiest items to omit when repertoire, technique, and theory all compete for a share of lesson time. Deciding on a program of study is the most important step for the teacher. Materials that are constructed to include brief daily sight reading, rhythm and ear training assignments, are frequently the most successful with students. It's important that these materials begin at the student's current sight reading ability, almost always several steps below their repertoire level, and gradually and steadily increase in difficulty.

Sight reading can also be included in the curriculum by consistently assigning four to five "prepared reading pieces" that also begin at the students sight reading level, and gradually increase in difficulty. At the lesson the teacher only "spot-checks" the assigned pieces, to insure the student practiced any difficult spots. This can be particularly effective with the more advanced student.

When it comes to sight reading, as the Nike slogan says, *Just Do it!*

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Discover the Benefits of Greek Folk Music: An Alternative to Standard Teaching Repertoire of the Twentieth Century

by Joanne Kampiziones

Introducing twentieth-century folk repertoire to students is often a challenge for many piano teachers, particularly since several students resist the thought of playing non-tonal, dissonant harmonies and metrically complex rhythms. Teachers are often faced with the difficulty of finding new music abundant in pedagogical elements yet creative enough for students to retain interest. Significant volumes of piano pieces based on folk songs and dances have been written by Bartok and several others; however, few contain the distinct and imaginative characteristics of Greek folk music.

Despite its uniqueness, there is a lack of popularity for Greek folk music, mainly in part to Greece's tumultuous past prior to the twentieth century. As Greece recovered from the destruction of wars in the late nineteenth century, musical developments began to take place as a process of reformation.[1] These developments resulted in unique repertoire abound with non-tonal melodies and primarily distinguished by extensive thematic development of Western European nineteenth-century compositional practices. The benefits of discovering Greek folk music are numerous, and far surpass the conventional introduction to twentieth century modality, rhythms, and textures. It is an additional resource for piano teachers as well as a rewarding experience for students exploring this genre. In order to better understand Greek folk music, this article begins with a brief overview of musical developments in Greece in the twentieth century.

Greek Folk Music

Greece and music have a long history dating from Antiquity, during which poetry, dancing, and music were all a part of the ancient Greek's everyday life. With the fall of ancient Greece, however, Greek music was dormant for nearly two thousand years, followed by four hundred years of slavery during the Ottoman Occupation. Several ideological and intellectual developments in Greece supported the construction of national music by the beginning of the twentieth century. These included the study of folk song, the emergence of folklore, and the gradual dispersion of national dances.[2]

The development of national music in Greece in the twentieth century was greatly influenced by Russia, Central Europe, and many surrounding countries who like Greece, incorporated folk music and dances into their compositions. For many countries in Europe and its peripheries, creating a national music was a way to contest against German absolute music. This rebellion led to composers creating national characteristics in music that were recognized as specific to each one's country. According to Willi Apel, editor of the *Harvard Dictionary of Music*, origins of music nationalism in the nineteenth century were characterized as "a reaction against supremacy of German music."[3]

There is a great difference, however, between Greek national composers and those from abroad. Greek composers did not reject the Western ideals of composition as Russia and

other countries did. They were not interested in creating a reaction against the German absolutist ideals in music. Instead, Greek composers focused on fusing folk music with Western ideals of composition in order to rebuild the Greek identity that had been suppressed for so many years. This was Greece's attempt at a musical rebirth.

Greek folk music provided inspiration to composers throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century and defined the development of the Greek National School. By using original folk songs in their compositions, Greek composers gained access to a rich tradition of musical sources and stylistic elements not available elsewhere. A Greek national music with folk song as its foundation, but mainly expressed in the language of European art music, validated the Greek state and the attempted musical reformation.

Many of the Greek composers of the nineteenth and twentieth century were educated in Europe. The majority of national composers received their initial training in Greece, and then pursued advanced musical studies outside of Greece. Although Paris was the main choice for several of the older generation composers, many others moved to leading musical centers in Germany, Austria, England, and Russia.[4] As a result of Greek composers studying abroad, many stylistic influences from the European tradition exist in their works. They used compositional techniques they learned while studying in Europe, but incorporated elements of folk song and programmatic aspects into their music to give their country a personal voice.

44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies, a little-known collection rarely played or taught in any country other than Greece, is a brilliant display of Greek folk songs and dances written by Greek composer, Yannis Constantinidis (1903-1984). These piano pieces for mainly intermediate and advanced students, serve as a worthy introduction to non-functional harmony, complex rhythmic notation, and tonal control and balance, as well as practice in frequent dynamic, accent and tone color changes. Additionally, these miniatures allow piano teachers and students, often avoiding lengthy repertoire, to focus on greater musical issues rather than simply learning notes.

Yannis Constantinidis (1903-1984)

Yannis Constantinidis was an important twentieth-century composer whose use of folk music was paramount to the development of didactic works for solo piano, as well as to the promotion of Greek national music. His compositions provide an original approach between traditional Greek music and art music. He is different from other composers of the Greek National School as he based nearly all of his works on folk songs and dances. His music is a unique combination of diatonic modality and twentieth century compositional techniques. The *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies* (also known as *Greek Miniatures for Piano*) are constructed on the continual melodic variation of authentic Greek folk tunes and dances. Written during the period of 1949-1951, this three-volume collection is based on forty four pieces in progressive difficulty from all Greek territories and is the most indicative of Constantinidis' mature compositional style. He allowed for traditional melodies, rhythms, timbres, and forms to define the stylistic parameters of his music.

Constantinidis was born in Smyrna, Asia Minor (now Izmir, Turkey) in 1903. From an early age, Constantinidis surrounded himself by music of the profoundly multi-cultural areas of Asia Minor. Smyrna was a city largely inhabited by Greeks that contained more than forty theatres often staging Italian dramas, operas, and various chartered orchestras. Art music flourished during this time, as well as operettas and popular music in silent movies, and thus increased Constantinidis' interest in stage works, as well as served as an important influence for many of his future compositions.

Although Constantinidis grew up comfortably, he was raised during a significantly tumultuous time for Asia Minor Greeks. Many lives were greatly affected by the Greco-Turkish War (1919-22). In the spring of 1922, Constantinidis, managing to complete high school, left Smyrna for Germany. He resided in Berlin until 1930 studying theory and composition with Russian composer Paul Juon, piano with Karl Rossler, orchestral conducting with Karl Ehremberg and later with Kurt Weill, the most famous of his teachers. With Nazism on the rise, he eventually settled in Athens in 1931.

He successfully launched his career under the pseudonym Costa Yannidis, in order to not be confused with a famous operetta composer of that time, Grigoris Constantinidis. He was active in the Athenian musical theatre during its golden years writing over 50 operettas, revues, and musical comedies. The popularity of Costa Yannidis allowed Constantinidis the luxury to compose music according to what he wanted and felt there was a need for, as opposed to simply writing for commercial success. After thirty successful years in the field, he retired in 1962 to concentrate on composing and revising earlier works.[5] He worked as a radio producer at the Information Network of the Greek Armed Forces, which became the second program of the Greek Radio and Television (E.R.T.) in 1974. He hosted the radio programs, "The Classical Music Hour," "Old Athens Lives Again," and "Symphonic Concerts."[6] He died on January 17, 1984, in an Athens hospital from intestinal cancer.

Constantinidis composed approximately 200 compositions, ranging from stage works, song cycles, individual songs, choral works, numerous orchestral and chamber works to his significant contribution in piano repertoire. His piano works include: *Sonatina (1927)*; *22 Songs and Dances form the Dodecanese* (1943-1946); *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies* (1950-51); *First Sonatina* (on folk melodies from the island of Crete) (1952); *Second Sonatina* (on folk melodies from Epirus) (1952); *Third Sonatina* (on folk melodies from the Dodecanese) (1953); *8 Dances from Greek Islands* (1954) (arranged for two pianos in 1971); and *6 Studies in Greek Rhythms* (1956-1958).

Even though Constantinidis is responsible for many contributions to Greek music, he has been greatly unrecognized by the state or its institutions. For the most part, the public disregarded his music after he retreated from composing popular music. Despite the lack of public popularity he received in the latter half of his life, Constantinidis' classical works remain important and were applauded in the 1950s and 60s by music critics, composers, and the concert-going public. These works continue to hold great value in Greek musical circles.[7]

Didactic Works for Piano Solo: *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies*

Constantinidis chose well-known melodies from oral tradition, folk songs that were also national dances, as well as written transcriptions of folk music for *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies*. He realized that many twentieth-century Greek composers ignored writing for piano and preferred writing for orchestra. He primarily wanted to give Greek children and conservatory students a composition that was based on traditional music, gradually increasing in technical difficulty.

44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies was one of his favourite works, and was quickly incorporated by Greek conservatories as an exceptional work with several pedagogical aspects in performance practice, as well as an ideal model for teaching Greek folk song. Its significance was likewise recognized abroad, being published by Broude Brothers in 1957 and titled *Greek Miniatures*.[8]

Constantinidis' Style and Approach to Folk Music

The piano was clearly Constantinidis' beloved instrument, and the works he composed for it are characterized by the effortlessness with which he translates the timbre of the outdoor folk instruments such as the violin or *santouri* into his compositions. At first, his works for piano solo may appear simple, but in reality, they are sufficiently complex. Attempting to preserve the strophic form of Greek folk music, Constantinidis' music is presented in smaller forms, such as songs, sonatinas, and suites. His compositions are also characterized by an absence of thematic development, due primarily because Constantinidis wanted to retain the true melody of the music. He rarely changed the original written transcription of each folk song or dance, making only minor changes in rhythm or slightly elaborating the melody, as a folk musician might do in a performance.

His innovative compositional technique is the use of continual melodic variation by means of different textures, articulations, and embellishments. He thus avoids the redundancy of a recurring motivic element, which is the tendency in Greek folk songs or dances. He manages to skilfully balance the repetition with variation, so that the original motive never loses its ability to be recognized. The collection itself is organized into three volumes. Many of the pieces appear individually, or sometimes grouped into two, three, or four pieces. The pieces that are grouped in two usually have a contrasting mood and character, while groups of three or more offer additional complexities. Pieces that are to be performed in groups have the word *attacca* (to begin what follows without pausing) at the end. Despite being titled *Children's Pieces*, Volume One would equate to a mid-level range of intermediate repertoire and conclude to a late-intermediate level of difficulty. Volume Two follows in a late intermediate or early advanced level, while Volume Three progresses to an advanced level of complexity.

Formal Structure

Formal structure in *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies* is quite simple. Most of the

pieces are binary in form, such as *aabb*. Often times the melodies are strophic, as they are continuously varied, resulting in *aabb-a'a'b'b'*. There are several instances, however, where melodies are presented as short fragmented sections, which are unified by a recurring motivic element. These melodic fragments seem to lack the strong sense of direction that a binary-formed melody possesses, due to the fact that they revolve around one note. Initially, it appears that these fragments add to a discontinuity throughout the piece, but on the contrary, their cyclical character is better reinforced by the unifying motivic element. The result is an improvisatory-sounding folk song, much like what an original folk song would sound like if played by various folk instruments. Constantinidis incorporates elisions, *stretti*, contractions, prolongations, and antiphonal style writing, as a means of diversifying the various phrases, while maintaining the formal clarity these melodies possess.[9]

Harmonic Structure

Constantinidis' approach to harmonization is based on a completely different artistic orientation than that of other Greek nationalist composers. Rather than limiting himself to the melodic material of the Greek folk tunes, he relies on the varied repetition of the melodic idea, whose tonal tendencies are irrelevant to the form. Harmonization therefore acts as another means of continual variation, on a monophonic melody. This concept corresponds to the way a folk musician would improvise on a melodic idea, but rather than melodically develop the musical form, Constantinidis does so harmonically. At all times, the original folk song or dance retains both its pitch-interval structure and form.

These pieces are modal, and Constantinidis does not include key signatures in the scores. His harmonic elaboration of folk melodies is rooted in the Greek modal system. The modal system of Greek folk music consists mainly of heptatonic modes, similar but not identical to the Byzantine modes. The heptatonic modes are diatonic (containing major or minor seconds) or chromatic (containing augmented seconds), consisting of conjunct or disjunct tetrachords and pentachords.[10] Other harmonic characteristics include the frequent use of parallel sonorities that often occur as a result of chords formed by adding notes above or below the original melody (harmonic planing), the use of poly-chords and bi-modality, and the incorporation of persistent pedal tones that emphasize temporary or permanent modal centers.

Greek musicologist, Lambros Liavas, stated that Constantinidis' harmonic elaboration may be considered "the most important secret of his art."[11] His greatest harmonic influence came from Russian and Hungarian nationalists and French Impressionist composers. For example, Constantinidis incorporates various seventh chords and augmented sixth chords as seen in the music of Mussorgsky, Kodály and Bartok, as well as Debussy and Ravel. Moreover, his frequent use of pentatonic and whole-tone scales, as well as planing is also encountered in Debussy and Ravel's music.[12]

Rhythmic Intricacies

Constantinidis fully encompasses the metric and rhythmic intricacies found in Greek folk

music. He remains not only close to the original folk song's melody, but also maintains the same rhythms for each song and dance used. In each piece, he skillfully repeats and varies by several means, all the while maintaining a steady tempo.

Several of the pieces contain the metric diversity of Greek folk dances including the asymmetrical meters 5/8, 7/8, and 5/4. These asymmetrical meters are included as early as the seventh piece in the first volume. Constantinidis also achieves rhythmic irregularity by the use of mixed meter and displaced accents, shifting the accent to relatively weak beats.

Frequently encountered rhythmic devices include hemiolas (a 3:2 ratio interaction between rhythm and meter) and cross-rhythms, which occurs when two or more contrasting rhythmic lines are presented at the same time. These cross-rhythms create a defined sense of rhythmic instability, and often times a syncopated harmonic tempo. Cross-rhythms usually occur between the left and right hand, each hand seeming to have an individual rhythm. For example, the right hand part may retain a 3/4 meter set at the very beginning of the piece, while left hand part establishes what may seem as a 6/8 meter.

Textural Creativity and Expression

The sufficient amount of melodic embellishment contained in *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies* highlights Constantinidis' creativity. Embellishments range from a simple grace-note or appoggiatura within a melodic line to three and five-note embellishments. Constantinidis naturally transforms the timbre of outdoor folk instruments into his piano music. Throughout the collection, the metallic, penetrating tones of what would be the folk singer of an original folk song, are replaced by folk instruments such as the *gaida* (bagpipe), the *klarino* (clarinet), and the *lyra* (fiddle). The *laouto* (lute), plucked with a quill plectrum, and the *santouri*, a type of dulcimer with cotton-covered hammers, would provide the accompaniment, with the beat often being marked by a *daouli*, a large double-headed drum.

Throughout several pieces in the collection, the melismatic melodic lines are embellished with grace notes containing modal tendencies, much in the manner of a skilled clarinet folk player. Constantinidis employs several ornaments, including mordents, trills, broken chords and appoggiaturas to effectively attain timbre imitation as well as vary the repetitive material. Ever-present are intricate embellishments that continue to become more elaborate within melodies that must easily project over heavy textures and busy accompaniment patterns.

Constantinidis provides interpretive challenges that require a considerable degree of sophistication in certain areas. The texture of each piece may appear to be somewhat of an obstacle, although students may enjoy this aspect the most. Students can use their imaginations to imitate folk instrument sounds and overcome the challenge of voicing the melodic line through the thick accompaniment textures. Many times the notes are the simple part, but the articulation becomes the challenge. Hand-over-hand action is a

recurrent pattern, making hand coordination vital for the execution of these pieces. Less common expressive markings are ample as Constantinidis specifies suggestions such as *scintillante* (sparkling), *sonoro* (resoundingly), *cantando* (singing), *afflito* (melancholy), and many others. He also includes detailed fingerings and specific pedal markings throughout all three volumes.

The Benefits of Exploring Greek Folk Music and Piano Pieces

The vast multitude of available teaching and performance literature for piano is undoubtedly shaped by traditional pieces that generations of teachers have learned and taught. While much of the standard literature based on twentieth century folk music greatly facilitates musical and technical advancement, the harmonic, rhythmic, textural and expressive intricacies contained in Greek folk music, particularly in *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies*, are well worth exploring for didactic and performance purposes.

The pedagogical merits contained in Constantinidis' *44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies* are unlike those of any other collection of intermediate and advanced solo piano repertoire. Students are introduced to non-functional harmony, which is something not often found in the standard repertoire of today's piano teaching literature. These pieces also serve as an exceptional introduction to compositional and performance practices of the twentieth century. The less common rhythmic intricacies and unconventional metric organization found in these folk songs offers a unique conditioning to rhythmic fluency. With this level of complexity, students are able to acquire a high level of rhythmic facility and precision. Additionally, the refined levels of musical and technical elements, as well as Constantinidis' significant perspective to textural imitation and musical expression, offer a credible quality to each piece.

Notes

1. Margaret Alexiou, "Modern Greek Studies in the West: Between the Classics and the Orient," *Journal of Modern Greek Studies* 4 (1986), 5.

2. Bliss Sheryl Little, "Folk Song and the Construction of Greek National Music: Writings and Compositions of Georgios Lambelet, Manolis Kalomiris, and Yannis Constantinidis" (Ph.D. diss., University of Maryland, 2001), 59.

3. Richard Taruskin, "Nationalism," in *The New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, 2nd ed., ed. Stanley Sadie (London: MacMillan, 2001), vol.17, 696.

4. Little, "Folk Song," 61.

5. Lambros Liavas, "Yannis Constantinidis (1903-1984)," program notes for "Anazitondas ton kyrio Yannidi-Konstantinidi" [Looking for Mr. Yannidis-Constantinidis], Athens Concert Hall (Megaro Mousikis Athinon), 17-19 October 1994,

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6. Byron Fidetzis, "The Orchestral Compositions of Yannis Constantinidis," notes to the recording *Yannis Constantinidis: The Works for Orchestra*, Bulgarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, Byron Fidetzis, Lyra CD0169, 19.

7. George Leotsakos, "Yannis Constantinidis (1903-1984). Kapies prosopike anamnisis ke dokimi kritikis apotimisis." [Some Personal Memories and an Attempt of a Critical Evaluation], paper read at the Symposium "Yannis Constantinidis," Athens Concert Hall (Megaro Mousikis Athinon), 19 October 1994.

8. All of Constantinidis' music has been copyrighted by Greek publishing house Nakas Music.

9. Petros Vouvaris, "44 Children's Pieces on Greek Melodies by Yannis Constantinidis: A Masterpiece of Mikrokosmic Proportions," *The American Music Teacher* 54, no. 6 (June/July 2005): 42.

10. Costas Tsougras, "Generative Theory of Tonal Music and Modality: Research Based on the Analysis of *44 Greek Miniatures for Piano* by Yannis Constantinidis" (Ph.D. diss. English summary, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, 2002), 4.

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Promoting Creativity at the Keyboard Through Technology Projects

by Tom Pearsall

Introduction

This is an exciting time to be teaching group piano. With today's keyboards we can record and save our work, multi-track parts, add sounds and effects, transpose keys, change tempos, add harmonic support, and even connect to the internet, all with the touch of a button. These advances in technology are changing the way we use the keyboard in our personal and professional lives. This impacts our students who will be using these keyboards with increasing frequency.

We as teachers continually seek new ways to serve the changing needs of our students. I took steps in that direction this past year by adding technology projects to my curriculum. The results have been outstanding. Never before have I seen my students so motivated to be creative, and have such fun doing it! To illustrate this I've included audio files of actual student projects (with their permission). Hearing these will hopefully prompt more teachers to consider incorporating similar ideas into their curriculum.

I include these projects as a component of some tests and also assign them like quizzes. They are due at the beginning of class or during individual tests. With access to the lab available to them during the day, they usually work on the projects outside of class. To facilitate this I posted recording guides on each keyboard. They can return later to add more tracks if they like so projects don't have to be completed in one sitting. These can also be done in class, though with less time for preparation and other class activity. My students quickly become adept at using the technology and turn these in with great enthusiasm. Some even want to watch me listen so they can observe my reaction. They have fun guessing whose they are hearing when I share the best of these with class on an anonymous basis. The person in question inevitably reveals their identity with a big grin.

The examples that follow illustrate how my students find creative ways in these projects to play around with various musical elements. By changing or adding sounds or effects at key moments in the music they highlight important aspects of the phrasing. They enrich the overall texture and form by adding original countermelodies, introductions, and ending extensions. They also add interest to the harmony through chord substitutions and effective emphasis to the beat through rhythm tracks. Most of these students had little or no keyboard experience before coming to Georgia Southern. Some were also in danger of failing at one time or another. Yet each did an outstanding job with these projects that in various ways reflect their individual personalities.

Student Projects

12-bar blues project

My first-year final includes a 12-bar blues project. Students record an accompaniment on one track and melodic improvisation on another. For the accompaniment they have the option of recording the teacher part provided in the text (Alfred's Group Piano for Adults) on separate tracks or creating one of their own.

Brent (audio file not available), a saxophonist, features the sound of his instrument on the solo improv and adds a percussion track and brief solo extension at the end. His right-hand part in the accompaniment differs from that in the text. An unexpected keyboard glissando adds a fun twist to the final phrase.

Jacob (audio file not available) plays trumpet and uses that sound for the melody. He syncopates the accompaniment and frames the improv with percussion solos at the beginning and end.

Adam 1 (audio file not available) plays guitar. His improvisatory style mimics the type of "riffs" typically associated with this instrument.

Adam 2 (audio file not available) plays trombone. He alters the rhythm and pattern of the accompaniment and adds a percussion track with handclaps. An added improv on saxophone in the introduction quickly transitions to a brass sound. This is actually his second example. Like some of the others, he had so much fun with this he did more than one!

Emily (audio file not available) plays string bass. Her example includes an added walking bass part for her instrument, syncopated accompaniment, and four choruses instead of one with featured solos in the first three on saxophone, keyboard, and bass.

Brad (audio file not available) creates an original accompaniment, adds a percussion track, and opts for a "cool" style featuring finger snaps and soprano sax with a brief extended solo at the end.

Jonathan (audio file not available) always enjoys adding fun sound effects. Here he adds several including one that resembles a shivering vocal slide. These shivers occur mostly on downbeats but shift to beat three in measures five and six.

Improv project

Many of the improvisations in the first-year text are brief eight-measure chord progressions over which students improvise melodies. We practice these in various ways including as projects. In this one the book suggests an alberti bass pattern for the accompaniment. I sometimes offer the option of creating an original chord progression or "free improv" for extra credit. Students doing this write out the chord progression on a post-it and attach it to their floppy.

Brent (audio file not available) adds various ornaments to his melody that are very

effective in conjunction with the alberti bass pattern. A sudden downbeat accent and brief pause in the accompaniment and percussion track highlight the half cadence.

Doug (audio file not available), a percussionist, gives his improv a Jamaican flavor by featuring the sound of steel drums.

Phil (audio file not available), also a percussionist, uses a block style bass and adds fun percussion effects that help emphasize the phrasing.

Lead sheet project

The second-year final includes a lead sheet project. Students create an accompaniment for the song and record it along with the melody. This year the assigned example was an arrangement of Climb Every Mountain that included a wide variety of chord types set in a fairly simple harmonic rhythm. Students were also given the option of choosing another song with my approval, which several did.

Trevor (audio file not available) exempted the first three semesters of class. His playing here is very spontaneous. He adds a bit of countermelody in spots, a rhythm track, and alternative chord changes. He originally considered adding additional tracks but decided to focus on other finals after learning he'd already earned an A+! He watched as I listened the first time and saw me laugh out loud at one unexpected spot. Can you guess where?

Sarah (audio file not available) provides an arpeggiated accompaniment pattern that nicely reflects the harmonic rhythm and uses a colorful array of sounds to highlight the phrasing in places. A delightful countermelody in the bells and added part in the strings that emerges in the middle enrich the texture.

Marcus (audio file not available) chose another example for his project, Some Day My Prince Will Come. His jazzy rendition demonstrates his advanced proficiency and fondness for this style. Melody in the strings is complimented by melodic improv on piano. Added cymbal taps on beats three and one highlight the repeat of the opening melody.

Brandon plays guitar and also chose another jazz chart, Something Wonderful. The mellow style here reflects his laid-back personality. He features his instrument on the melody, alters some of the chords, and adds gentle support in the percussion.

Harmonization project

Charlie is My Darling is a second-year harmonization project. Students create an accompaniment pattern based on chords provided in the book and record it along with the melody.

Cory (audio file not available) has a fun nature that is very evident in this project. His

choice of sounds, tempo, and staccato articulation combine to create the effect of Halloween music punctuated by the sound of quacking ducks.

Deion (audio file not available) expresses his free spirit through an original and improvisatory sounding introduction and ending extension. He uses some interesting sounds and his slower tempo and legato line produce a lyrical, relaxed style.

Ensemble project

By the Light of the Silvery Moon is a second-year ensemble project. Students multi-track each part separately.

Trevor (audio file not available) assigns the melody to honky-tonk piano and uses a fun combination of sounds with added rhythmic emphasis in the percussion track.

Deion (audio file not available) again offers a very different interpretation. His very slow tempo, use of rubato, and melodic flourishes together create the effect of a moon that seems intoxicated!

Conversion from MIDI to Audio

Projects are automatically saved as MIDI files. These sound fine when played back on the keyboards used to create them, but issues sometimes arise when played back on a computer. Converting them to audio format eliminates this problem, thus allowing the teacher or student to keep their work and share it with others. This movie demonstrates how to convert MIDI files on a keyboard to mp3 files on a Mac using Audacity and iTunes. PC users should be able to accomplish this in much the same way. Both applications are free downloads compatible with Mac and PC platforms. Other commercially available software may also be used. Follow the instructions in your keyboard manual for connecting the keyboard to a computer. I did this using a stereo mini-jack to two mono quarter-inch jacks cable, with the mono jacks connected to AUX out on the keyboard.

What Next?

Now that I've successfully incorporated these projects into the curriculum I'm considering what the next steps will be. Playing some of the outstanding examples from previous projects as they are reassigned will motivate future students, as will the possibility of their receiving recognition for their efforts. Projects may also be posted online as audio files through Vista (WebCT) or our music technology server. To further motivate my students I may devise some type of friendly competition in which they select the winners. I will also post the above movie for student reference and assist them as needed with converting their files to audio.

Conclusion

Admittedly, multi-tracking alone does little to develop hands together playing since parts are often played separately on different tracks. When students so often defend their inadequate efforts by pleading their ability to play something hands separately, my inevitable retort is: "It takes two hands to play the piano!" Because of this, I also require them to play for me directly and record their playing hands together on a single track.

But as demonstrated through these examples, technology opens doors for students to creative exploration and motivates them in the process. In preparing this article I discovered additional files that students had done on their own, all of which were very original and well done. Among these were improvs, original compositions, arrangements of popular tunes, and creative treatments of repertoire selections. When students do more than is asked of them, you know they are motivated!

Equally important, current trends suggest there will be increasing use of digital keyboards in studios and classrooms in the future. This merits consideration as we re-evaluate student needs in their piano studies and how best to meet these. Students benefit from gaining practical experience with the features offered by these keyboards and the options they provide for using them in different ways. Used appropriately in conjunction with traditional instruction, technology projects like these can motivate students to spend more time at the keyboard while exploring fun ways to use it creatively.

Tom Pearsall currently serves Associate Professor of Music at Georgia Southern University, where he teaches group piano and piano pedagogy. A native of North Carolina, he holds degrees in performance from the University of Kentucky and Bowling Green State University, and a doctorate in performance and pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma. Before coming to Georgia Southern in 1993, Dr. Pearsall taught at Bowling Green State University, the University of Toledo, the University of Wisconsin-Marathon Center, and the Wausau Conservatory of Music, a community music school in Wisconsin. Dr. Pearsall enjoys working with adult students and has taught adult piano classes through continuing education at several universities. He is currently Immediate Past President of the Georgia Music Teachers Association and a member of the steering committee for the National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum. He also maintains a private studio of pre-college and adult students and is an active clinician, performer, author, and adjudicator.

The Internet as Performer's Forum: A Look at the YouTube Piano Wars and Their Possible Implications

by Ludim Pedroza

"Broadcast yourself," is YouTube.com's official slogan, an extremely popular internet site that allows people from all over the world to post audiovisual footage either of themselves (performing or simply 'being") or of anything that is of particular interest to them. The site contains excerpts of a variety of performances ranging from the latest pop music videos to gamelan performances in Bali. Perhaps even more interesting than the videos is the critical commentary that accompanies them; anyone who wishes can post - in comfortable anonymity - their bluntest and most sincere thoughts on any video excerpt.[1]

It is not surprising to find the latest popular music videos on YouTube, but art music video-excerpts have a prominent presence on the site as well. Indeed, there are hundreds of video-excerpts of piano performances alone featuring such artists as Vladimir Horowitz, Martha Argerich, Glenn Gould, and a host of other past and present concert pianists.[2] These too are accompanied by critical commentary and it is this commentary along with the role of the visual aspect of musical performance that I wish to discuss in this article.

A YouTube dialogue on an artist can go in many directions; after all, any person in the world who whishes to post a comment can do so. Usually, the dialogue is started by fans of the artist who praise his/her abilities using clipped phrases such as "he's great!" or "she is my favorite!" From time to time, one encounters a more erudite and critical statement, which presumes to explain in very specific terms *why* the artist is great - or not. Take, for example, the video of Rafal Blechacz[3] performing Chopin's Sonata Op. 58 No. 3 in B minor, posted by a fan on August 2006.[4] The footage consists primarily of numerous close-ups of Blechacz's hands, arms, and torso from various perspectives. The accompanying discussion about Blechacz's performance soon turns in the direction of criticism regarding his use of a "very flat" right hand pinky. A wide array of piano students and piano enthusiasts varying greatly in age and nationality (U.S., Italy, Argentina, Iceland, etc.) participates in the conversation. The discussion revolves around numerous personal opinions, some "free-spirited," some unrelentingly dogmatic. Is there such a thing as a "correct" hand position? Are Horowitz, and perhaps Blechacz, "renegades" because they use their hands and fingers in peculiar ways? Is Blechacz's right pinky clearly double-jointed? Are his hands "ugly," yet his sound superb? Are the judges of the 15th International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition justified in their decision? Are these judges the most qualified individuals for deciding that Blechacz is the best Chopin "interpreter" alive? Can there be such a thing?

While undeniably lively, the spirited controversy over Blechacz's alleged technical peculiarities pales in comparison to the ongoing debate between the Evgeny Kissin-*ists* and the Yundi Li-*nists*.[5] Videos of both pianists performing Paganini/Liszt's *La Campanella* were posted throughout 2006.[6] The conversations on both performances

individually, of course, are wide ranging, as fans and detractors of each comment on the pianists' idiosyncrasies of gesture and technical ability. The discussion becomes even more complex, however, when the commentators begin to compare and contrast the two performances, a not surprising turn since these two renditions of the famous Paganini/Liszt etude could not, in fact, be further apart. Kissin revels in speed, clarity, and crispiness, while Li's tempo is atypically conservative, which allows him to enhance tone colors and craft surprising textural layers and dynamic voicings. Both performances are superb and exhilarating on many levels and flawed on others, which is precisely what many of us enjoy about live performances. But the YouTube dialogue seems to get bogged down in age-old extremes: wrong notes vs. flawlessness, "expressiveness" vs. technique, "correct" interpretation vs. "incorrect" interpretation.

We may roll our eyes and dismiss the whole thing as one more example of the internet's tendency to create virtual, ephemeral, and allegedly trivial realities. Moreover, the first impulse of the reader who casually drops by the YouTube universe may be to flee the scene in dismay at the apparently nonsensical cyber lingo, the numerous misspelled words and names, and the not so few tirades of serious insults put forward by some participants. Nevertheless, I think the YouTube "Piano Wars" are worth exploring, although not necessarily for the purpose of gaining new wisdom on the subject of pianism.[7] What we as educators can obtain from the YouTube commentaries is a unique insight into the intimate personal attitudes, opinions, and concerns that are being perpetuated throughout the student, amateur, and art music-lover communities. In the remainder of the article, I will single out two aspects of piano performance discussed in the YouTube commentaries that have important ramifications for professional pianists and educators: 1) the performer's body as visual art and 2) either/or attitudes and the zeal of the music lover.

The Performer's Body as Visual Art

It is easy to understand how dialogues about technical issues, such as the ones developed in relation to Blechacz's hands, can only happen in the presence of video and not just audio files. After all, if one chooses to separate the "technical" aspect of piano playing from all other ones, the athleticism of piano playing is certainly relevant. If one considers pianism to be a sport of macro-and micro-muscle achievement, the notions of "listening" and "paying attention" do not seem so compelling. Of course, one could just as easily argue that a dispute about two different pianists' "interpretation" of the same work could develop with or without the actual visual footage of the performers coming into play. Merely "listening" and "paying close attention" to two different recordings of the same work could be enough to inspire interpretative wars. But could it also be possible that the YouTube Piano Wars are precipitated and enhanced for the most part by seeing the performer at the instrument?

Consider a summary of the arguments in favor of Kissin's interpretation: it shows "true" virtuosity by taking a faster tempo than seems humanly possible, it portrays the sounds suggested by the title (a "little bell"), it illustrates the amount of power the piece requires as Kissin's sweat and hair fall profusely while performing; in short, it portrays a true

"Lisztian character." Supporters of Li's interpretation, however, downplay Kissin's performance as "too technical and inexpressive" and list some of the following arguments in favor of Li's performance: it contains "fewer mistakes," it revels in a complexity of textures and dynamics, and finally, it is "truly expressive." One could almost say that to enjoy Kissin's *Campanella* one must see him, while Yundi Li's goes "beyond" the visual. This argument, nevertheless, could easily be turned around: perhaps Yundi Li's performance appears particularly expressive because one *sees* a different demeanor from that of Kissin. Yundi Li smiles throughout the performance, moves his torso around, appears "to feel the music," while Kissin's powers of concentration are evident in the pronounced frown, the quivering unsmiling lips, and the straight torso. In short, *seeing* both pianists at the piano actually adds a layer of complexity to their "interpretations" of the music.

Historically, the dilemma of the visual versus the aural has been and continues to be at the heart of modern pianism (19th - 21st century). Do we play mainly to be heard, trying to minimize our bodies and personas or do we make our bodies and personas part of the musical work? Do we conceive of the physicality of "technique" as a means for achieving musicality or do we make physicality and musicality the same end? Do we restrain ourselves from using demonstrative gestures so as not to intrude on the audience's aural experience or do we give the audience the opportunity to witness, and thus share, the performer's music-kinesthetic experience?

Many classically trained pianists have inherited very specific (or sometimes very tacit and subtle) values regarding the role of their bodies and gestures during a performance. For the most part, post 1950's pedagogical pianism requires the pianist to place his or her own body at the service of the music. Yet, when one looks at past generations of pianists, and present ones too, one will find an infinite and highly individualistic array of "physicalities." From the quiet, aristocratic restraint of Arturo Benedetti Michelangeli or Maurizio Pollini to the fiery power of Sviatoslav Richter or the whimsical enjoyment of Glenn Gould, the artistic signature of a pianist is always determined in large part by his or her physicality at the piano. In the YouTube Piano Wars, Kissin's rendition is judged to be "too technical" and "inexpressive" in comparison to Li's. Yet each rendition is uniquely crafted *through* the body and personality of the performer; neither one can be "inexpressive" since "emotion" and "intellect" are, in fact, two sides of the same coin.[8] On the other hand, some of the defenders of Kissin's rendition judge his performance "best" because it is "doing the job that needs to be done," that is, by not "indulging" in expressivity but by presenting "the music" as it is. Kissin's performance then is judged by some to be interpretatively "sounder" than Li's, which leads to my next point.

Either/or attitudes and the zeal of the music lover

Internet feuds on various topics, especially politics and religion, are extremely common thanks in great part to the empowering and liberating anonymity which cyberspace provides. Consider the length of the dialogue about the interpretative value of Kissin and Yundi Li's performances. Kissin's video was posted in May of 2006 and Yundi Li's was posted in August of 2006. Since 2006, then, passionate cyber-interlocutors have been,

and continue to be, engaged in a virtual battle involving a misleading and naive concept of "interpretation" rooted in strong, but unexamined convictions about what constitutes "expressive" playing. From time to time, a mature-sounding conversant has dropped by to offer a truce by reminding the participants to respect each other's preferences and opinions. Sooner or later, though, the conversation seems to re-cycle around to the same problems.

It would be easy to attribute such dialogues to youthful hubris. On the other hand, we must not forget that contentious encounters among musicians and music lovers have never been lacking and musicians often maintain unwavering convictions about what they "believe" is "the truth" about music or musicianship.[9] What I find interesting is that many of the attitudes and comments posted seem to come from an array of young or amateurish participants whose views echo those of pianists since the time of Franz Liszt and Clara Schumann. While many critics and musicians in the 19th century preferred the immediacy, drama, and self-oriented style of Liszt, many others were adamant that Clara Schumann's more restrained, classicist, and composer-oriented approach was "superior."[10] Clara Schumann herself often criticized Liszt for providing "faulty" interpretations of certain composers.[11] These arguments, which have been recycled for generations, are beautifully illustrated by that famous rejoinder of Wanda Landowska: "You play Bach your way and I will play it *his* way." Did she mean that there is one "correct" way of playing Bach, prescribed by Bach? Both the scholar and the performer in her knew this not to be so, yet the statement betrays her protectiveness of her own interpretations of Bach. Today we can hear the Bach not only of Landowska, but also of Tureck, of Gould, and many others. So we are fortunate to have inherited the legacies of Both Liszt and Clara. But the question remains, why do many musicians feel so strongly that there must be an absolute, irrevocable, and perennial truth about the meaning of music and musical works? Are these convictions rooted in the intense communion we forge with the instrument, the repertoire, the canon, and the heroes of pianism? How many of us freely and routinely talk with our students about the issue of music's meaning, about its potential seriousness or lightness, and about the importance of keeping an open mind with respect to the musical experiences of peers and colleagues? The anonymity of the internet empowers "chat"-*ers* not only to voice their opinions, but to defend them through virtual aggression.[12] Despite its potential negative aspects, then, the internet, as a forum for the discussion of aesthetic issues that are central to the experience of music, can perhaps teach us all something about our own attitudes towards music and musicians.

In Closing

And after all, why do we perform? For exploring the human potential? For spiritual fulfillment? For athletic and kinesthetic achievement? For pure fun? For preserving music? For introducing new music? For creating music? For sometimes dismantling our egos and sometimes indulging them? For any, some, or none of the above? It is a question that deserves attention and inquiry, but for which there may be no single right answer. The motivations behind performance can be as variegated and infinite as the different ways in which people look, and sound, as they perform. Such a democratic notion of musicianship does not constitute an invitation to sloppiness or carelessness. On

the contrary, it is an invitation to awaken and revitalize our "artistic consciousness,"[13] our awareness of the history of performance and performance philosophy, and our enjoyment of the visual and aural sides of performance. In the internet era, the audiovisual dissemination of musical performances can be a great asset for keeping the practice of art music alive, not only amongst prospective musicians but also amateurs and the general public. Unfortunately, cyberspace can also afford an opportunity for the music community to maintain and disseminate dogmatic attitudes which do not reflect or nourish the human side of making music. For it is precisely when we *see* the artist making music that we are most compelled to recognize this unique form of artistic pursuit, which involves not just the "music," but the living, breathing, distinctive persona of the performer.

Notes

1. YouTube is an internet service that allows both individuals and institutions to post audio and audio-visual footage. College professors also make use of this site to post video materials that can later be discussed in class. Posted excerpts can be discussed through the site's open forum which is available on each single posting. Visitors should be advised that YouTube does not censor commentaries in terms of either language or ideas. YouTube has faced a number of lawsuits involving copyright infringement by its users. The debate seems to center around the question of YouTube's responsibility for the footage posted by its users, which may or may not be infringing on traditional copyright laws. As the internet music industry did in the previous decades, the YouTube site will undergo legal scrutiny and procedural revisions while the internet community continues to establish how to create relevant copyright guidelines.

2. To my knowledge, no complaints regarding copyright infringement of most of these excerpts have been forthcoming. Moreover, the Van Cliburn Foundation posted excerpts of their latest production, *Encore! With James Conlon* (2005). The documentary features Conlon's view on the philosophy of performance along with various performances of the participants and winners of the 12th Van Cliburn International Piano Competition.

3. Rafal Blechacz (b. 1985) was the winner of the 15th International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw. (October 21, 2005).

4. Rafael Blechacz performing Chopin's Sonata in B Minor, Op. 58, accessed July 2007.

5. Evgeny Kissin, born in 1971, is a Russian pianist of significant international renown. His younger and considerably less famous colleague, the Chinese pianist Yundi Li, is best known for being the youngest pianist to win the first prize of the International Frederick Chopin Piano Competition in Warsaw in the year 2000.

6. The videos in question can be accessed at: Evgeny Kissin, and Yundi Li. If the reader wishes to visit the dialogues in question, he or she should click on "view all comments" in order to experience the dialogues in a sequential manner.

7. Nor can somebody with the "right" credentials jump in and "enlighten" the dialoguers; credentials are irrelevant in these particular coordinates of cyber space.

8. See for example Antonio R. Damasio, *Descartes' Error: Emotion, Reason and the Human Brain*, (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1994). Several new editions have been issued since the book was first published in 1994.

9. Many examples of these types of feuds can be found throughout the history of Western music, but perhaps one of the most notable is the so called War of the Romantics which involved on one side Wagner and Liszt, and on the other Hanslick, Brahms, and Clara Schumann. See for example the chapter entitled "The War of the Romantics" in Alan Walker, *Franz Liszt: The Weimar Years: 1848 - 1861* (Cornell University Press, 1993).

10. For numerous and varied critical views of Liszt's aesthetics dating from his own time, see Adrian Williams, *Portrait of Liszt: By Himself and His Contemporaries* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990). See also the chapter entitled "Other Friends and Contemporaries" in Nancy B. Reich, *Clara Schumann: The Artist and the Woman* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1985).

11. One of Clara's most recalcitrant notes on Liszt can be found in Williams, *Portrait*, 317. "But it was so horrible, that my feelings could find an outlet only in tears. How he banged the piano, and what a tempo he took! I was beside myself that His work should be so desecrated in these rooms which have been hallowed by Him, the dear composer. Liszt afterwards played Bach's Chromatic Fantasy equally dreadfully..."

12. The cyber-dialogues regarding the interpretation of La Campanella by Evgeny Kissin and Yundi Li feature the occasional participation of one extremely aggressive individual, whose severely dogmatic attitude once pushed him into a highly offensive tirade against another dialoguer, a thirteen-year-old female piano student.

13. A phrase coined by Goerge Houle in his article "Performance: The Profession and Preparation for It" *College Music Symposium* 14 (Fall 1974): 1 - 12.

Ludim Pedroza currently serves Assistant Professor of Music at the University of the Incarnate Word, in San Antonio, Texas, where she teaches music history and piano. She is a native of Venezuela, South America, where she studied piano at the conservatory Vicente Emilio Sojo in the city of Barquisimeto, from the age of 6 until her graduation from high school. She consequently earned B. A. and M.A. degrees in music (performance) from Antillean College and West Texas A& M University, and a Ph. D. in Fine Arts from Texas Tech University. Her research focuses on the philosophy and cultural anthropology of performance, and her presentations include "Priestess at the Piano: The Mind/Body Conflict in Clara Schumann's Performative Persona" (Hawaii International Conference on Arts and Humanites, 2007), "The Infinite Liminoid: A Look at Clara Schumann, Franz Liszt, and the Rest of Us Amidst the Wonders of Performative Neverland" (CMS South-Central, 2006), "Experimental Piano Recital: New Ways of Engaging a Diverse Audience" (CMS South-Central, 1999). Dr. Pedroza's performance interests gravitate towards the exploration of non-canonical repertoire in historical and aesthetic relation to standard repertoire. Her most recent solo piano recital featured repertoire which explores the human perception of the natural world and of life in the outdoors; it included works by Johann Sebastian Bach, Bela Bartok, Ann Ghandar, Claude Debussy, Franz Liszt, and Margaret Bonds.

An Interview and Job Application Checklist for Graduating Students

by Scott Price

In the past seven years, we have mounted approximately 15 searches for new colleagues here at the University of South Carolina School of Music. Not all of those positions were filled the first time they were searched, so one can imagine the number of committees that have been formed, the number of candidate files that have been reviewed, and the number of people who have visited our campus. In that time, we have hired a group of superb colleagues, with all of them building impressive careers on a national scale.

During our searches to fill piano performance positions, we have routinely received a minimum of 140 applications with approximately 70 percent of them being very well qualified as performers. While a lower percentage can prove interest and experience in teaching, the applicant pools have still been very strong.

During our searches to fill piano pedagogy positions, we have generally received between 30 to 60 application files. Many of these applicants are performance-emphasis people, but the majority are all well-qualified applicants with degrees, background, and experience in teaching at all levels.

The number of qualified applicants continues to remain high (or is growing), but the number of positions is not what it was a decade or so in the past. The market is more competitive, and I find myself spending more and more time discussing professional development with my students. Professional meetings sponsored by The Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and the National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum conference do wonderful work in aiding all of us to maintain consistent standards in education and practice among our degree programs, but it still remains a question as to why several applicants are identified as excellent prospects when the applicant pool is very large and strong, and why one of three or four people interviewed stand out as excellent when each of the finalists is equally strong.
At the end of the process, two points seem to generally emerge in each case we review across all disciplines in the School of Music:

1. "Will this person be able to successfully navigate the tenure and promotion process?"
2. "Will this person be a good fit for us, and will we be able to work with this person?"

In essence, personal growth and development is just as important as professional development. The interview process is central in helping us determine answers to these questions, and successful candidates seem to navigate certain procedures in the process which I would like to summarize and make available for anyone who may find them useful. I should add that none of the information contained in this article is reflective of any one individual person or application that has been received at the USC School of Music, or of any individual who may have interviewed at our school. The specific points are only generalizations and should be viewed as such by readers.

As is already known, once a school determines a position opening and the necessary university procedures have been followed and the commencement of a search has been approved and a committee formed, a call for applications is advertised. The announcement usually appears in the College Music Society Vacancy List, the Chronicle of Higher Education, and advertisements may be sent to NASM-accredited institutions. The piano world is very small and interested applicants may know through teachers and colleagues where and when a job may become available. I, personally, will often send a note to colleagues asking them to recommend people for application.

Each school and search committee has its own peculiarities regarding search procedures - some of these are mandated by individual State law, and some are peculiar to individual institutions. The general procedure that occurs after the job announcement has been posted is:

- Applications are tendered
- Completeness of applications is checked - letters usually go out letting applicants know which parts of their application have not been received
- Applications are reviewed
- Semifinalists or "short lists" are determined by the committee
- Semifinalists are contacted
- References are called and verified
- Semifinalists may be requested to complete a phone interview with the committee or a member of the committee
- Finalists are invited to campus
- A prospective hire is determined and the appropriate administrator completes the hiring process

Applicants are usually sent an Equal Opportunity Employment form to fill out and send back to the college or university. While these forms take extra time to fill out and return, they are actually very helpful to the State, university/college, academic unit, and are becoming increasingly scrutinized by governmental agencies. Every qualified applicant deserves a fair chance at employment, and I, personally, feel an obligation to help support this philosophy even in light of disagreements over policy, etc.

If a particular student is interested in pursuing a career in academia, I usually tell them all very early in their time with me that the interview process actually begins while they are completing their terminal degree (or earlier). Now is the time to start developing a professional career and to be active outside of the school environment. Now is also the time to start thinking about issues concerning curriculum, practices and implementation, personal and professional philosophies, and other issues from the "top down" or faculty perspective. This type of thinking and preparation will help make a prospective applicant ready to face the rigors of an interview, and to "hit the ground running" once they are hired.

I am very frank with my students in telling them that college is not school. It is a professional training program. Yesterday was the time to start preparing and serving the

profession. The students who begin thinking in this manner are often the most successful in their endeavors, and almost 100 percent of our graduate students have been successful in securing employment before or upon graduation.

One of the best pieces of advice I was ever given came from an undergraduate professor. When I began obtaining performance and teaching work outside of the school, my professor told me "you remember to always be the regular guy and you'll get asked back". What was meant was to keep ego and self-confidence in check, to always be on time, never complain and make demands, and to always go out of my way to get along and to get the job done in the best manner that it could be done, respond positively to the requests of my colleagues and the situation at hand, and to always, always be polite and respectful. It was also a warning to not fall into the attitude of "well, I'll just be what I need to be for as long as I need to be that to get what I want from these people". Personal growth and self-examination were both things my professor found important in our line of work. Have I, personally, always been the regular guy? No. But my professor's particular advice will get one very far in life and in a career, and in the application, interview, and professional development process.

At the current time, it is a "buyers market" in the profession. There are far more qualified people in the application pool than there are positions, and every bit of interaction with the search committee (prior to, during, and after the interview) is part of the process in determining answers to these two questions I posed previously:

1. "Will this person be able to successfully navigate the tenure and promotion process?"
2. "Will this person be a good fit for us, and will we be able to work with this person?"

The following are some tips for assisting the committee in evaluating your application. Please remember that this is a very busy group of people who are taking time out from their busy teaching and performing careers to review your request to be considered for an open position at their school.

Resume/Curriculum Vitae

Keep it as organized as possible. The committee may not have time to track down information, and an unorganized resume presentation actually may say a lot about the candidate and their working style. If padding must be included, keep it to a minimum. Padding can be spotted immediately and anything suspicious will be investigated if necessary. Be sure to include (as necessary and in reverse chronological order):

- Educational background (with principal teachers if desired)
- Employment history
- Teaching experience
- Related professional experience
- Awards
- Grants funded
- Performance engagements (it is helpful to have solo, orchestral, and chamber

performances separated)
- Competitions prizes/wins
- Radio/television broadcasts
- Publications (separated by articles, books, compositions, etc.)
- Recordings
- Clinics and workshops presented
- Masterclasses presented
- Adjudication experience
- Professional memberships
- Professional service activities
- Current references - be sure to include all contact information, phone, email, etc.
- Repertoire list
- Copies of concert programs
- CD performances (with separate tracking of works and movements)
- Any other information that will be useful in letting the committee know about you - remember, this often your only chance to bring yourself to the attention of a very busy group of people

Less experienced persons may wish to include:

- Instructor evaluations
- Short professional biography

It is also most helpful for less experienced persons to have reference letters and transcripts filed with your university placement office so that they may be mailed directly in a packet to the hiring institution. Try to keep follow-up work non-existent or to minimum level.

Contacting the Committee

If you have questions regarding the position or the progress of the search, it is generally fine to contact the chair of the committee with a brief question regarding these general questions. More specific questions should probably wait for a phone contact initiated by the committee. Clarification is ok - but be sure you are calling to get clarification and not just to bring yourself to the attention of committee. If you achieved special recognition in any area of your resume after it was sent to the committee, it is generally fine to send an update - especially if it is a significant achievement!

The "Short-List"

After an initial review of files, the committee will determine a list of semifinalists or "short list". It is not uncommon for the chair of the committee (or another member) to contact the semifinalists and ask if they are still interested in the position. It is also not uncommon for this person to ask if they may contact your references and other colleagues, and to ask if there is anyone you specifically do not wish to be contacted. This is done to be sure that sensitive situations are not created between an applicant and their current

employer, etc. Applicants may also be asked at this time if they have any questions regarding the position, the process, or the hiring time frame set up by the committee.

Reference Checks

Each school and/or individual committee has its own peculiar process regarding reference checks. Some committees may not contact references, other may contact 1-3, all, or extra references. Questions asked may range from one simple check on reliability, to very specific questionnaires that are asked of each reference. Most of your references will contact you very soon after the committee calls them to tell you that you've gotten an inquiry! Now is the time to start preparing for a possible phone interview.

Unsolicited phone calls from references are also common occurrences and different people have differing opinions on these calls. Busy colleagues will often call each other to bring a particularly gifted applicant to each other's attention. Most of your references will know the process and will give you a glowing reference - deservedly so. If someone is going to make an unsolicited call on your behalf, choose this person carefully. Years ago, I had an unsolicited call regarding an application and was asked specifically "Well, does he have a chance?". That kind of thing generally does not leave a good impression. The people who are referring you sometimes say as much about your application as your resume does.

Phone Interviews

Each school and/or individual committee has its own peculiar process regarding phone interviews. Some committees may have an individual member contact an applicant, others may have pairs of committee members conduct a conference call, or the entire committee may be present for a conference call. Questions asked may range from a few simple questions about you and your work, to very specific questionnaires that are asked of each applicant. These questionnaires may contain questions on a range of varying subjects and applicants will need to be prepared to speak on these subjects, and to think and react quickly to different personalities and lines of thinking, and related issues. Phone interviews are also a chance for the committee to get to know you on a more personal level. Overall, be prepared to talk about larger issues I discussed earlier, and don't be afraid to get to know the committee a little. We want to meet new people and colleagues and have a good time - you should too!

Post-Screening

If you have been invited for an interview, the committee will be in contact with all of the details and specifics regarding your interview and what you will be asked to do. I will still recommend the advice of my undergraduate teacher - "you remember to always be the regular guy and you'll get asked back". I would also recommend the first two questions I posed at the opening of this essay:

1. "Will this person be a good fit for us?"
2. "Will this person be able to successfully navigate the tenure and promotion process?"

In addition, trust yourself, your talents, and your teachers. They should help you navigate this process, and be able to answer questions as they arise. Self-confidence is fine - remember though, that it is a buyers market and there is a fine line between confidence and attitude/arrogance. Overall, get to know the faculty, school, degrees, courses, and programs inside and out. Come prepared with questions and get to know your potential colleagues. Be prompt and organized, and all will go well.

Some Advice Post-Interview

If you were hired for the job, congratulations! If you weren't hired, don't be disappointed or upset, and certainly don't think less of yourself. As a chair or member of many hiring committees, I can honestly say that we work very hard to find two or three absolutely excellent people to invite to campus. We probably thought very highly of you and your work. We probably liked you very much as a person. It just happened that another equally talented and personable candidate was a better "fit" for our position. A successful interview in which you weren't hired for a job can lead to great references and recommendations for other work. Learn from the process and talk with your colleagues and professors. The application and interview process is an excellent opportunity for personal and professional growth, is worth the time and effort, and is another chance to meet a group of new and wonderful colleagues, and a chance for further growth in the profession.

Scott Price currently serves as Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy, Head of the Piano Area, and Coordinator of Group Piano at the University of South Carolina School of Music. He is a graduate of the University of Oklahoma (DMA), Cleveland Institute of Music (MM) and Bowling Green State University in Ohio (BM). Dr. Price is creator and editor-in-chief of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum" which is the recipient of the 2008 MTNA Frances Clark Keyboard Pedagogy Award. He has recorded 31 compact discs of educational piano music for Alfred Publishing Company, and has published educational compositions with Alfred Publishing Company and the FJH Music Company. Special teaching interests of Scott Price include teaching students with autism and associated disabilities, very young children, and teaching keyboard improvisation to piano students ranging from beginning to advanced levels. His work with autistic students has been featured on national television (Dateline NBC) and at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association and the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. Dr. Price has performed, presented masterclasses and lectures throughout the United States and in Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand.

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Panel Presentation: A Dialogue between Music Education and Group Piano

report by Courtney Crappell

Pamela Pike began the dialogue by modifying the title of the presentation. She stated that preliminary meetings with Mike Raiber indicated that this was only "a beginning dialogue between music education and group piano teachers." The ensuing discussion highlighted the potential benefit for group piano teachers in an exchange of information with music educators concerning the skills teachers in primary and secondary schools use daily in the classroom and how group piano classes can help prepare students for future careers.

Pike began by reevaluating the goals of group piano for the non-keyboard music major. The classes reinforce theoretical concepts visually at the keyboard, but the main goal is to focus on real world skills that the students will need in their careers. Pike questioned the current curriculum and its ability to adequately prepare students. She related a story of an employer commenting to a music education teacher, "You're not going to send me another student who can't play the piano, are you?"

Pike next outlined the five elements typically included in the curriculum of group piano classes:

3. Technique
4. Sight Reading
5. Harmonization/Transposition
6. Improvisation
7. Solo/Ensemble Repertoire

She compared these skills with the skills often used by music education teachers as outlined in a dissertation by Linda Christensen titled *A Survey of the Importance of Functional Piano Skills as Reported by Band, Choral, Orchestra, and General Music Teachers* (2000).

- Harmonize melodies using chord symbols
- Harmonize melodies (no symbols)
- Improvise accompaniments
- Transpose simple melodies
- Transpose instrumental parts
- Sight read vocal or instrumental scores
- Play songs by ear using simple accompaniments
- Accompany (soloist or group)

Pike highlighted that the skill sets are not perfectly matched and that only three of the five elements, sight-reading, harmonization/transposition, and improvisation, directly affect the abilities outlined in Christenson's study. She concludes that students would benefit from a problem-based curriculum in which they learn how to work through useful

skills.

Mike Raiber described possible fields that music education majors choose. These include band directors, orchestra directors, choir directors, and elementary music teachers. Within each of these choices, a teacher may choose to teach only certain grades. Also, while one teacher may just direct band, another may also be part of a staff. The piano skills these teachers require vary and are based on where and what they teach. Group piano teachers should begin speaking with educators in the classroom, not only education faculty at universities, to discover the most useful skills for teachers in a specific area and discipline.

Raiber next outlined the different skills that teachers regularly use in the classroom and then Pike compiled the piano skills common to all educators. Each skill set is listed below.

Band Director Piano Skills:

3. Transpose instrumental parts
4. Harmonize melodies from chord symbols
5. Sight read open and closed scores
6. Skills to input data to notation software
7. Basic accompanying skills
8. Jazz comp skills

Orchestral Director Piano Skills:

- Same as band directors *plus*
- Sight reading alto/tenor clef
- Accompany the group
- Improvise simple accompaniments

Choir Director Piano Skills:

- Harmonize using chord symbols
- Sight read open score
- Accompany groups (while standing at keyboard and conducting)
- Play vocalizations in all keys
- Use music notation software

Elementary Educator Piano Skills:

3. Same as choral *plus*
4. Be able to use the keyboard appropriately with the materials that will be used in the classroom

Common Piano Skills:

- Harmonizing melody with chord symbols
- Sight reading
- Band: open/closed score
- Orchestra: alto/tenor clefs
- Choral: open score
- Basic accompanying
- Technology

Pike then discussed how collaboration with music education colleagues would help in compiling specific examples to incorporate in the group piano curriculum. Instead of creating individual sections for each type of educator, create components, or modules, that could "plug in" depending on the student's area of music study. If they use these skills as assignments in another class that is specific to their discipline, it will appear meaningful and they will practice more.

Raiber mentioned that the compartmentalization of curriculum erects a barrier between educators and their piano skills. He recommended that assignments in one class should be revisited in another. For instance, if a student is working to arrange a score, much of the score reduction can happen in group piano. The skill then has a direct and immediate application, and this experience will increase the perception of value of the group piano class. Raiber compares separating these skills to the compartmentalization that occurs in primary schooling. A student attends Math for an hour, then English for an hour. This segregation leads to the popular question in our classes: "Will you be grading on spelling and grammar?"

After examining the skills above, Raiber and Pike summarize how group piano teachers can adjust. First, teachers should discover the regional differences in repertoire for music educators. The next step is to identify musical examples that students will be using in their education classes by speaking with colleagues in the department. Finally, teachers should encourage students to explore how they will use the keyboard in their own teaching.

Raiber and Pike return to the idea of "plugging in" curricular components based on a student's area of music study. Outlining a possible group piano curriculum, they pull from the common skill set listed above and include an adaptable component that would vary according to the student's area. The skills covered include:

- Sight reading
- Harmonization w/ chord symbols
- Basic accompaniments/piano reductions
- Technology training
- *Adaptable component*

The adaptable component should include an element from the lists below:
Band Director Component:

- Transposition
- Sight reading (open/closed score)
- Jazz comp

Orchestral Director Component:

- Transposition
- Reading tenor/alto clefs
- Improvise simple accompaniments
- Play piano reductions

Choral Director Component:

- Sight read open scores
- Accompany group while standing at keyboard and conducting
- Vocalizations in all keys

Elementary Music Educator:

- Same as choral
- Be able to play accompaniments and use keyboard for appropriate music methods

In conclusion, the panelists reiterated that the dialogue has only just begun. This panel highlighted that collaboration between group piano teachers and educators is crucial in order to adequately prepare students for the challenges they will face.

Courtney Crappell teaches piano and piano pedagogy and coordinates group piano at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He previously taught class piano and piano pedagogy at Oklahoma City University. His research in piano literature, piano pedagogy, and ethnomusicology has been featured at national and regional conferences. Currently a DMA candidate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma, he earned his MM in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from OU and his BM in Piano Performance at Louisiana State University.

Using SMART Classroom Technology in Group Piano Teaching

report by Michael Dean

Utilizing the University of Oklahoma's two piano labs, Courtney Crappell, Jyoti Hench, and Rebekah Jordan-Miller demonstrated ways in which group piano teachers can use Smart Board technology in the classroom. The presenters explained the equipment needed to successfully operate this technology, and outlined many of the Smart Board features while offering ways to use these tools in group piano classes.

What do I need?

Each piano lab at the University of Oklahoma is equipped with a Mac connected to the Smart Board by a USB cable. USB cables also connect the computer to a Wolfvision document camera and to a projector. The technology also works well with a PC and with other document camera brands. The necessary software to run the Smart Board and the document camera is provided with this hardware. It is important to purchase a projector with sufficient lumens in order to read the screen in a fully lit classroom. Teachers were encouraged to test a portable projector in their individual rooms to determine the number of lumens necessary for the space.

How can I use it?

Perhaps the easiest way to use this technology is through use of the document camera. The teacher can place a score on the document camera to project the music onto the screen. Previewing the piece in the classroom becomes uncomplicated when using the pens to circle or mark broken chords, patterns, formal sections and other features of the music. This saves the instructor from having to mark an actual score or from cleaning up the pages used in overhead projectors. Anything that is written can be erased as easily as on a white board, so the teacher need not worry about making mistakes.

Smart Board software is quite advanced and offers nearly limitless possibilities for the classroom. One component of the software is Notebook, which Crappell described as being the Smart Board's version of PowerPoint. Anything written on the board can be saved as a slide before moving to a new page. Teachers may also type using the keyboard function if the legibility of their board writing is in question, or they may type directly from the computer keyboard. It is very easy to move from one slide to another and to locate previously created pages and Notebook files. Crappell, Hench, and Jordan-Miller created a Notebook file that demonstrated how they use this technology in their own group piano classes. They focused on three main areas: Planning, Previewing and Classroom Interaction.

Planning

Using the Notebook feature, five-week plans and lesson assignments are projected for the

class. Since these slides are prepared in advance and saved, they may be displayed easily whenever it becomes necessary without the instructor taking time to rewrite the information.

The University of Oklahoma, with copyright permission, has scanned every page of *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* and saved these pages as PDF files for use with the Smart Boards in the piano labs. The presenters placed the pages needed for the five-week plan into a separate notebook, organizing them for efficient accessibility. An instructor can capture and copy any portion of a page to the notebook, as well as attach MIDI files to each piece. Preparing such a Notebook in advance saves set-up time, as the instructor is ready to teach as soon as the file is opened. This is especially convenient when teaching and classroom schedules are full.

Though the Notebook presented was a five-week plan organized according to the type of activity (repertoire, transposition, harmonization, etc.), the presenters stressed flexibility. A Notebook might be created for each day or week and can be organized in any number of ways. Each graduate assistant at the University of Oklahoma has an individual folder on the desktop for class plans and Notebook files. Planning often occurs on another computer with files transferred through use of a flash drive.

Previewing

Using the Smart Board to preview sight-reading and repertoire examples is especially effective. While using the Notebook application, an instructor may use the colored pens to mark intervals or other features of the score in the same manner as demonstrated with the document camera. Additionally, one might choose to use the Highlighter or Spotlight tools to further guide students on the page.

The Highlighter tool can emphasize a specific set of directions in a larger portion of text. When using two distinct colors, it can show the distribution between the hands in a score-reading example. The Spotlight tool accentuates a certain area of the board while darkening or dimming the rest of the page. The shape, size, and level of transparency are adjustable, directing the student's focus to the portion of the score being studied.

Classroom Interaction

There are many ways of using the Smart Board interactively in piano classes. Displaying an improvisation accompaniment and playing the MIDI file in advance of the activity gives students extra focus and confidence when it is time for them to perform.

The presenters observed that students enjoy writing on the Smart Board. Teachers may ask students to come to the board to write consequent phrases to antecedents presented. There is a template gallery in Notebook that includes staves that are very useful for this activity. When projecting harmonization examples, students might write the bass line or chord inversions on the board.

An especially entertaining activity presented was a game of Group Piano Jeopardy. The Jeopardy template is available online as a PowerPoint with various hyperlinks and may be attached to a Notebook page. Clicking on the desired portion of the Jeopardy grid changes the display to the question, answer, or activity corresponding to that category. Categories may be altered to fit a given class. For this demonstration the categories had amusing titles that included "Hectic Harmonization," "Aggravating Arpeggios," and "You Want Me to do What???"

Other Considerations

One of the issues of any technology is that the instructor must be trained to use it in an effective manner. At the University of Oklahoma, the first pedagogy course includes technology projects designed to train graduate students on how to use the Smart Board and its software. Emphasis is on good teaching first, with graduate assistants encouraged to use the technology as they are ready. The instructors frequently record videos of their teaching to evaluate if they are teaching well and using the technology effectively.

Crappell mentioned other hardware alternatives beyond that presented, such as using a wireless keyboard for extra convenience in a teaching space. A recent alternative to the board is to have a plasma or LCD display with an overlay that allows it to become a touch-sensitive writing device.

Dr. Barbara Fast stated the importance of collaborating with a technology expert in designing a setup that works best for each individual situation. It is important to note the most expensive option is not always necessary. The costs can vary greatly depending on each classroom's needs.

Conclusion

Though SMART technology may seem foreign and intimidating to many teachers, it is quickly becoming a standard form of presentation in many schools. Students often experience this and similar technologies in middle school and earlier. Once one learns how to use it, a Smart Board can significantly decrease planning time as well as increase the effectiveness of teaching.

Website Addresses

SMART Technologies

30-day free trial of Smart Board software

Jeopardy PowerPoint template

Michael Dean is Assistant Professor of Music at Oklahoma Baptist University, where he teaches piano pedagogy, applied piano and group piano classes. He also maintains an active schedule as workshop

clinician, adjudicator, solo performer, collaborative artist, and faculty at summer music camps throughout the United States and Canada. Mr. Dean previously taught at the Wheaton College Conservatory. He holds degrees from Minnesota State University Moorhead and the University of Oklahoma.

Online Pedagogy: Breaking The Barriers of Time and Distance

report by Alexis Ignatiou

Dr. Valerie Cisler, NCTM, joined the faculty of the University of Nebraska, Kearney in 1994 and serves as Chair for the Department of Music & Performing Arts. The abstract from her presentation provides an effective overview of this session: "In response to the growing demand for well-developed distance education opportunities, this session explores strategies for teaching graduate and undergraduate online courses in piano pedagogy. Practical considerations related to course design and structure, asynchronous communications, and online issues and protocols will be discussed. Demonstrations are drawn from online courses developed by the presenter since 2005."

Dr. Cisler began her presentation by highlighting the evolution of performance and teaching. Performance options expanded over time from strictly live events to recorded ones. Further advances in technology made broadcasts over radio, TV and the Internet possible. Reflecting these were parallel changes in teaching methods, where print media and technology impacted original face-to-face methods.

One of the most notable influences of technology upon teaching is the establishment of online classrooms. Dr. Cisler discussed the advantages and challenges of setting these up, and noted that the role of the instructor, student, and institution need to be re-addressed in order to accommodate such changes. Her main points are highlighted below.

Instructor Challenges

- Time is the biggest factor
- Compensation
- Resistance from the administration
- Teaching style

Technological Challenges

- Institutional Infrastructure
- Support and Staff
- Course management and software availability
- Technological needs of the student

Effectiveness Challenges

9. Communication
10. Course rigor
11. Student expectations
12. Assessment

Advantages: Anytime and Anywhere

- Expands outreach by allowing the student to work, study, and access information from any computer. Such flexibility will benefit those students with very busy schedules or family obligations.
- Costs: no classroom will eliminate the need for transportation or lodging, which will ultimately help expand student pool.
- Student centered: focuses on student learning and addressing their needs.
- The instructor becomes a facilitator.

Instructor's Primary Considerations

- What are the prerequisites?
- What will I teach and how will I teach?
- Who will I enroll?
- What is the institutional technological infrastructure?
- How can I incorporate technology?
- Is it feasible to teach pedagogy online?

Dr. Cisler emphasized that planning is crucial when getting started. Structuring the content of the virtual classroom based on assumptions will be catastrophic. Therefore, the instructor must check, prepare, and process feedback quickly and accurately. There are many steps to this process:

5. Pre-communication with students
6. Determine student's computer/software requirements
7. Student learning objectives---learning activities
8. Pre-record lectures, performance/teaching demonstrations.
9. Explore digital resources such as the Library Web
10. Research Copyright laws (*see link at end)

Instructor's Training

Essential to the success of the instructor is specialized training and the implementation of such information. Therefore, Dr. Cisler recommended the following resources:

- Workshops
- Online tutorials and online education resources
- The essential book *The Power of E Learning* by Dr. Shirley Waterhouse

Course Design

- Determine a time frame (consider learning curves)
- Logical sequence (unit modules)
- Learning activities (set reasonable goals)
- Communication (synchronous/asynchronous)
- Delivery (lecture, readings, demos, projects)

Teaching Piano Technique

The four modules:
- Discussion board
- Readings reference
- Projects
- Demonstrations

The Wimba Classroom (URL no longer active)

The Wimba Classroom is a virtual classroom that integrates live E-board communication capabilities, live class polls, online office hours, incorporates tests and quizzes, displays your desktop to students, and is compatible with ***Blackboard*** (online grading, display, and communication tool). In this sense, the future of online pedagogy teaching is always "live" and "archived."

Concluding Remarks

This most enjoyable presentation by Dr. Valerie Cisler provided a wealth of information for aspiring teachers who wish to offer an alternative to the physical classroom for today's students. Teaching pedagogy online comes with many challenges but with rewards as well, for both teacher and student. The academic institution is also challenged to provide and to streamline such technology, making such courses accessible. The 21st century instructor must be able to understand, adapt, construct, and ultimately implement such technologies.

***Web link**

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Familiarizing Pedagogy Students with the Teaching Literature

report by Sallye Jeffcoat

In the lecture *Familiarizing Pedagogy Students with the Teaching Literature*, Dr. Lesley Sisterhen McAllister offered a three-prong approach for university piano pedagogy courses. Dr. McAllister is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Director of Piano Pedagogy at Baylor University in Waco, Texas. The goal of her pedagogy courses is to acquaint students with piano teaching literature as well as repertoire leveling. At Baylor University, undergraduate piano pedagogy majors are required to take three semesters of piano pedagogy. Dr. McAllister divides the semesters by repertoire levels as follows: elementary (levels 1 - 3), intermediate (levels 4 - 6), and late intermediate/early advanced (levels 7 - 10). She uses Dr. Jane Magrath's leveling system and focuses on standard master composers since pedagogical music and composers are always changing. Students are expected to learn and know representative composers, genres, and collections, along with representative pieces at each level.

Students learn these through three stages: acquisition, discovery, and implementation. The first stage, acquisition, is hearing and seeing representative pieces in a wide variety of literature. Be careful in this stage, as it is the easiest to get stuck in. Acquisition can include performing a piece or listening to recordings while looking at the score. Make sure that students are listening to polished performances that evoke the "wow" factor. Students should make notes and discuss specific difficulties of pieces and practice suggestions. This is an important stage in learning to level repertoire. Sometimes arguments do arise at this stage; however, this provokes discussion and, even more so, learning.

Discovery, the second stage, includes playing through the music to experience technical issues and difficulties firsthand. This experimental stage shows that merely looking at a piece of music does not necessarily level a piece. Discovery can be done in class if a piano lab is available. This stage is great for sight-reading practice as well as selecting and leveling pieces.

The final stage, implementation, involves the students themselves giving polished performances of the literature. Students offer critical feedback of each other's performances for the class. This stage requires them to consider musicality and interpretation of repertoire. Unmusical performances often occur when students do not hear polished performances in the first stage of acquisition, or become too dependent on their private teachers for instruction and demonstration.

Students demonstrate their knowledge in her course in several ways. First, they provide insightful commentary regarding performances. In doing so, students gain practice in critical evaluation that can be transferred to their own teaching. This activity promotes musicality as well. Second, students level unknown pieces appropriately. Finally, they identify known pieces from recordings and scores. Certain collections and pieces must be memorized. On exams students must be able to talk about their pedagogical approach and

discuss individual pieces learned.

The three-prong approach includes weekly score readings, recorded performances of an assigned work, and final exams. In weekly score readings, the students are given music on Monday to perform for class by Wednesday. This allows students to become familiar with many collections, especially the important ones. Every student in the class learns and performs a piece from a standard teaching collection and provides brief oral commentary. Students also fill out Repertoire Evaluation Forms that include the following categories: Title, Composer, Technical Features and Requirements, Musical Concepts and Required Skills, and Why Might You Teach This Piece. Dr. McAllister chooses to start with easier pieces and collections and move to the more difficult repertoire. She also tries to pick mostly well-known pieces and at least one unknown piece from the various collections.

The second part of the three-prong approach is recorded performances of an assigned work. Dr. McAllister first has two or three students record the same piece. The class then listens to the recorded performances. Discussion and notes can include comparison of musicality and stylistic interpretation as well as decisions on which was the most convincing performance.

The final component of the three-prong approach is the final exam. This exam includes leveling of an unknown piece, listening identification, and score identification. Students include Opus numbers, composers, and complete titles for all listening and score identification answers.

This approach for a piano pedagogy course offers several advantages. Students acquire notes for approximately thirty pieces, and applied knowledge by playing rather than merely hearing and memorizing them. They also learn in a variety of contexts for better retention, and gain significant experience learning to level pieces independently.

Sallye Jeffcoat is currently a student at the University of Alabama pursuing a Doctorate of Musical Arts in piano performance while studying with the 2008 MTNA Teacher of the Year, Amanda Penick. She holds a Master of Music degree in piano performance with an emphasis in piano pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma where she studied with Dr. Jane Magrath, Dr. Ed Gates, and Dr. Barbara Fast. At the University of Oklahoma, Ms. Jeffcoat taught class piano and applied piano to non-keyboard music majors as well as to non-music majors. She studied with Constance Knox Carroll while a student at Louisiana State University for a Bachelor of Music in piano performance. Ms. Jeffcoat has been active in summer programs including Brevard Music Festival and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan. She has been a faculty member at the Tennessee Valley Music Festival and Huntingdon College Junior Piano Camp. She has an extensive collaborative resume and regularly performs with chamber music programs and orchestras.

Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them

report by Joanne Kampiziones

Bill Moore, a performance psychology consultant, served as keynote speaker for the 2008 Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum in Norman, Oklahoma. His presentation, *Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them* addressed issues surrounding the psychological aspects of performance as well as helping musicians play with greater confidence and trust in their preparation. He is also currently teaching a course in performance psychology for musicians in the School of Music at the University of Oklahoma.

"Piano culture is similar to golf culture," was one of Bill Moore's first statements as he energetically spoke to a packed audience of piano teachers at the 2008 GP3 conference. Garnering everyone's attention, Moore explained that golf is, in fact, a highly technical sequence of patterns where correctness is premium and mistakes can never be taken back. As a performance psychologist, Bill Moore spends 99% of his time with performers in practice, not teaching them how to acquire skills of their specific discipline, but rather how to acquire skills of performing. Moore offered three broad topics in his strategic explanation for helping pianists get out what they have in them: 1) Embracing the Performance Elephant, 2) Bobbing for Apples and Oranges, and 3) Keeping the Performance Alive.

EMBRACING THE PERFORMANCE ELEPHANT

The human performance involves several mechanical, physiological and strategic elements that play a significant role in the outcome of a performance. It is never strictly a mental practice alone. The challenge for a coach or teacher, however, is to break down all of the elements, determine where psychology fits into the picture, and develop parts of an ideal performance state.

Bill Moore presented a Performance Psychology Model, a pyramid constructed of three levels that build upon each other. Psychological tools, psychological abilities, and psychological skills lead to the top of the pyramid, which is defined as the Ideal Performance State (IPS) or trust. Also illustrated in the Performance Psychology Model are the disciplines essential for sustaining high performance. They are personal commitment, a positive mental attitude, self-management, and self-leadership. There is a link on the 2008 GP3 home page at www.mtna.org that provides a *Coaching for Performance* handout with Bill Moore's performance psychology model, as well as a self-assessment questionnaire further detailing aspects of this pyramid.

Level One: Psychological Tools

In order to achieve the Ideal Performance State, individuals must begin from the bottom

of the pyramid using three psychological tools (independent will, self-awareness, and imagination) to form the foundation before psychological abilities and skills (the next two levels) can be used to further the outcome of the ideal performance state. The first psychological tool, independent will, is the ability to choose how to approach things in life and how to respond or change certain elements. Self-awareness, the second psychological tool, is the ability to step aside and examine patterns of thinking and responding. The last psychological tool is imagination. The primary factor determining how successful a performer becomes depends on how well his/her imagination is utilized.

Level Two: Psychological Abilities

Moore's Performance Psychology Model contained eight psychological abilities evaluated on a level of one to ten. They are self-coaching, visualization (ability to create positive performance images), goal setting, attention control, differential relaxation (detecting and releasing muscle tension on command), centering (ability to access a centered state), energy management (ability to adapt energy state to demands of the situation), and lastly, preparation routines (ability to execute an effective preparation routine). An individual's capacity to implement these psychological abilities positively will better enhance the ideal performance state.

Level Three: Psychological Skills - the Three C's

Ascending on the performance psychology model to the third level is what Moore refers to as "the three Cs," or the developmental parts of an ideal performance state: confidence, concentration, and composure. Confidence distinguishes good performers from great ones. It is an expectation of performing at a desired level; a matter of free will that all performers can choose to execute by believing in their own selves. Concentration deals with learning how to properly direct focus and observe the relevant indications for proper skill execution. Composure is the management of emotional energy. A positive emotion may successfully drive a performance just as a negative emotion (anger or fear) may disrupt one. The result of a person's composure will always have an effect on their performance.

Level Four: Ideal Performance State - Trust

The top of Moore's pyramid leads to the ultimate performance goal, which is trust, also labeled as the ideal performance state (IPS). This means the pianist relies on what has been learned through each level (psychological tools, skills, and abilities) and trusts the positive execution of each tool, skill, and ability. According to Moore, letting go of conscious control over correctness and allowing natural, well-trained processes to execute skill is the key element in trusting, especially when mistakes count. It is a courageous act to trust what you train. By being courageous and trusting what has been practiced, the individual is able to direct his/her will to overcome fear, self-doubt, over-analysis of mistakes, and performance anxiety-all cognitive factors that hinder motor skills during a performance. Moore points out that pianists do not have to trust 100% of the time, however. They can let go of conscious control in a performance 80% of the time,

for example, and depend on the multiple performance repetitions (practice skills) to carry them through 80% of the performance. The last 20% (performance skills) can be used to balance the repetitions. These four levels of the performance psychology pyramid are the foundation for reaching the ideal performance state, trust. This is only one of the three aspects, however, that Moore covers in coaching for performance.

BOBBING FOR APPLES AND ORANGES: Practice Skills vs. Performance Skills

Moore depicts a difference between psychological practice and performance skills. He compares the two skills as apples and oranges, due to their extreme differences.

Practice Skills (Skill Acquisition)

Practicing (skill acquisition) is fundamental movement patterns taught, monitored and evaluated during multiple sessions. The practice skills that should be "put in" the individual are completely different from the skills needed to perform or "put out." Moore states that the practice skills to be filtered by the individual include self-instruction, self-monitoring correctness, and analyzing cause and effect (what caused the mistake). Practice skills are necessary to refine physical dexterity and should be reinforced at every practice session, but they are also the exact issue that can hinder one's best performance. The goal with practice skills or practicing is to maintain a clear and present focus and trust what has been trained. In order to do the latter, however, performance skills must also be rehearsed.

Performance Skills (Performance Acquisition)

Three main factors Moore points out in the area of performance skills involve courage, trust and acceptance. Courage is directing one's will to overcome fear and self-doubt-without fear there is no courage. Trust, as mentioned before, is letting go of conscious control of mistakes, and acceptance is the act of perceiving without judgment of good or bad. There is no trust (learned skill) without acceptance (decision). Moore states that acceptance, as it relates to performance, seems to be the hardest skill for perfectionists to learn.

Practicing Performance Skills

A quality practice session includes skill acquisition for the majority of the session and performance acquisition for a small amount of the session. Both elements must be present to accomplish the performance skill. Another way of observing this concept is blocked vs. variable practice formats. Blocked practice includes multiple repetitions of the same passage. It is possible to convince an individual that he/she has worked hard playing 100 repetitions of a passage in forty-five minutes, but if the 100 repetitions were all wrong, the point of blocked practice becomes defeated, the mind goes numb, and the concept of practicing performance skills is eliminated. Playing the same passage correctly fifteen times instead would be more beneficial after the skill acquisition has been attained.

A variable practice session may prove to be more favorable for performance skill acquisition. In other words, when the notes of a passage have been learned and played repeatedly, switch to a variable block of practicing, playing the passage one way and changing the format, as might be done when practicing in rhythms, for example. This way the mind is "put on the spot" each time a variant of the passage is practiced, much like being "put on the spot" in a performance setting.

Teaching Quality Practice

The *process* of practicing is essential when teaching students how to practice with quality (variable format) and not only repetition (blocked). It is additionally crucial for students to understand why they are asked to practice in variable formats-what the point is of each varied exercise. When implementing the 80-20 rule (80% blocked practice, 20% variable practice), eventually have students reverse the percentage and type of practice. As they get closer to being performance ready, have them practice with 80% variable format and 20% blocked. This way, students will begin to eliminate cognitive interferences prior to the actual performance.

KEEPING THE PERFORMANCE ALIVE

Creating a positive focus is paramount for all pianists. Usually, the more important the performance, the more individuals feel they have to do something differently, but this is truly unnecessary. They should believe what they have is good enough. Moore's handout contains several constructive performance psychology activities reinforcing a positive psyche. These include:

1. **Best and Worst Performances** Try to remember vividly all aspects that contributed to a positive or negative experience, and what psychological aspects come to mind. Reflect upon the differences between the two.
2. **Performance Psychology Intake Form (PPI)** A self-assessment of many of the psychological skills addressed in this article.
3. **Performance Strengths and Struggles** Once the PPI is completed, review the strongest and weakest areas of the psychological skills.
4. **Keep a High-Performance Journal** Design a separate notebook as a high-performance journal, making practice and performance entries using the format described by Moore. It is recommended to follow the format for at least ten days and two performances.
5. **Write a Personal Performance Philosophy** Take time to reflect on individual personal philosophy of musical performance. What is valued through musical development and performance? Why strive for excellence, and how are goals to be achieved?
6. **Describe a Great Attitude** Think of the last year and question if there has been a "great attitude" in the process of musical development and performance. If the answer is yes, describe what it means to have this. If no, describe what is lacking in attitude and what is needed to become great.
7. **Utilize Visualization Scripts** Describe the perfect performance from start to

finish. Use descriptive terms to portray it and become engrossed with this concept. If it is not made readily available to the individual's memory, it will not be achieved. Oftentimes, due to human nature, moments of failure seem to be vividly accessible, especially in performances. A structured, concerted effort has to be made to change the moments of failure that naturally come to mind. Make up a script of playing well and visualize it repeatedly. Moore states, it may not happen this way, but it is definitely better than focusing on what could go wrong.

Trust: the Ultimate Performance Goal

Throughout the entire presentation, the key factor that Bill Moore continuously reinforced was trust. The ultimate performance goal should not be to play perfectly, but rather to "trust" what the individual has acquired through practice and performance skill acquisition. Although this may be challenging, it is an attainable goal. The outcome of a performance cannot be controlled, but the thoughts that cross one's mind during a performance can be.

Once a pianist has grasped the psychological tools, abilities, skills and trust needed for the ideal performance state, then he/she can actively work on performance skills, which are entirely separate from practice skills. The two concepts coincide significantly and must be included in every session of a pianist's daily practice routine in order to maximize ideal results during a performance. Pianists should fully embrace the positive and negative experiences, reflecting upon the good and learning from the bad. This will allow pianists to develop as musicians, keep every performance alive, and as Moore suggests, *get out what they have in them*.

Joanne Kampiziones currently serves as Assistant Professor of Music in Piano at Coker College in Hartsville, SC. She holds a D.M.A. in Keyboard Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Miami and received a M.M. in Piano Pedagogy, B.M. in Music Education, and a B.A. in International Studies from the University of South Carolina. During her residency at the University of Miami, Kampiziones served on the faculty of the University's Piano Preparatory Program and taught applied and group piano as well as music technology courses. She has given recitals, master classes, and presented workshops on various topics including performance teaching strategies of twentieth-century Greek piano literature throughout the country, most recently at College Music Society regional conferences at San Francisco State University, Westminster Choir College, the University of Miami, and the 2008 national conference in Atlanta, Georgia. She is presently on the board of directors for the South Carolina State Music Teachers Association as the Senior Piano Competitions director and has served on the jury of numerous piano competitions and festivals.

Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach: A Living Room Discussion

report by Chung-Ha Kim

Learning and teaching are two areas that preoccupy all piano pedagogues. This forum explored both areas from a variety of viewpoints: pianist, teacher, piano pedagogue, student, and performance coach. Discussants included Dr. Samuel Holland (Southern Methodist University), Dr. Edward Gates (University of Oklahoma), Dr. Claire Wachter (University of Oregon), Rebekah Jordan-Miller (University of Oklahoma), Dr. Bill Moore (performance psychology consultant, University of Oklahoma) and Dr. Lisa Zdechlik (University of Arizona), who served as the moderator. The very casual, informal setting effectively created the effect of a discussion taking place in a living room, as suggested by the session title. What follows is a transcript of this discussion.

Dr. Lisa Zdechlik opened the discussion by posing three questions:

How do you learn best? 2. How did you discover this? 3. What/Who helped you refine your learning process?

Jordan-Miller: I find that I learn best through positive questioning. Instead of asking myself "Why can't I get this right?" or "Why is my technique not better?" I would ask questions like "What do I love about this work?"

Gates: I think for me it is the practicing that helps me to learn. Practicing is actually the act of teaching yourself. Once I started to teach, it was experience that helped me to figure out what worked for a student and what didn't. This requires that you reach a certain age when you can be reflective enough, though, so you can't really use this when you are young.

Wachter: Neurophysiological studies have shown that most of us use a combination/mix of visual, aural, and kinesthetic learning styles, so when we teach, it is important to know a student's learning style.

Holland: To go back to the idea of practice being the act of teaching yourself, I think a piano teacher needs to teach students how to practice as much as piano pedagogues need to teach students how to teach.

Zdechlik: How can piano teachers in the studio help students to discover and strengthen their own learning process?

Holland: I think a lot of this has to do with what a student experiences in the presence of the teacher. A teacher can say the same thing over and over again, but if it doesn't happen during the lesson, it won't happen in the practice-room. So it is important to create an environment that will support the experience.

Gates: When students come unprepared, let them practice; you discover a lot by

watching/listening to their practice! I had a funny experience when I was a student of John Perry: the lesson was over, and he told me to stay and practice for a while. He went off to mow the lawn, and all of a sudden he stuck his head through the window and said: "I told you not to do that!!"

Moore: One characteristic of a great "practicer" is that the process of learning and development fascinates them. Fascination is the mother of discipline. I do believe that practicing is teaching yourself. And until we can understand what causes someone to be great at practice, we won't be able to teach it. Great practicers are very different from great performers.

Holland: What's the point of great practice unless it yields a great performance?

Moore: Well, you can say that a great performance would be the ultimate goal, but there are very different mental skills required for practice and performance. Practice requires the assimilation of information; performance the action of getting this information out.

Gates: Going back to the idea of fascination being the mother of discipline: one way to kindle this fascination would be to give students challenges and give them hints on how to meet them.

Zdechlik: What can we as piano teachers do to kindle this fascination? And is there a way to bring together applied piano and piano pedagogy to create fascination?

Holland: We cannot create fascination, but we can certainly create an environment that will nurture it. Love of music is contagious.

Gates: We should always serve as a model for students. I also think that students should observe more master teachers and follow their observations with a discussion afterwards. I think there is room for richer interaction following a masterclass.

Holland: I agree that we can do more observations, but there are some caveats: in order to gain from observation, one has to know what and how to observe. I've seen young, inexperienced teachers observe great teaching, but take all the wrong things away, because they didn't understand why a decision was made. So the "exit chat" after a masterclass becomes absolutely critical.

Gates: I think we can benefit from observing teaching outside of our areas, so pianists could, for example, observe a cello teacher.

Holland: Yes! I learned a lot about teaching piano by watching a baseball coach. Great teaching is great teaching, regardless of the field.

Wachter: True. Going back to the question of how to honor the piano pedagogy side in applied piano: sometimes students come to lessons and ask about problem students. I

think it's important to discuss the issues, but we should then try to tie it into their lessons.

Jordan-Miller: For me, the studio-classes were almost like group lessons that helped me in my teaching. And reading observation reports by Dr. Gates also helped me a lot, since I had never watched myself teach.

Gates: I'm for group lessons! But a teacher should emphasize, "I'm teaching you this way, because…" and explain to the audience why a certain method is being applied.

Wachter: There is a Leschetizky-anecdote when a student received some fingerings from Leschetizky for a certain piece. Later on, another student took that same piece to a lesson, together with the fingering Leschetizky had given to the other student. Well, Leschetizky exclaimed that the fingering was all wrong, and when the student explained that he had given this fingering to another student, Leschetizky replied that that fingering was for that particular student, not for him.

Zdechlik: How can the process of learning to learn become an effective tool for learning to teach?

Holland: We must remember that we are constantly in the process of learning. I think the shortest commencement address ever given was by Kurt Vonnegut who said "Do something that terrifies you every day."

Zdechlik: We already mentioned some tools, such as observation, but are there other tools that could help our students to develop the skills of learning and teaching?

Jordan-Miller: I think modeling can be a very effective tool. Also, videotaping performances, followed by an analysis.

Gates: I agree that videotaping is a great tool. I actually let students write comments first. When students think they did well, I ask them to identify ten areas in which they can grow. Start with "You do this very well" instead of "You should to this."

Wachter: Even though there are some that think that intimidation works, I don't think it's necessary. Just from my personal experience, I had a teacher who explained something to me, but it took a demonstration by him for me to understand what he wanted.

Gates: Some students are closed to a learning experience. You need to win them over.

Wachter: With students who are resistant, you need to establish authority. You do know more and you do have more experience.

Holland: The match-up between teacher and student is important. Some students thrive in an atmosphere of a free, open environment; others prefer clear authority. Most students

fall somewhere in the middle. The ideal teacher has a range.

Zdechlik: I'm thinking of my teacher Eloise Ristad who made it clear in her group lessons that you are the one responsible for your learning. That was a terrifying experience for me.

Moore: One of the major differences between sport and music that strikes me is the lack of performance repetition in music, which is tied to performance anxiety. Athletes perform every week; musicians twice a semester. The performance element is the difference between teaching and coaching. Going back to the idea of fascination; it's really the student's job to be fascinated. But too often, once students enter colleges and start to get graded, this fascination gets diminished. Teachers need to remove barriers to fascination by focusing on performing rather than grading.

Wachter: That is very true. I know a Broadway singer who has performed a song 1,000 times. I thought to myself a thousand times! I just performed a concerto twice, and I could already tell that I felt a lot more comfortable the second time.

Moore: Well, even with a lot of performance repetitions, athletes are never comfortable. I don't think it's about becoming comfortable, but more about learning to manage fear and discomfort. Musicians only perform three times a year - they should really perform a minimum of 20 times.

Holland: I think a distinction that often gets lost is that teaching can consist of the acquisition of fundamental skills or be closer to the idea of coaching where you refine a skill set that is already in place.

Gates: The basic principles of teaching and coaching would be similar.

Moore: Yes, you can still coach beginners.

Holland: At the same time, you cannot skip to coaching without having laid the foundations through teaching first.

To conclude, all participants in this discussion agreed that successful teaching is based on mastery of the learning process, and that the fields of piano pedagogy and piano performance are closely intertwined. In fact, the two fields share many tools that facilitate improvement: observation of self and others, the element of fascination, analysis and repetition, and performance practice. Dr. Bill Moore also contributed the perspective of professional athletes by comparing and contrasting athletes and musicians in their training and performing-processes.

Chung-Ha Kim teaches applied piano, piano pedagogy, class piano, and piano ensemble at Western Illinois University. She remains active as a pianist, and most recently performed at Western Illinois University, Radford University in Virginia, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kim is an active member of MTNA and ISMTA (Illinois State Music Teachers Association), and currently serves as a state

competition coordinator for the MTNA and ISMTA High School Competitions.

Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach: Breakout Sessions

report by Chung-Ha Kim

GP3 participants followed up on the morning "living room" discussion by sharing their own thoughts and ideas on the subject in smaller breakout sessions. The element of fascination resonated with all participants. Often overlooked or forgotten, it is important for teachers to re-kindle fascination in their students. One discussion member shared the idea of asking young students to write a couple of sentences about the pieces they were playing. The art of asking the right questions was also cited as a way to spark a student's fascination. However, teachers themselves sometimes loose fascination with the teaching/learning process. As models for their students, it is crucial that teachers maintain fascination themselves. This can be achieved by taking on new challenges, such as teaching a disabled student, a new course, etc.

Although pacing was not mentioned in the morning discussion *Learning to Learn, Teaching to Teach*, teachers felt its importance, especially for beginning teachers, cannot be stressed enough, and is crucial for successful lessons. Pedagogy students need to learn how much time to spend on a certain activity, and to recognize the signs for when it's time to move on.

Videotaping your performances and/or your teaching was cited as an invaluable tool. These recordings should be followed by careful discussions and comments. Students often feel very self-conscious about watching themselves, and sometimes react negatively to comments. Teachers need to be aware of this and act with sensitivity.

Teachers also discussed performance anxiety further in these breakout sessions. Members agreed that providing more performance opportunities for students would help, as would keeping pieces for longer periods of time. One member suggested asking students to keep a certain number of so-called "Triple A" pieces in their repertoire: pieces that could be performed anytime, anywhere, for anyone. Another idea was to alter the typical approach to a studio-class in which everyone performs a piece. Instead, students could be asked to present a problem to the class that would then get solved in a group effort. This would remove the performance element from the studio class, and lower students' anxiety levels. Practice for piano students should allow them to explore a passage from many different perspectives. Instead of mindless repetitions, students need to be encouraged to use imagination and creativity in their practice. When students repeatedly return with the same mistakes, teachers need to consider whether they have taught them how to practice properly.

To conclude, it became evident during the breakout sessions that the morning "living room" discussion resonated very strongly with all participants and sparked new ideas. Participants left feeling energized and excited about the topics discussed.

Chung-Ha Kim teaches applied piano, piano pedagogy, class piano, and piano ensemble at Western Illinois University. She remains active as a pianist, and most recently performed at Western Illinois University, Radford University in Virginia, and Indiana University of Pennsylvania. Dr. Kim is an active

member of MTNA and ISMTA (Illinois State Music Teachers Association), and currently serves as a state competition coordinator for the MTNA and ISMTA High School Competitions.

From the Top: What Students Think About Their Group Piano Experience

report by Oscar Macchioni

In a time when some university administrators and colleagues are questioning the validity of including group piano in the undergraduate curriculum, we must re-examine our discipline. What we do as group piano teachers is extremely important for our students because we have the opportunity to influence the entire music student body throughout our classes. Instead of the "arm chair" approach to music, we offer a practical, hands-on performing approach, a *gestalt* of concepts students learn in other subjects. It is our responsibility to teach students keyboard skills that will be useful in their field, allowing them to understand and experience the world of music.

The motto for the 2008 GP3 Forum was "Staying Focused, Staying Fresh." Friday was dedicated to Group Piano Teaching at the College/University level under the topic, "A Fresh Look at the Goals, Standards, Outcomes and Status of Group Piano." The first panel session was titled *From The Top: What Students Think About Their Group Piano Experience*. We were given the opportunity to evaluate, from the students' perspective, what we are or are not doing right and what and how we can improve the curriculum of group piano. Using video interviews, this panel assessed what the secondary piano students thought and felt during their tenure in group piano classes. Three panelists from different institutions presented their students' opinions about group piano and their findings were quite similar.

Erin Bennett, currently pursuing a D.M.A at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (CCM), interviewed five former secondary piano students, all of whom received a grade of "A" in their final semester and completed their requirements within the past two years. Erin questioned students in four broad areas and was quite surprised at some of the answers, especially the positive comments.

1. *What are we doing right?* On the subject of scales and technique, students at the CCM liked what they were doing and expressed the importance of technique to build confidence. In repertoire and sight-reading they wanted more. On memorization, although not required, one student who chose to do so, said that it gave her confidence to memorize pieces on her own instrument. Regarding connection to theory, students felt they needed more in this area, especially intervallic relationships reinforced by harmonization, transposition and score reading. Other areas they were pleased with were performing in front of the class, performing pop tunes, patriotic songs and music education songs.
2. *In what areas do they desire more comfort?* They would like to be able to navigate the keyboard more freely with less looking down at their hands. They also felt the need to play more complex repertoire, have the ability to approach a new piece on their own; play piano accompaniments pertaining to their own instruments or voice (most instrumentalist saw it unnecessary to have a stronger background in choral- style playing), and to be able to transpose at sight.
3. *Ways we can improve*. Although students were satisfied with the curriculum they

thought quantity was emphasized over quality. They feel concepts should be better related to their overall musical education through a curriculum that includes more pedagogical accompaniments and repertoire for their instruments (i.e. Suzuki, band methods, art songs). Since most students take theory and piano concurrently, they need a better connection between both disciplines and more reinforcement than what we actually think. We need to provide better pedagogical instruction to multi-staff reading and allow more time to learn materials.

4. *Student ideas to add to the curriculum*. Students expressed a desire for more focus on jazz, composition, and improvisation. *Harmonization at the Piano* by Frackenpohl was cited as a good beginning resource for these activities. Graduate assistants felt they needed better direction in the teaching of these skills.

Erin's observations and responses to the interviews were the following:

1. No major changes are needed in the content. Overall, students liked the curriculum and saw it as an important part of their education. They saw an improvement in their playing but wish they were better now.
2. There is a need for fine-tuning to better reach the goals: quality over quantity.
3. Repertoire should be more related to students' instruments or voice type.
4. We need to emphasize more how they can use the piano throughout their lives.
5. We should talk to our colleagues in the theory department.
6. Work to achieve more consistency among graduate assistants.

The second panelist was Hanna Mayo, who is currently working towards a master's degree in piano performance at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL). This institution has approximately one hundred and twenty students who take three semesters of piano class. Hanna asked the students five broad questions and was also surprised at their positive comments.

1. *Did you learn to play the piano in this class?* Students responded positively to this question and cited the following abilities as important elements of this: coordination of hands together playing, breaking down of music for study; using appropriate fingerings and good practicing techniques, blocking of chords, and reading from lead sheets.
2. *What is your comfort level at the piano?* Students expressed comfort with their ability to read chords but not an actual piece of music. They stated they were uncomfortable playing for “legitimate” people.
3. *What do you wish you were more comfortable doing?* Students cited the following: playing in more keys; reading two clefs simultaneously; composing and improvising; playing with less tension; and being able to recognize and properly voice chords.
4. *What skills did you learn? What are you able to do right?* Students were satisfied that they could play accompaniments to their own instruments' repertoire, compose, understand music theory, think intervalically, sight-read more efficiently, and participate in ensemble performances.
5. *Are these skills valuable?* Hanna got a big and positive YES! Students think that

these skills turn students into musicians.

As a summary, Hanna pointed out the need for a unified curriculum between theory and class piano and the importance of degree specific skills and assignments to accommodate our varied pool of students.

The last panelist was Dr. Kenneth Williams, director of graduate programs in piano pedagogy and coordinator of the class piano program at Ohio State University (OSU). A doctoral student conducted the interviews for his segment.

At OSU, students elaborated on how class piano helped them with their theory classes and how important it was to learn to play from multi-staves. Demonstration from the teachers was very valuable. Activities they enjoyed the most were practical activities and playing in duets and in groups. They felt confident "thinking on the spot" and playing easy chord progressions in different keys. They did not feel confident in sight-reading. As expressed by the other panelists, students at OSU felt they needed to learn more practical skills relevant to their degrees.

In conclusion, this panel presented the students' opinions about class piano, addressing in particular the areas of content, practicality and comfort. To the teacher's surprise, no major changes were requested but they all agreed that our curriculum should include more assignments and skills related to the students' specific area of study, instrument or education. In addition, we should work more to unify the theory and class piano curriculum. These diverse panelists interviewed students who successfully passed class piano, most with "As." Perhaps in the future it would be wise to interview students who passed with a lower grade such a "C" or who fail class piano, and listen to their experiences and ideas for improvement within the curriculum.

Oscar Macchioni is an Assistant Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of Texas at El Paso. A graduate from National University of Tucumán in Argentina, he received a scholarship from the Polish Government to complete the Artist Diploma at the Krakow Academy of Music. He received his Master of Music from Louisiana State University and his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Arizona. Oscar Macchioni has performed extensively in his native Argentina, Italy, Poland, Mexico, and in the USA. In March of 2005 he presented a solo recital at the esteemed Myra Hess Memorial Concerts at the Chicago Cultural Center. Dr. Macchioni has served as a lecturer and adjudicator for the World Piano Pedagogy Conference, the MTNA Southwest Division, the Arizona Music Teachers Association and El Paso Music Teachers Association. In the summer of 2006, he was hired by the International Piano Performance Examinations Committee of Taiwan to conduct piano examinations for about 1,200 students nationwide. In 2006 he finished the installation of a $250,000 state-of-the-art piano lab at UTEP. He also enjoys research activities and presents lecture recitals at national and international conferences.

Where do we go from here? Striking Accord Among Class Piano, Theory, and Musicianship Curricula

report by Simone Gorete Machado

Mrs. Barnett, currently a Ph.D. student at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, brought to this session her perspective as a music theorist who believes in the integration between theory and piano skills while developing musicianship. She acknowledged that even though theory and musicianship curricula are similar, many times they are not working together.

For the common challenges of coordination and practicing at the piano, Mrs. Barnett suggested teachers listen to each student's individual needs and have them talk through the process, set personal goals and combine mind, fingers and ear. She also highly recommended singing with your students, especially movable do. Mrs. Barnett classified the necessary piano skills for college-level theory and musicianship courses as basic, core and more advanced. The basic piano skills include "confirming the key" and harmonic progression/figured bass, which can also be used as a warm-up. The focus should be in the chord function, played in "keyboard style," and the student should always be capable of transposing.

Transposition, melody harmonization and "sing and play" were cited as core functional skills. According to the presenter, in order to transpose, one should be able to do the following:

- Analyze (written and aloud)
- Sing (all the voices individually)
- Play as written
- Transpose (bass line, add soprano)
- And above all: Think in the key!

For harmonization she suggested using tunes you could sing. She chose, for the presentation, a sample melody from Roig-Francolí, Harmony in Concert. The student should combine the analysis of the structure of the phrase with its scale degrees, pitches of repose and goal points, and identify which cadences would work best. She classified chord functions as follows:

- Structural: I, V, vii dim.
- Cadential/Predominant: IV, ii
- Prolongation: IV, vi, iii

Her third and favorite of the core skills was "sing and play." She suggested it helps to do this when confirming the key, either by playing one hand at a time or while blocking the chords. This should be done slowly and without singing, however, when the student has trouble coordinating the hands together. On the handout, she presented two extreme examples to be used as "sing and play," taken from Berkowitz's *A new approach to sight*

singing, 4th Ed. The first example, with the melody in bass clef, had a simpler accompaniment with blocked chords at the piano. The next example featured an alto-clef melody and a more active piano accompaniment.

Mrs. Barnett considered the final skills, sight-reading and open-score reading, to be more advanced and this is where she included improvisation. Some of the ideas she shared for improvisation included adding parts to the melody while having to play always from the beginning as a "growing melody," or trying to identify the scale degrees of the melody. She recommended chorales and hymns for harmonic reading and chamber music activities for rhythmic reading experience. Regarding open-score reading, she suggested classical symphonies and string quartets as good examples to use with students; especially Haydn string quartets that tend to have standard chord progressions. The texture of 20th century works by composers such as Stravinsky and band scores would also work well.

At the end, she mentioned helpful websites and software:

- Big Ears www.ossmann.com/bigears/
- MacGAMUT
- G Major Music Theory www.gmajormusictheory.org
- MusicTheory.net
- International Music Score Library Project www.IMSLP.org

And also recommended the following resources:

- Berkowitz: *A new approach to Sight Singing*
- Butterworth: *400 Aural Training Exercises from the Masters*
- Ottman: *Music for Sight Singing*
- Theory texts: Roig-Francolí, Laitz, Koska & Payne, Marvin & Clendinning,
- Aldwell & Schacter, Gauldin
- Bach chorales (reduced or open score)
- Texts: Theory, Solfege, Sight Singing, Class Piano Methods and Anthologies

Simone Gorete Machado has won many prestigious Brazilian competitions, the first one being at the age of fifteen. Among others, she won the Jovens Solistas competition in Sao Paulo in 1991, resulting in a performance with the Sao Paulo State Symphony Orchestra. In 2003, at the Green Valley Concert Association piano competition, she was awarded the Second Prize and was also selected by the public to receive the Audience Prize. Ms. Machado holds a DMA in Piano Performance from the University of Arizona, where she studied under Dr. Paula Fan and taught piano classes under the supervision of Dr. Lisa Zdechlik. She received her MM in Piano Performance and a Graduate Professional Diploma from the University of Hartford in Connecticut. She currently serves on the faculty at the University of Sao Paulo in Brazil.

Technology Based, Online Curriculum for Group Piano

report by Hannah Mayo

In this session Dr. Susanna Garcia and Dr. Chan Kiat Lim introduced a new online curriculum developed by them at the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. E-novative Piano is a method aimed at promoting artistry and musicality through comfort and ease at the piano. This curriculum encourages holistic learning by integrating the aural, visual, kinesthetic, and intellectual aspects of learning. Concepts are presented in a variety of contexts and skills are acquired through repetition and reinforcement. An array of teaching materials is used to accomplish the holistic learning goal. Issues such as technique and sight-reading are presented in short video clips. The online method also uses MIDI and MP3 audio files, animated instructional slideshows, customized software drills, repertoire, assignments, technical drills, informational documents, and web links to information like composers and musical terms that may appear on repertoire documents. This curriculum is aimed at the students of the millennial generation as it incorporates an intense use of online materials.

The *E-novative Piano* curriculum is meant only to replace or supplement a textbook, not to replace the teacher. Group piano instructors are still necessary for providing reinforcement of specific processes and instructions, providing immediate feedback on the technique of each student, and, of course, providing praise for a job well done. The curriculum contains such a variety of materials that an instructor also has new responsibilities to help students learn how to navigate the system and use the materials.
To better understand what and how these materials work, the presenters demonstrated many of the items shown below from the first "block." (A "block" is a specific test area. Therefore "block one" is the list of items and materials included on the first test.)

Learning and Teaching Goals

- Posture at the Piano
- Keyboard Topography
- Interval Basics
- Staff Basics

MATERIALS

Videos

- *Hand Shape* promotes a natural and relaxed hand shape.
- *Keyboard Topography* describes the visual use of the black key groups.
- *Posture at the Piano* helps students find a comfortable distance from the piano and emphasizes correct posture.
- *Tone Production* reviews the physical reasons for which warm tones and harsh tones are produced.

Getting Started: Finger Number Drills and Repertoire

13. Black Key Repertoire This folder contains black key pieces in a variety of styles that are taught by finger numbers and are all in one position. They also contain MIDI accompaniments for students to play along with.
14. Black Key and White Key Finger Number Drills These drills indicate the starting position and are much like the black key finger number repertoire.
15. Two Pentatonic Tunes: *Auld Lang Syne* and *Swing Low Sweet Chariot* These two tunes use three staffs and contain a hand cross. Instructions on the hand crossing and accompaniment come with these pieces.

Getting Started: Repertoire

- *Ghost Dance* This piece is a traditionally notated white key piece that primarily uses the "A-C-E" groups.
- *Steps of the Lantern Boy* This piece is a traditionally notated black key piece that contains hand crosses.

Getting Started: Tunes for Aural Playback

- This folder contains instructions for playing songs by ear. There is also a folder with MIDI files of black key tunes: *Amazing Grace, Motherless Child*, and *Oh! Susannah*.

Getting Started: Improvisation

11. This folder has three improvisation activities. For the first activity, students are asked to improvise a phrase to the antecedent phrase played on the MIDI file. The student is asked to match the rhythm of the antecedent phrase, end on tonic, and use black keys. The next activity pairs two students and one provides the antecedent and the other student provides the consequent. Then they switch. The last activity is a Blues Improvisation in which the rhythm options are given and the students arrange the rhythms in a black sixteen-bar worksheet.

Getting Started: Interval Reading Drills

- This folder contains two documents with reduced staff interval reading drills. Also included is a slideshow that drills the student on logical fingering choices for intervals from seconds to fifths. And tactile interval drills that instruct students to play various intervals in succession.

Staff Basics

- This is a slideshow that explains the relationship of the music staff to the keyboard. The slideshow also shows the A-C-E groups, clef landmarks, and the relationship of the alto clef to the grand staff. Also included are visual explanations of

intervals from seconds to octaves.

Flash Cards

- This unit contains three sets of flash cards. Note Flash cards contain notes ranging from three ledger lines below the staff and three ledger lines above the staff. The A-C-E group flash cards reinforce the A-C-E groups learned from the staff basics slideshow. The alto clef flash cards drill notes on the alto clef. The notes drilled do not extend past an octave from Middle C.

At the conclusion of the session, Drs. Garcia and Lim passed around a sign-up sheet for those in the audience wishing to give the curriculum a trial run. Readers with an interest in this project may contact them directly via email.

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Hannah Mayo is currently working towards a Master's Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette. She also holds a Bachelor's Degree in Piano Pedagogy from UL Lafayette.

Staying Fresh: A Pedagogical Cyberspace Cruise to YouTube, Piano Flicks and the Internet

report by Teresa Sumpter

In this presentation Dr. Carol Gingerich, Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy at the University of West Georgia, shared her experiences getting acquainted with Cyberspace as well as the Internet projects she utilizes with students in her piano pedagogy classes. Dr. Gingerich first became interested in YouTube when she was preparing a PowerPoint presentation for a lecture-recital and needed an excerpt from a Jane Austen movie that she subsequently found on YouTube. As she became more fascinated with this online resource she began speaking to students and colleagues about it and realized what an important resource it is for her students in their daily lives. YouTube, she discovered, was normally the first place her students would look to find a recording and it was an excellent source for archival performances of great artists such as Vladimir Horowitz. When she asked her students if they wished to work with YouTube during class assignments the answer was a resounding yes.

Many people are suspicious of YouTube and dread using it. Dr. Gingerich stated these attitudes are well founded. Before beginning her class projects, Dr. Gingerich consulted with the Director of Technology at her university who agreed to help her and assured her that the process would not be difficult. In reality it took three months of preparation and the overcoming of many obstacles before the projects were ready to present to her class.

Cyberspace Projects and Pedagogical Objectives

Dr. Gingerich's Internet projects allowed her and her students to learn about YouTube and the Internet together. She utilized three class assignments: YouTube Analysis, Piano Movie Report, and Internet Article Critique. There were three pedagogical objectives for these projects:

1. *Develop students' critical thinking skills
2. Give students an opportunity to learn something new and gain access to a fresh source of information while learning a new skill herself
3. Motivate and inspire students

*Dr. Gingerich utilized the four steps in the Critical Thinking Process created by Dr. Stephen Brookfield of Columbia University with her students to help them understand the importance of questioning what they read on the Internet. These four steps are as follows:

1. Identify assumptions
2. Check accuracy and validity
3. Take alternative perspectives
4. Take informed actions

YouTube Analysis

For this assignment each student gave a 10-minute presentation that showed, analyzed, evaluated and reported on two pedagogical clips related to class topics that were found on YouTube. The first clip needed to be a bad one that demonstrated a poor performance, while the second illustrated an excellent performance. Dr. Gingerich shared with the audience three of the student projects submitted for this class.

The first student, Laura, compared a professional recording of Horowitz performing Chopin's *Ballade No. 1 in G Minor* Opus 23 with an amateur's recording of Chopin's *Waltz in A minor*. In her presentation Laura noted the inconsistencies in tempo, rubato, and pedaling in the amateur performance.

The second student, Brittany, decided to listen to two unknown performers as she wanted to aurally discern which performer was the professional and which was the amateur. She listened to Wilhelm Kempff performing the first movement of Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*. She reported on the classical style characteristics of the performance such as elegant touch, singing tone, and excellent balance.

The third student, Yaeju, focused on Romantic style interpretation and discussed the importance of accuracy versus convincing interpretation. She listened to an inexperienced performer playing Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C-sharp Minor*. This performer, who was still working on accuracy, was unable to convey flexibility because he was too focused on playing the correct notes. She then listened to another performance of Rachmaninoff's music and found that there were a few wrong notes but the music was in the correct style.

Piano Movie Report

In this assignment students were asked to give a visual and verbal synopsis, description, and evaluation of a movie about a composer, pedagogue, or performer's life. Students' choices had to be approved by Dr. Gingrich. Students were allowed to use clips from YouTube, a DVD, a downloaded movie from a website, or create their own CD of highlights. She made a point of emphasizing to her students the need for them to drill their technology to be certain it worked, because technological proficiency would affect their grade. This project was to be 10-15 minutes in length.

The first student, Laura, chose a pedagogical clip from the movie *Shine*. She was surprised that the students in the movie did not perform by memory. This allowed Dr. Gingerich to explain that the movie is set in Australia where the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music curriculum is generally used, which does not require memorization.

The second student, Brittany, chose the movie *The Pianist*. In this movie one hears the same piece, Chopin's *Nocturne in C-sharp Minor*, Op. 27 three times, which allowed the student to compare three different renditions.

Internet Article Critique

The third assignment was to review an article from an Internet journal regarding a topic discussed in class. Dr. Gingerich used this assignment to educate her students about quality online information. Students were asked to give an aural report of 10 minutes in length that included:

1. Description of contents

2. Critique of: a) Scholarly value of research sources b) Author's credentials c) Author's writing style d) Journal quality (peer reviewed, single editor, etc.)

This assignment provided her undergraduate students with their first opportunity to critique an online article. She expected a more in-depth discussion from her graduate students, who were also taking a research methodology course.

Further Research

The Internet can be a useful tool in teaching musical style, a learning objective in most pedagogy courses. Gingerich offered the following suggestions for additional assignments:

16. Revisit sites and articles and create more specific analytic questions related to topics discussed in class.
17. Assign the website, article, or movie and create specific questions pertaining to class topics.
18. Have students create a set of standard questions they could use for life-long learning in evaluation of all media information. These questions would include a critique of the author's credentials as well as the quality of the journal in which the article was found.

Conclusion

Cyberspace can provide an excellent source of motivation for both teachers and students. Dr. Gingerich cautioned the audience to save the YouTube performances they find because there is a great deal of turnover on what is available on the internet and a clip found one day may be gone the next. She also cautioned that YouTube could be easily overused. In addition, YouTube clips are often hard to hear and not all the examples are good.

Teresa Sumpter is currently an Assistant Professor of Music at Mars Hill College in Mars Hill, North Carolina where she teaches Applied Piano, Group Piano, and Theory. She has earned a PhD in Music Education with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma in addition to a Master of Business Administration from West Virginia University, and a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Ball State University.

Discussion Groups: Brainstorming the Group Piano Experience

report by Thomas Swenson

The goals and objectives in teaching group piano in a college or university setting can be unique to each institution. While some group keyboard requirements can be completed in a single year, others extend to six or more semesters. Some classes meet only once each week, while others may meet up to three times. Given these extremes, a number of skills continue to guide our instructional objectives such as harmonization, improvisation, repertoire, sight-reading, score-reading, technique, accompanying, and working with lead sheets and popular styles. These components we associate as functional keyboard skills.
Composers, pedagogues, teachers, and piano pedagogy students met in small groups on the first day of GP3 2008 to define each of the skills mentioned above. Additionally, the groups were charged with evaluating the importance of each skill, share competencies for first and second year courses, and discuss additional ideas. This article summarizes the notes and reports from each of the sixteen meetings. The demarcation of these skills should not indicate that overlaps do not occur or that there are not additional skills taught in many curricula.

These small group meetings served mainly as a springboard for further inquiry. The Music Teachers National Association has initiated a web-based discussion board (URL no longer active) on these topics for which you are invited to read and share your own thoughts.

Accompanying

The skill of accompanying involves the ability to actively collaborate with another musician (or group). For the beginning keyboard student accompanying may involve providing simple harmonic support through the use of block chords. More advanced levels include accurately following notated scores and the development of additional harmonization and improvisatory skills. As accompanying skills improve, students acquire the ability to lead, to follow, and contribute to truly expressive performances. Accompanying is a standard skill on most proficiency exams.

Some of the objectives of the first year include being able to play vocal warm-ups and maintain a steady tempo using various accompaniment styles (left-hand or two-handed). First year students should also have the ability to create two-handed accompaniments from lead-sheets (assuming a subservient role), and be comfortable using primary chords to accompany traditional songs. Second year programs utilize more complicated left-hand patterns, such as a jump bass (stride), and composing/improvising introductory material. Students in their second year are usually challenged with more complex notated accompaniments and requested to demonstrate greater musicality.

Ideas shared in the discussions included the importance of preparing students to lead "sing-alongs." Students can be encouraged to maintain eye contact with the singers, and speak and give directions while maintaining background patterns ("comping"). Also,

some teachers assist their students in simplifying and "faking" accompaniments.

Many participants did not feel that a two-year program sufficiently prepares students to a functional level. As such, a recommendation was made that a third year, especially for vocalists, would help rectify this deficiency.

Harmonization

Harmonization was defined as the ability to "realize" music when provided with a melodic structure. Harmonization encourages a number of component skills: the ability to audiate, anticipate harmonic changes, evaluate effective performances through listening, and develop coordination skills. As students harmonize they integrate aural, theoretical, and technical abilities. Participants mentioned that harmonization enhances basic musicianship and supports skills such as arranging, accompanying, songwriting, composition, and improvisation. Knowing and understanding harmonic progressions assists students in hearing textures and the architecture of a piece. This, in turn, may provide insight into shaping and expression. Additionally, an understanding of the harmonic structure of a piece may aid in memorization, encouraging students to logically encode music patterns. Supporting applications were discussed with regards to elementary and choral music educators, church musicians, those in the business of music, and instrumentalists.

First-year students are often exposed to three types of harmonization: chord symbols, Roman numerals, and melodies lacking any type of harmonic notation. Students commonly demonstrate harmonization using diatonic chords (in all major and minor keys), playing harmonized sequences, and performing simple traditional melodies with various styles of harmonic support. Finding a balance between assigning pieces with a large number of chords and the number of transposition keys was frequently mentioned. Second year programs usually include secondary dominants, more use of seventh chords, and modulations. While many keys signatures continue to be explored in the second year, assignments are sometimes tailored according to the primary instrument of each student.

Improvisation

Improvisation takes many forms and guises. The participants identified improvisation as anything done at the keyboard without a manuscript; therefore, not tied to reading. This definition clearly delineates it from the skills of harmonization (where the student is provided with a melody) and lead-sheet realization (where the student is provided with a melody along with chord symbols). The fact that improvisation is often not included on proficiency exams should not imply that it is not a valuable skill.

Improvisation activities offer students invaluable opportunities for creative exploration at the keyboard. As an "icebreaker" or introduction of new concepts, improvisation can be especially effective. Alternating between reading and non-reading activities was a noted teaching strategy used by one participant. Specific concepts mentioned for which

improvisation was useful in classes included: modal experimentation, pentatonic scales, drilling articulations, phrase organization, and working on concepts such as form, dynamics, and harmonic progressions. Improvisation allows students to demonstrate the ability to organize musical thought and create musical responses to others. This skill may even enhance musicianship and appreciation for notated music.

In the first year, improvisation may be geared towards inspiring creativity and exploration. Second-year classes tend to use improvisation to acquire, reinforce, and demonstrate skills.

While much of the improvisation used in piano classes is grounded in traditional tonal patterns, further development can encourage extremely creative compositions. Several participants mentioned setting parameters for improvising. Further clarification on these parameters would be useful as this discussion continues.

Repertoire

The topic of repertoire in the group piano curriculum contained a great disparity of ideas. Beginning with a definition that included only standard classical literature, many participants additionally incorporate accompaniments, chamber/ensemble music, patriotic tunes, and popular literature. The latter group referred to any music written on two staves that was "meaningful" and featured structure, phrasing, and other compositional elements. It seems clear that defining this skill as clearly as possible would be important as discussions of the objectives of group piano for music majors continue.

Like the other components, repertoire was considered a fundamental element in group piano curricula as it integrated many of the other skills commonly taught in these classes. In addition, students are challenged to be musical and stylistic in these pieces. These elements are of utmost importance to music education majors, as they will later be shaping future generations of musicians. For other music degree candidates, the application of music theory to the keyboard, through actual piano literature, was considered essential.

Questions regarding repertoire included the leveling of pieces, the number of pieces to study and master/polish, the end result in learning these pieces (jury, informal recital, class performance, or a grade), the use of solo versus ensemble music, and whether memorization was required. All participants agreed that a culmination performance of some sort is recommended at the end of a term, semester, or academic year although debate ensued on memorization requirements.

The definition for repertoire tended to expand as the curriculum progressed. Rhythm, meter, and phrasing were usually emphasized in one-year programs. Two-year programs tended to also include ensemble music and accompaniments, with additional attention to musicality, stylistic considerations, and connections to other music courses.

Score-Reading

Score-reading was defined as the ability to play exercises or excerpts with two or more parts (generally for voices or instruments, other than a keyboard instrument). The groups recommended that two-part choral score excerpts be introduced sometime around the third semester. By the fourth semester score-reading of four parts was standard. The participants in these discussions commonly introduced instrumental score reading in the alto and tenor clefs during the third semester. Additional transposition (instruments that do not read at concert pitch) often occurred in the fourth semester. Sight-reading of two parts was common among the instructors during the fourth semester.

The skill of score-reading seems to assist in students' ability to analyze harmonies and harmonic progressions. Reading skills, especially by interval, are reinforced in this activity. Score reading is especially important for students preparing for the Praxis Exam, given to most music education majors.

Technique

The topic of technique as a separate "skill" summoned up some lively conversation. Three interesting categories or perspectives on technique emerged: 1) exercises designed to build strength (and, I assume, coordination and thought patterns), 2) "formulas" to be used with current and future repertoire, and 3) developing awareness of the physical anatomy which can assist or hinder the ability to use the keyboard. Scales, arpeggios, and other technical requirements are often grouped together under the term technique in group or private lessons. The potential misconception of grouping scales, arpeggios, and other technical requirements could be that students begin thinking that these are technique, rather than opportunities to build or practice technique.

Obviously, developing a healthy technical foundation was a desire of all participants, although the reports did not define how to develop this in a group situation.

The topic of scales elicited much conversation regarding teaching strategies and requirements. While playing scales hands together rarely occurs in repertoire, some participants voiced that doing this is not only motivational for many students but may promote good coordination and exercise the brain. Other instructors did not see the need to have non-piano-majors spend the time and effort on this activity.

Sight-Reading

This skill was defined as the ability to either quickly, or immediately, perform a reasonable rendition of a new piece. Sight-reading requires not only the basic identification of pitches, rhythms, patterns, shapes, tonalities and meters, but also the ability to recognize melodic and harmonic tendencies. As a skill it should be developed so that students are given very little or no preparation time before playing. One reporter, Kevin Richmond, succinctly wrote: "The goal of sight reading is to train the ear to hear

what the eyes see and to be able to communicate that confidently with the hands." Sight-reading is a skill that teaches one how to cope and survive in performance situations with little time for preparation. More experience seems to impart greater skill.

Some discussion ensued on the balance between the quantity of sight-reading materials and evaluations, and the actual quality of the performances. Consistency and a systematic leveling seem to develop this skill. Drilling isolated components idiomatic to sight-reading, as well as composition assignments (distributed to the entire class), are effective ways to increase the quantity of materials.

One teacher shared the idea of preparing two-measure examples and putting them in a bowl for students to pick up as they enter the classroom. These examples may be related to current concepts or something forthcoming. Students do not feel overwhelmed when these examples are so short. This idea is similar to displaying patterns ("flashes") to the class, which has been used effectively by many instructors. Patterns might begin with only three-notes but grow in length and complexity as the class advances.

First year students should be able to sight-read simple melodies using a lead sheet and adding harmonies, recognize blocked and broken chords, recognize scalar figures and sequences within one octave, notice repetition, and accurately perform dotted rhythms in keys up to two accidentals. Second year courses can be tailored to the particular degree plans of the individual students.

Lead Sheets and Pop Styles

This skill was defined as the ability to accompany, in different styles, a notated melody that includes chord symbols such as those found in a fake book. This skill is in contrast to those used in harmonizing a melody, where chord symbols may not be provided. Pop music was generally considered to be easily accessible to those without formal music training, and familiar to a large segment of the population through aural and rote approaches. A variety of styles fall in this category, such as rock, blues, older standards, jazz, film music, video game music, and contemporary church music songs, among others.

The importance of playing popular styles of music from fake books in the group piano curriculum stems from the integration of a number of important skills beyond piano technique and coordination. Music theory, harmonization, aural discrimination, and rhythmic abilities are all being used and developed in playing these types of pieces. Musicians with strong skills in this area are able to utilize them in music education fields and are marketable in a number of other careers. Some careers for which possessing this ability are of benefit include jazz band directors, accompanists, choral directors, church musicians, elementary music educators, vocalists/singers, music therapists, and those who want to play for musical theater. Ironically, it was noted that many piano majors often lack this skill due to the fact that they are exempted from functional piano classes.

In a one-year program discussion participants recommended students should be able to

play a simple melody accompanied with primary and secondary diatonic chords. They suggested further development of this skill take place in second-year courses through playing from actual fake books. Providing students with opportunities to play in groups or combos allows them to rotate between being the soloist or the accompanying ensemble ("comping" or "vamping"). Instructors differed on the length of time a student should have to study/practice before being evaluated: anywhere from one minute to one week.

Some additional ideas offered by participants included the study of chord voicing, which may add to the students' appreciation of this skill. Yet it was also mentioned that many instructors have a difficult time getting beyond right-hand melody and left-hand chords given the time constraints in their present curriculums. One innovative idea invited students to bring a recording of a popular piece to class. The students would then collectively listen to the piece, determine the chord progression, and explore suitable keyboard accompaniment styles appropriate to their skill level.

Summary

The small group discussions at the 2008 National Group Piano and Piano Pedagogy Forum encouraged instructors of class piano to define important skills, and share ideas regarding curricula and teaching strategies. The various reports point to the idea that keyboard classes might be seen as a "hub" where music theory, style, and musicianship are integrated. Students are requested to mesh together concepts from a variety of classes and bring these ideas to life through the keyboard. We, ourselves, are a diverse group of committed teachers hoping to influence a variety of students pursuing unique careers in music. As committed educators we are passionate about music, the piano, and learning. In these classes we provide students with a foundation for a multiplicity of careers in music. In providing a solid introduction to the keyboard, we guide our students to use the piano as a tool to create, recreate, understand, and teach music.

Thomas Swenson is Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the Community Music School at Salem College. He completed his Ph.D. in Music Education with emphasis in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. He has also studied at Minnesota State University (Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance), the State University of New York at Stony Brook, Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (Master of Music in Piano Performance). He has taught piano, piano pedagogy, and music theory at the North Carolina School of the Arts, the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, North Carolina A&T State University, and the University of Oklahoma. Thomas has performed, adjudicated, and presented throughout the country including the MTNA National Conference, the Symposium of World Music, the National MENC Convention, and many state and local associations. He has presented topics relating to practicing, the role of parents and caregivers in music lessons, and adult piano students (his dissertation topic). Thomas is currently a vice president for the North Carolina Music Teachers Association.

Wrap-up Session

report by Adam Clark

Dr. Moore is a performance psychology specialist whose work with professional, Olympic, collegiate, and elite junior athletes helps individuals and teams perform at optimal levels under competitive stress. His presentation brought together a number of issues addressed throughout the forum and offered a variety of ideas and calls for continued education and growth in the field of piano pedagogy. Some areas discussed included teaching technique and improvisation, bridging the gap between pedagogy and performance, and various aspects of performance psychology.

Technique and Improvisatino

Dr. Moore opened by recalling two breakout sessions he had attended: one dealing with technique and the other with improvisation. With regard to technique, he encouraged teachers to clearly define the physical movements of piano technique and how these movements relate to a particular result. In sports the relationship between movement and a desired result is very clear, but in piano the connection is often vague and overlooked.

With regard to improvisation, he suggested that it be introduced to students right away. Pianists are often perfection-driven in personality, and improvisation is an excellent way to break down this barrier. It allows the teacher to emphasize, early on, that mistakes are okay.

Pedagogy, Performance, and Practice

Dr. Moore went on to recognize that an apparent divide has emerged between those who are pedagogy specialists and those who might be considered artist/teachers. Although the conversation was somewhat general, posing more questions than answers, he did emphasize that these groups should not exist in two separate camps and that both must find a way to come together and establish some sort of a middle-ground.

He also emphasized that it is important for all teachers to keep playing. A fundamental motivation for choosing a piano-centered life is a deep love for playing and a deep love for music. This joy can be rediscovered through a commitment to regular practice and performance. Not only will this help nurture and perhaps rekindle a love for the instrument, but it will inevitably help in teaching a variety of skills to students as well.

Recognizing the time constraints on most teachers, he suggested practicing in forty-five-minute blocks. Setting time limits on a practice session will actually refine practice technique and increase work efficiency. A larger, say four-hour block of practice time, might often be unfocused and unproductive. Taking a ten-minute break is a sufficient amount of time for separating forty-five-minute practice blocks.

Performance Psychology/Literature Review

A large portion of Dr. Moore's presentation focused on books related to learning and performance psychology. The following titles were mentioned:

- *The Inner Game of Tennis* by Tim Gallwey
- *Psycho-Cybernetics* by Maxwell Maltz (the original paperback edition, not the 2000 edition)
- *Punished by Rewards* by Alfie Kohn

The majority of his discussion centered on Tim Gallwey's *The Inner Game of Tennis*, emphasizing, in particular, Gallwey's depiction of a Self One and Self Two. Self One refers to conscious awareness (the "thinker") while Self Two is a "parallel processing system" that functions below the conscious level. One example used to illustrate the interaction between these two was the process of getting out of a car. While it is a seemingly simple act, it can in fact be broken down into a complex series of intricate steps. This sort of complexity, however, is not handled in a conscious and cognitive way (Self One), but rather is executed automatically at the subconscious level (Self Two).

As related to piano performance, Self One must learn to trust Self Two. Problems typically arise when Self One wants to control Self Two, a scenario that might be described as "over-analysis." Self Two must learn to "let go." This struggle between Self One and Self Two reflects the performer's need for courage, a key point in Dr. Moore's presentation earlier in the forum, *Coaching for Performance: Strategies for Helping Pianists Get Out What They Have in Them*.

Another notable discussion in his overview of literature was derived from his own publications and workshops relating to improved golf performance. Activities mentioned included describing a best and worst performance scenario, writing a detailed visualization script of an ideal performance, and keeping a performance journal. He emphasized that a journal is often the most effective tool in helping with performance anxiety.

Conclusion/Question and Answer Session

The session concluded with a period of Questions and Answers. Questions and summaries of Dr. Moore's responses are included below:

1. **Your PGA tour client: What makes him an amazing teacher?** *(Dr. Moore had referred earlier to a client he considered to be both an amazing golfer and an amazing teacher)*

- He has a great sense of the history of the golf swing, and its evolution.
- He has studied the great players.
- He can discuss the modern swing.

- Being around him makes me a better person.
- His character and approach to life are admirable.
- He is fascinated by teaching.

2. **From a physical aspect, do you have any ideas on what we should be doing for our bodies?**

19. Considering that golfers are in amazing shape, a worthwhile study would be looking into the holistic aspect of piano playing, such as the role of nutrition, core strength, sleep, etc.
20. Along these lines, Dr. Moore noted that the military has done numerous tests regarding the effects of sleep on performance. What they discovered is that the amount of sleep one gets two nights before an important activity or event is more significant in affecting performance than the sleep one gets the night before.

3. **Is there anything we can do to improve group teaching?**

- Be fascinated by it and observe it.
- It would be beneficial to observe the Duke basketball coach. There is a peer leadership component to the team. The coach rarely raises his voice. It is the teammates who primarily do the rebuking, and it is the group itself who eventually leads.
- It is also important to fight the right battles and to do so consistently and early on.

4. **In Daniel Levitin's book, *This is Your Brain on Music*, he mentions the "10,000-hour rule," which is basically that it takes that much practice time to become stellar at an instrument. What do you think of this statement?**

- Dr. Moore did not agree with this statement. Believing in multiple intelligences, he stated that some people can lock a feeling or pattern in right away and do not require a set number of repetitions. Talent is an "X" factor. One can nurture it or screw it up.
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This session was intriguing and thought-provoking. Many left feeling inspired, energized, and eager to bring a number of thoughts and ideas back to their own studios, classrooms, pianos, and lives. Publication and presentation information for Dr. Moore can be found on his website, (URL no longer active). He may be contacted by email at Bill@MoorePerform.com.

Adam Clark teaches applied piano, class piano, and piano pedagogy at Hope College in Holland, Michigan. He holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Piano Performance from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music (Cognate area in Piano Pedagogy), while his Bachelors and Masters degrees were completed at the University of California at Santa Barbara and the University of Texas at Austin, respectively. He is an active soloist and chamber musician and has performed to great acclaim throughout the United States, as well as in Belgium and Italy. He has also lectured on diverse topics ranging from technical and musical development to twentieth century pedagogical literature.

A Pedagogy of Authenticity: Creating an Open Dialogue with Secondary Piano Students

by Laura Amoriello

What began several years ago as casual conversation with my secondary piano students has become a fascinating inquiry into the teaching and learning process. The more I spoke with secondary pianists about their struggles with piano study, the more I understood the complexity of this population. Learning a secondary instrument was made more difficult by ensuing doubt and anxiety combined with reluctance, on the part of many students, to meet this requirement. How could I communicate with students in order to make this experience more meaningful to them?

From Reflection to Action

Exploring literature in authenticity in adult education provided me with pertinent questions related to understanding students' perspectives. How do students perceive what we say and do? Are our words and actions helping them learn? How does content bear significance to their everyday lives? I found that dialogue in the classroom created an open atmosphere of trust in which students felt free to express their thoughts. In turn, greater freedom contributed to improved student performance.

With inspiration from relevant literature, I began collecting anonymous weekly surveys to identify critical classroom issues. I welcomed dialogue in class, and, with inspiration from colleagues, utilized online discussion boards. Midterm and final course evaluations and my own journal were additional means of data collection. Student comments pointed toward a connection between authenticity and performance. I was compelled to develop my reflections from these findings into a course structure in which an authentic instructional approach was complemented by open, honest dialogue.

Defining Authenticity

Cranton defines authenticity as the expression of the genuine self in community with others. This includes demonstrating consistency between words and actions, encouraging authenticity in others, and critically reflecting on our nature, preferences, values, and past experiences. According to Cranton, good teaching is good communication, and good communication occurs only when authenticity is present.[1] Palmer agrees: “We can speak to the teacher within our students only when we are on speaking terms with the teacher within ourselves.”[2]

Do we effectively communicate with our students? Do our actions consistently agree with our words? Do we encourage students to be authentic? Do we critically reflect on our practice regularly? For the purposes of this article, I define authenticity as a multi-dimensional research area in adult education focusing on three topics - self-awareness, awareness of students, and fostering student responsibility. At the end of each section,

practical suggestions are offered for application of these concepts to the collegiate piano class. Concepts apply specifically to adult students, but adjustments may be made for those of a younger age.

Essentially, an authentic approach aims to promote a supportive community in the classroom through critical reflection on students' interests and needs. It also encourages self-reflection on how our actions as teachers might foster a more meaningful learning process. My intent is not to reach any certain conclusions regarding authenticity's place in music pedagogy, but to offer insight into related literature and to support a pedagogical perspective that seeks to equalize the contributions of student and teacher.

Self-Awareness

An authentic approach to teaching demands awareness of oneself as both a person and a teacher. What are our values, preferences, and beliefs? What are our strengths and weaknesses? Self-awareness includes being genuine and open in our communication with students and sharing our sense of self in the classroom. I will never forget a former teacher who shared his struggles with learning disabilities on the first day of class. Not only did my classmates and I hold a high regard for his honesty, we felt comfortable knowing our own difficulties in the course would be met with patience and understanding.

The literature in authenticity encourages educators to reflect critically on their perceptions of teaching. What was your view of teachers as a student? How did this evolve as you became a teacher? What about your personality makes you a teacher? What are your teaching strengths and weaknesses? How do you relate to students? Such inquiries, I believe, are essential for improving practice. If our goal is to communicate effectively with others, understanding ourselves is the first step toward accomplishing it.

Practical Suggestions

- Take time to reflect on yourself as a person and teacher. What are your strengths, weaknesses, preferences, values, and beliefs? What are your views on teaching, and how did those views develop? What experiences shaped your views?
- Share your sense of self with students. This includes not only expressing your personality, but openly sharing your learning struggles and triumphs. How did you experience piano study? What obstacles did you encounter, and how did you overcome them?
- Be mindful of maintaining agreement between words and actions in the classroom.
- Consider keeping a teaching journal to reflect on critical pedagogical issues that arise daily. When pressed for time, jot notes on lesson plans and write with more detail later.

Awareness of Students

Awareness of students' needs and characteristics as learners, including strengths,

weaknesses, learning styles, motivations, and experiences, is essential to the pursuit of authentic teaching. Brookfield stated, "The most important knowledge skillful teachers need to do good work is a constant awareness of how students are experiencing their learning and perceiving teachers' actions."[3] When I began collecting anonymous surveys in class, I was fascinated by students' perceptions. While one student felt an explanation of five-finger patterns was the most helpful portion of the class, another felt it was the most confusing. While I was certain a new ensemble piece would motivate students, some commented that it was difficult to follow. I learned from this data that, while it was certainly impossible to inspire all students at all times, I increased my chances of reaching students individually by diversifying my instruction as much as possible.

Practical strategies are often viewed as potential solutions for teaching problems. Yet sometimes teachers are tempted to fit "the square peg of a best practice gleaned from a manual into the round hole of our classroom."[4] In other words, context and strategy must match; practical solutions are not always helpful if applied without an awareness of students' views or needs.

It is easy to lose sight of what students need when we are consumed by what we *think* they need. We know teaching to be inherently more complex than the use of any strategy. If I were to determine how effective an instructor might be, I'd begin by asking the students. Students know a great deal about their learning needs, strengths, and weaknesses. When we combine a regard for that knowledge with our own expertise, requirements, and course goals, we create a high learning potential in a dynamic atmosphere of collaboration.

Practical Suggestions

- Collect regular, anonymous data from students regarding their experience in class. Sample questions might ask what the most engaging, confusing, helpful, or surprising aspects of the class were.[5]
- Share this information with students. Let them know you are aware of their views. Make any changes to the class you feel are appropriate and beneficial. Students respect a genuine concern for their progress and an instructor's passion for improving practice.
- Consider experimenting with student journals or online discussion boards in the course. There is much students can teach us about their learning processes by expressing themselves in writing. I have acquired a great amount of sobering information from students' practice journals that has allowed me to address these issues directly in class.
- Maintain consistent, open dialogue with students about their experience in the class, both individually and collectively. Students appreciate their views occupying a place in even the most minor course decisions, and welcoming their opinions facilitates commitment to the class.

Fostering Student Responsibility

An authentic teaching approach aims to increase students' involvement by developing an awareness of their needs as learners. However, it by no means insinuates adoption of a consumer mentality, in which faculty pander to students' search for a satisfying product. This metaphor has found a place in higher education for good reason in recent decades; sometimes the pendulum that seeks to address students' needs swings too far, creating directionless classrooms bordering on chaos.

Rather, being aware of students' needs and experiences implies teaching with ample flexibility that allows for instructional changes should the need arise. Faculty must decide individually how much flexibility is both suitable and beneficial for students. Will flexibility be of structure, content, material? For example, can students perform repertoire pieces that reflect their own musical interests? Can exam content be varied so that the beginning student and the late-intermediate student are not performing the same score reading or sight playing examples?

A balance of freedom and structure allows all students to progress consistently. Students respond enthusiastically to decisions bearing a requirement, perhaps choosing from three given repertoire pieces or several harmonizations in different keys and styles. Regular performances are a great opportunity for students to display their interests by choosing their own selections to play. Choice not only motivates due to increased relevance, but fosters autonomy in the learning process. Ultimately, it is students' own decision to prepare for classes, exams, or performances.

Often the greater the freedom in the classroom, the more successfully students perform. Thus, increasing structure often fails to provide the control we seek. When control is subordinated to collaboration, ironically students respond in the initial way we had hoped - with interest, excitement, and motivation.

Practical Suggestions

- Give students frequent opportunities to make decisions in the course. This can range from daily class goals to repertoire selection to procedural considerations.
- Provide options to guide student choices. For example, you may present three repertoire pieces in contrasting styles at the appropriate level, and allow students to choose one. You might offer three options for a final project or performance, and ask students to choose which is most applicable to their future musical career.
- From the beginning of the course, be sure to clarify student responsibilities. Implement logical consequences, rather than disciplinary actions, and be sure students are aware of them from the outset.[6]
- Decide how much flexibility is appropriate in the course. How can you involve students in decision-making processes while simultaneously maintaining structure? For example, is it possible to involve students in evaluation procedures? Can students practice performing for and grading one another as preparation for an exam or the proficiency?

Students' Perceptions of an Authentic Approach

The most prevalent theme of data collection pertained to the atmosphere of the classes. Students consistently commented that the "laid-back" or "relaxed" environment was motivating and enjoyable. One student wrote that the class was "a safe place to make mistakes," and another commented that she was no longer afraid to come to piano class. Another student related that he enjoyed working at his own pace on his own time. One comment read, "The slow pace helped me to understand rather than work for a deadline."

A second theme addressed the variety of instructional approaches. Students commented that a mix of individual time, group work, ensemble playing, and performances was enjoyable and varied the pace of the class. Many students wished to see other aspects of the course, such as scales or technical concepts, pursued more creatively. Some students simply enjoyed time to work individually in class with the option of seeking help if needed. An additional theme here related to performance. The majority of students stated that weekly performances were helpful in combating performance anxiety, increasing motivation to practice, and inspiring musicianship through hearing classmates' performances and post-performance comments.

A final and illuminating theme pertained to the instructional approach. Students offered insight into their interpretations of teacher behaviors. One comment read, "I was helped if I had a problem and not shunned off. She didn't make students feel dumb." Another stated that it was easier to learn without intimidation or pressure, while one student wrote that he could make progress without being "put down." Yet another student commented that a patient instructional approach motivated her best work, and a classmate wrote, "I'm glad you understand our weaknesses and struggles and work to focus on them." These themes led me to believe that there was a connection between an authentic instructional approach and students' experience in the secondary piano class.

Coda

Secondary piano is essentially a skills course, with set requirements and learning goals. Ultimately, the objective is to develop keyboard skills necessary for a musical career. One might argue it is not necessarily an ideal place for dialogue, but my experience has demonstrated otherwise. It is the absence of collaboration, I believe, that hinders the learning process. Over the past several semesters, I have consistently witnessed students' enthusiastic response to an authentic instructional approach that addresses their learning needs. These findings have strengthened my belief that skills are most effectively acquired when practiced in meaningful contexts. Further study may illuminate potential links between an authentic teaching approach and both skill development and musical performance in the secondary piano class.

Students respect our desire to understand their perspectives. They appreciate diversified instruction and welcome opportunities to embrace greater responsibility for their learning. Perhaps a "big picture" approach can aid in the development of authenticity; my duty to prepare students for examinations seems less important than my duty to foster lifelong

learning at the piano. I am hopeful that with a decreased gap between research and practice, learners may find themselves not only as recipients of expertise, but as dynamic, responsible participants in an exploration of creativity and musicianship at the keyboard.

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Laura Amoriello is Assistant Professor of Piano at Westminster Choir College of Rider University and Instructor of Keyboard Skills at The College of New Jersey. She has appeared regularly as performer, presenter, and adjudicator throughout New Jersey. She combines her experience in group piano teaching with research in adult education in an ongoing inquiry into the most effective instructional practices. Ms. Amoriello has studied piano with Mary DeTurck, Ingrid Clarfield, and Dr. Timothy Shafer. She has performed with the Westminster Community Orchestra and in the Associated Music Teachers League of New York Young Musicians Concert at Weill Recital Hall. Presentations include Westminster's Perspectives in Piano Pedagogy week, the South Jersey Music Teachers Association, and the 2007 European Piano Teachers Association Conference in Novi Sad, Serbia. Ms. Amoriello's research interests encompass student-centered philosophies of education, adult education, intrinsic motivation, and the piano music of Prokofiev. Ms. Amoriello earned the Bachelor of Music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from Westminster Choir College of Rider University and the Master of Music degree in piano performance and pedagogy from The Pennsylvania State University. She is currently pursuing the Doctor of Education degree in college music pedagogy at Teachers College, Columbia University.

Community Music Teaching

by Scott Donald

Everyday I wake up and head off to teach I feel this incredible energy that makes me think how lucky I am to do what I have always wanted to do. Many teachers face the day with that same enthusiasm. With changing demands in the field of music have come new opportunities for one to pursue a career in music. For those that are entering the teaching profession it still seems however that there are really only 3 options: independent teacher, public/private school teacher or university faculty. Returning from a conference recently, I was pondering the current job market in piano and piano pedagogy. Given the changes in university funding and cut backs in school districts, I wasn't shocked by the lack of opportunities in terms of positions that are available, however, I was struck by the lack of information regarding another very rewarding teaching option rarely discussed. That is teaching in the community music school setting.

About fifteen years ago I decided to return to school with the express purpose of finishing my degree and beginning my career in music education. As many of us, my career goal had been set as a young musician still in high school. My dream was to go to college, major in music, get a Master's degree to be followed by a Doctorate then a career in college teaching. The mark of success had a very clear status symbol of college professor. I was well on my way until I hit a "bump" when finishing my Master's degree. After being in school for 6 years, I determined that I was sick of music and hated the piano. I decided to complete the degree and as I informed by piano professor, "never do this again." You can imagine how lost I was. Time pasted and after a four year break I started playing the piano again. I also considered returning to school. With the guidance of a wonderful mentor that I had met during my "piano break", I returned to school in a doctoral program in music education/piano pedagogy. My main focus was on finishing and getting a college job. To me, there was no other mark of status as a college teaching position. No other options were even considered during the doctoral process. During that time I did everything I could to ensure a college position at the end of my education. When that day came I began my career as a college faculty member. Sure there were few jobs available and you pretty much had to go wherever the job was but that was all part of the excitement. For many musicians that are finishing graduate work, it seems that there are few teaching options other than college teaching or independent studio teaching. Among my colleagues, few considered anything else other than a college position. I had no information given to me regarding community school teaching opportunities. Why is that I wonder now?

My life changed dramatically in the fall of 1999 when I became a faculty member at a community music school program in Princeton, NJ. The depth and variety of my teaching has been an enormous challenge. This experience has transformed my teaching and life in terms of why I teach and what contributions I feel I can make to the piano pedagogy community. When I accepted this position, I still felt like it was just a transitional period until I got the opportunity for another college job. Because of this new direction in my life, I feel it is now my mission to spread the word regarding the opportunities that are

present in community music school education. It is possible to finish a music degree and have a full and varied teaching career in other venues besides the traditional accepted college or independent teaching paths.

Let's take a look at the variety of community school programs across the country. Community schools were first established in 1892 in Chicago as an opportunity for immigrants to gain specialized education and then rapidly spread around the country as "settlement" schools. According to the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts there are about 600 member schools of the arts nationwide. That translates into about 330 of these schools operating in 380 communities in 44 states that are current members of the Guild. These schools offer not only music but also multi-disciplinary and multicultural programs. Nearly 60% of Guild members have ongoing partnerships with public schools including 84% that offer early childhood education programs and 50% that provide programming for students with special needs. The teaching demands are quite varied and just as demanding as any college position. More than 13,000 professional artists are employed as teachers at these community schools of the arts.

So consider for a moment that you are a student finishing a bachelors or masters degree and you haven't a clue as to what you are going to do next. Or you're a doctoral student and this year you have seen maybe six jobs in the country that are right for your particular set of skills and half of them where in some remote part of the country that you really don't want to move to. Or you have a spouse or significant other that gets a job and you will be moving without a college teaching position available in that area. What do you do? You don't feel like you are ready or financially able to establish a private studio and you really want to teach. Teaching in a community music school setting is an excellent alternative. If you have always wanted to live in a major metropolitan city, why not do it and gain valuable teaching experience. You're in luck because a city like New York City has over 19 community schools clustered around Manhattan and the surrounding boroughs. Every major metropolitan area of the country has at least one if not multiple community schools that offer a wide variety of instruction to a diverse population of student.

As a teacher in a community music school setting, I have had the opportunity to teach jazz piano to novice musicians, teach ensemble literature at a variety of levels, and even start a chamber music program while always providing a solid foundation to the most basic beginning student or graduating senior that is going off to college to become a music major. I have seen adult students experience the joy of music making for the first time at 50 and beyond. As a faculty member, we have the opportunity to collaborate with other wonderful musicians on recitals and also be presented on solo programs. We also have the opportunity to participate in other professional development programs and pedagogy forums on a regular basis. Our work is very collaborative and stimulating on many different levels; musically, professionally, and personally.

Many schools offer group instruction and ensembles such as choir, orchestra, band, jazz, percussion, Suzuki and other ensemble combinations. Most schools offer some sort of pre-school music programs. At the opposite end of the spectrum, some schools have

programs that are for advanced musicians similar to artist diplomas from a university. There are also teacher training courses and workshops or master classes that are presented. For instance, our school has a post-graduate fellowship where graduates teach, observe, and are observed to help apply techniques and develop further their knowledge gained during their time in graduate degree programs.

So how do you find out more. The first place to go is to the National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts website, www.nationalguild.org. There you have access to information regarding what programs are offered through the Guild and a searchable database by state to find where schools can be found. Each Guild member school will have some kind of link to find more information about the school and the specific community that they serve. Some schools will also have a link to job opportunities currently available at their school. Job descriptions and the application information will most likely be found there. If you are interested, you should do some investigation into the school and then contact them directly regarding potential teaching positions. Compensation will vary with the geographical location to the size of the school and number of students. Some offer full-time employment some will only have part-time teaching available. With full-time employment, there may be benefits but not necessarily. Again, it will depend on the school and the size of budget. These are questions that one should be aware of when researching the school.

My position has continued to grow and develop over my nine year tenure. The opportunity exists every day for me to make a difference in my students' lives. I realize the importance of my teaching as well as the responsibility that goes along with it. While it is not always easy, the struggles along the way are well worth it. I have the opportunity to grow and learn everyday from my students, as well as, my colleagues. Community school teaching is certainly an opportunity that has made a significant difference in my life. How could it make a difference in yours?

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Scott Donald is the Administrative Director for the New School for Music Study and on the piano faculty at The College of New Jersey in Ewing, NJ. Dr. Donald received his Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Furman University in Greenville, SC where he studied with John Roberts. He received a Master of Music in Applied Piano and the Doctor of Musical Arts in Music Education/Piano Pedagogy from The University of Texas at Austin where he studied piano with Danielle Martin and pedagogy with Robert Duke, and Martha Hilley. Dr. Donald maintains an active schedule involving performance, research and pedagogy presentations. He has presented research at the local, state, and national level and has published articles for Texas Music Education Research, Piano Pedagogy Forum, and Keyboard Companion and is a member of the research committee for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. Dr. Donald is also a frequent adjudicator of festivals and auditions. He is a member of the New Jersey Music Teachers Association, Music Teachers National Association, College Music Society and the National Guild of Community Schools for the Arts. He is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music.

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Developing an Outreach Curriculum

by Cully Bell

Derek Kealii Polischuk, Assistant Professor of Piano and Director of Piano Pedagogy at Michigan State University, presented a session involving the outreach curriculum at the Michigan State University College of Music, in which piano pedagogy students travel to urban Detroit to give piano instruction to students. Polischuk began by pointing out the current economic circumstances faced by Detroit. According to Polischuk, one in three residents in Detroit live below the poverty level, primarily due to the loss of manufacturing jobs. On the other hand, some suburbs in Detroit are quite wealthy. Though the economy is suffering, Polischuk noted that music lessons should not be limited to those who can afford them.

Polischuk mentioned that public schools in Detroit are often considered to be failing. He then discussed The Cornerstone School, a private school in urban Detroit. With a 95% on-time high school graduation rate, this school has an 11-month school year. Emphasizing parental involvement and individualized learning, this school achieves significant success. Particularly notable is the vibrant music program available at Cornerstone, which includes group piano classes. Using electronic keyboards, 42 students in grades 6 through 8 are taught in five different classes. These piano courses are highly popular with the students.

After providing background information regarding The Cornerstone School, Polischuk discussed the partnership between this school and the Michigan State University College of Music. Once a semester, the piano pedagogy students at MSU travel to Cornerstone in order to give master-classes for the students in these piano classes. In return, the Cornerstone students get the opportunity to visit MSU for various musical events, where they are also given the opportunity to play on Steinway D pianos. Polischuk showed several video clips, available on YouTube, of MSU students giving master-classes to these students.

Highly beneficial to the MSU pedagogy students, this program provides an opportunity to develop skill sets that are not readily available in a pedagogy classroom setting by giving the students the opportunity to give master-classes, as well as by providing teaching opportunities across a wide range of social and economic demographics. As noted by Polischuk, piano pedagogy students, and musicians in general, tend to live "insulated" lives. This program enables them to branch out into the community and see the larger role that music education plays in the betterment of society.

Polischuk went on to discuss the various expenses of this program. Transportation and meal expenses are underwritten by a local family foundation. Overall, he noted that this program is not very expensive. Many partnerships make this program possible, including the MSU College of Music Outreach and Engagement, the Cornerstone School itself, as well as donors such as Family Foundations, Cornerstone School Partners, and the MSU Alumni Club Grant.

Polischuk noted the various positive outcomes of this partnership. The Cornerstone students, many of whom come from disadvantaged backgrounds, benefit from the opportunity to receive high-level music instruction. In turn, the Michigan State University students benefit from gaining teaching and master-classing experience, and receive inspiration and fulfillment from this program. The School of Music at MSU also benefits, in that these visits are also useful for recruiting purposes. In summary, this partnership program benefits both the pedagogy students at MSU, as well as the piano students at Cornerstone, and Polischuk encouraged other educators to incorporate similar programs into their pedagogy curriculums.

Cully Bell is the Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy and Class Piano at Southern Illinois University Carbondale. He previously taught group and applied piano at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music, where he was also on the faculty of the Preparatory Department. He is completing his DMA at UCC-CM, where he studied piano with Elizabeth Pridonoff and pedagogy with Michelle Conda, to whom he was assistant. In addition to teaching and performing activities, he is the Artistic Director for the *Challenging Performances* concert series in Cincinnati, Ohio.

Breakout Session: High School Group Piano Instructor

by Nicole Young-Biggs

In a breakout session, Pam Kalmbach shared her contributions in building a curriculum for group piano courses at Westwood High School in Round Rock, Texas. She teaches about 200 students on a weekly basis in a classroom equipped with approximately 20 pianos. The curriculum is centered on building essential piano performance skills supported by general musicianship activities such as ear training, music theory, ensemble playing, and composition.

The curriculum is organized into five levels, with level one consisting of beginners with no piano experience. Alfred's Basic *All-in-One Course* is used as a textbook for level one, with other selected supplementary instruction books for the other levels depending on the collective skill set of the class. A typical class consists of individual warm-ups with cadences and scales followed by ear-training exercises. Rhythmic activities are emphasized through the use of exercises away from the keyboard that make use of drums and rhythm sticks. Additional classroom activities include students working together in performance ensembles and sight-reading. Classes are 90-minutes in length, 45 of which are allotted to individual practice time.

Student projects include composer-based PowerPoint presentations and ensemble performance projects, as well as composition projects involving modes, theme and variations, and holiday arrangements. Forty percent of the final grade is drawn from class performance projects. Music technology is an essential element of the classes. Kalmbach uses a variety of computer programs such as *Finale*, *Auralia*, *Musition* and *Audacity*.

Kalmbach graciously shared the curriculum for the high school group piano classes in her breakout session. She affirmed the importance of drawing from individual learning styles, trying "new" instructional approaches, and aiming for appealing student-centered class activities in the group piano setting. Her situation at Westwood High School illustrates the potential for group piano instruction in the high school setting. For those brave piano instructors with an open mind and entrepreneurial spirit, the American high school could be the next new frontier for teaching piano in the group setting, and become a viable option for music courses at the secondary level of public education in the United States.

Nicole Young-Biggs, NCTM, made her Carnegie Hall debut in 2006 and has since performed in China, Italy, England, and the United States. Recent awards include winner of the Oklahoma Israel Exchange Young Artist Competition and the Yamaha In-Residence Fellowship. Her solo recording, *Lyricality*, is available on iTunes and amazon.com. She has performance degrees from the University of North Texas and the Cleveland Institute of Music and is a doctoral candidate at the University of Oklahoma. She teaches applied piano, group piano, piano pedagogy, and coordinates the group piano program at the University of Missouri-Columbia.

Educational Research Instruction in the Graduate Pedagogy Curriculum: Providing New Tools to Future Researchers and College Faculty

by Mason Conklin

Dr. Alejandro Cremaschi of the University of Colorado identified what he considers a troubling gap in the curricula for graduate piano pedagogy programs, namely, instruction in research in music education. Cremaschi believes that since the academic discipline of piano pedagogy has matured from its nascence in the early 80's, it is important that programs produce not just excellent teachers, but excellent researchers in music education as well. However, in a survey of twelve DMA programs in piano pedagogy, only three included introduction to research in music education as part of the curricula.

Co-presenter Emily Book McGree, a DMA student at the University of Colorado, observed that, as teachers, we often rely on informal sources of knowledge to guide our instructional endeavors. Such informal sources of knowledge include relying on intuition, self-examination and reflection on techniques that worked for us, reading articles, talking with colleagues, and modeling the instruction we received from our teachers. However, this source of information can be somewhat unreliable. McGree contrasted these informal and occasionally unreliable sources of knowledge with the kind of knowledge that is gained in academic research. She defined research as, "the search for reliable knowledge using systematic investigation." Research can be used to confirm intuition, or to shed new light on a problem.

Research Methodologies

Cremaschi and McGree briefly outlined five methodologies well suited for piano pedagogy research and provided real-world examples to help illustrate the methodologies.

8. **Survey/Descriptive studies.** Survey studies use statistical sampling to provide an accurate description of prevailing conditions. For example, a researcher might survey a number of parents over a wide geographical area to ascertain attitudes and goals for piano lessons for their children. Teachers could use this information to better address the wants and needs of parents.
9. **Correlational studies.** In correlational studies, researchers try to find relationships between two different concepts through statistical methods. For example, a researcher might try to determine the relationship of household income to the number of years a child continues piano lessons.
10. **Experimental, Quasi-experimental studies.** In experimental studies, two similar groups of individuals are measured on a certain outcome. One group receives a treatment, and the other group does not. For example, a researcher might compare academic achievement of low-income students with half of those students receiving piano lessons. Such research could be used for seeking grant funding for special outreach programs.
11. **Case and Phenomenological studies.** Case studies and phenomenological studies use qualitative methods of data gathering and analysis rather than statistical

methods. The researcher does not propose a hypothesis for testing, but rather uses observation through field-notes and interviews to discover frequently occurring themes that address areas of interest. For example, a researcher might want to discover how non-English speaking students interact with other students and with music in the classroom.

12. **Ethnographic studies.** With ethnographic research, the researcher collects a variety of qualitative data including observation, interviews, and artifacts to provide a clear picture of the inner-workings of a specific social phenomenon. For example, a researcher might want to examine three successful music schools that cater to different student populations to discover elements that could be incorporated in a similar setting.

Current Curriculum

Cremaschi believes that graduate students in pedagogy should be able to understand research reports, evaluate and criticize research, and apply research findings in relevant ways. In addition, DMA students should be able to contribute to the body of research in a meaningful way. Such contributions would enrich the field and NASM clearly requires it. The NASM guidelines for DMA pedagogy programs read, "preparation of music teachers and researchers who conduct inquiries and develop methodologies and repertories for music study. Programs normally include comparative methodologies, research in music and music education, performance, and educational evaluation."

However, in a comparison of the types of studies that appear in the *Journal of Research in Music Education* (JRME) and the types of studies from recent DMA dissertations, DMA dissertations may not be making the kinds of contributions required by the field. Pamela Klueck (2009) compared a content analysis of DMA dissertations from 1983-2008 to Cornelia Yarbrough's (2002) content analysis of the JRME. While the JRME articles featured a preponderance of studies that were descriptive or experimental in nature, very few of the DMA dissertations examined fell in that category. Instead, most DMA dissertations were either historical or fell into the Yarbrough classification as "other." Cremaschi observed that this discrepancy might be a result of a gap in the curriculum that does not address research in music education.

Solutions

One way to solve this problem would be to add research courses to the curriculum. Cremaschi recognized that this solution could be problematic given the administrative difficulties of changing an already extensive curriculum. He offered an alternative solution that injects elements of research education into the core pedagogy coursework. Methods discussed for doing this included giving additional reading assignments in music research, dissecting and discussing research articles in class, assigning literature reviews on specific topics, creating literature review posters for inclusion in conference poster sessions, and offering instruction in qualitative observation techniques for self-evaluation assignments. Cremaschi noted he is careful to tie readings in research to pedagogical concepts being discussed in his pedagogy course work.

McGree's Research Experience

McGree had a strong desire to produce meaningful research in music education for her DMA dissertation, but found that the structure of her degree made doing so difficult. She audited two courses in research in music education, courses not required by her degree plan but necessary for understanding the process and methodology of research. She felt fortunate to have an understanding committee that patiently helped her through the process.

McGree believes that, although very arduous, her experience with research has made her a better teacher, and that all DMA students need to be familiar with the processes and methodologies of academic research. Currently, she is responsible for coordinating a large keyboard studio associated with the Parlando School for the Arts in Boulder, Colorado. In addition to her administrative duties, she regularly provides professional development for the faculty by presenting overviews of recent research in music education. The teachers under her supervision report that the research McGree shares has helped them better address the needs of their students and made them better teachers.

Works Cited:

Klueck, Pamela. (2009). *Trends in Piano Pedagogy: A Content Analysis of Piano Pedagogy Dissertations (1983-2008).* Poster presentation at the National Conference in Keyboard Pedagogy.

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Additional resources, including the slides from the PowerPoint and examples of pedagogical research using the methodologies enumerated above may be found online at www.alejandrocremaschi.com/edresearch.htm.

Mason Conklin is currently on faculty at Iowa State University, where he teaches Class Piano, Applied Piano and Piano Pedagogy. Mr. Conklin holds a B.M. and M.M. in piano performance from Baylor University, where he studied with artist-in-residence Krassimira Jordan. He is a candidate for a Ph.D. in Music Education with an emphasis in Piano Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma, where he studied piano pedagogy with Dr. Jane Magrath and Dr. Barbara Fast. His dissertation research investigates the phenomenology of musical performance anxiety as it occurs in digitally recorded performances distributed via the Internet. As a guest clinician, Mr. Conklin has presented to local, state and national audiences on musical performance anxiety and digital audio recording. He is in frequent demand as an adjudicator in the state, and is a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music through MTNA.

Panel Presentation: The View: Innovative Formats Within Group Piano Teaching

by India D'Avignon

This panel presented a glimpse into four very different group piano teaching situations: the Yamaha Music Education System, group piano for non-music majors in the small college, group piano adult hobby classes, and high school group piano instruction. Each speaker had ten minutes for their presentation and then moved to breakout sessions where they talked more in depth. Questions were held for the breakout sessions.

Mike Morrell - Yamaha Music Education System (YMES)

Mike Morrell is the manager of the Yamaha Music Education System at Yamaha Corporation of America. Yamaha was founded in Japan in 1954. Their teaching method was initially an experiment that has now blossomed into an enrollment of over 500,000 students internationally. It boasts fifty locations in the United States and over seven million graduates overall.

Morrell cited three areas that drive the method forward: concerts (communication), curriculum (evolution), and examination (reflection). He also discussed YMES courses available in the United States, and elaborated on four principles that underlie the core of the method: timely education, group lessons, comprehensive scope, and use of the keyboard.

1. **Timely Education** To "speak music" is a process of language acquisition. The development of musical ability evolves in accord with the natural development of the human being. The approach matches the stage of development and considers aural ability, muscle development and coordination, imagination, intellect, and will. For ages 3-5 the focus is on aural ability (keyboard solfege), imitation (call and response) and age appropriate images and subjects. For ages 6-8 the focus is on cultivating independence, the ability to play the keyboard, and further development of comprehensive skills. And from elementary age into adolescence the focus is on the integration of skills, promoting the individual, performance, improvisation, and composition.
2. **Group Lessons** Group lessons foster a social and cultural context. They also create lateral relationships, and motivate due to shared experience. A sense of rhythm and ensemble are also formed.
3. **Comprehensive Scope** Individual elements are conveyed holistically. Elements are integrated as musical sensibility fluency in the language of music: Pitch Training = Vocabulary Harmony = Grammar and Syntax Keyboard Performance = Speech Improvisation = Form, Balance, Cohesive thought Composition = Individual Style, Aesthetics
4. **Use of the Keyboard as a Tool** Students sing what they have heard and play as they have sung, using solfege. The keyboard becomes the student's voice.

Michael Benson - Group Piano for Non-Music Majors in the Small College

Dr. Benson is on the faculty at Ohio State University in Lima. He uses the Piano for Pleasure text by Martha Hilley. Blackboard is used for additional assignments and blogging. He discussed several considerations concerning group piano instruction for non-music majors.

- Involving students in self-evaluation while implementing performance checklist blogs: students are asked specific questions pertaining to music reading/keyboard performance and blog their answers. Proper sentence structure is expected.
- Introducing music composition: students blog about the challenges of writing and performing their compositions.
- Initiating a small piano ensemble course within the curriculum: students blog about how they learn their part and are asked to discuss their videotaped ensemble performance and reflect on whether or not they enjoyed the experience.

Martha Hilley - Adult Hobbyists

Professor Hilley gave an unscripted talk. She was raised in a family that loved music; her grandmother could play a song after hearing just a few notes. When you walked in the door at grandma's for Christmas, you got two lists - one was your chore list and the other was where you were going to sleep. You also had to bring your instrument with you. From this she saw the absolute joy that music could bring to people who are not "talented". Her mother was a piano teacher for years and years and would tell her students, "Honey, if you don't practice, I'm going to tell your mother that you're talented." Hilley finds that there is a great deal of nurturing that goes into teaching piano. The education of the adult hobby student needs to be very much student-centered. It is not the instructor's agenda that is important but the student's. Listen to what they want out of the experience because they have chosen this path. In 1974, a New Jersey grant provided funding for the state to pay to bring senior citizens from a senior center to her studio. The state paid for the materials and pianos; Prof. Hilley volunteered her teaching time. She used the old Wurlitzer system and loved the entire experience. Herb was 89 and Maude was a young 81; they met in her piano class and got married.

Hilley started teaching at the University of Texas when it had a weak continuing education program. She rejuvenated this program in part by creating a "So You Want to Play the Piano" poster. They came in droves. The second level was called "But Your Mother Let You Quit". Those people had just enough piano experience to be dangerous. The third level was called, "Now That you're a Virtuoso". They had potlucks; the students didn't have to play well, but if they wanted to eat, they had to play something. There is a tremendous amount of support among hobby students - they really love it.

Pam Kalmbach - High School Group Piano

Westwood High School became the Fine Arts Academy for the Round Rock district in 2001. Ms. Kalmbach was at that time the associate choir director and was given the task

of developing innovative courses that were not offered in other high schools. She asked herself the question: what were classes that would benefit students and that would help them in their future music al pursuits. Two classes were developed, each of which combine traditional teaching methods (scales, technique, theory books, literature) with group activities (duets, ensembles, students helping each other, etc.) and technology based learning and projects. The district supported this endeavor with a piano lab of twenty-two full-sized keyboards (all with weighted keys) and thirty-two laptop computers. Capital Music came to download all the software on each computer, which they can now do through the server.

The Piano 1 class has 30 students per class. Students are given assignments from instruction books plus other music. Concepts are taught to the entire class each week and music is assigned and "checked off" for assessment. As always, some students are naturally more adept and ready to progress at a faster pace, so by the end of the first semester there may be three separate assignments each week. For the last six weeks of the year, Kalmbach prints out a list of required music in the instruction book and they "check off" what they have accomplished, having worked at their own pace. She continues to hear them individually each week. Many students start in Piano 1 and continue on for four years. Some students take the piano class for practice time while others take it for festivals and competitions.

The Piano 2 class has 27 students per class. Every student is at a different skill level that can range anywhere from one year of experience in the Piano 1 class up to 10 years of private instruction. Kalmbach is not able to hear even student individually in this class on a weekly basis. Nevertheless, the class offers opportunities beyond what a traditional private studio may, including the use of computer software for theory (Musition), ear-training (Auralia), and composition/notation projects (Finale/Allegro).

This will be the fourth year for Kalmbach to teach five of the seven piano classes plus one music theory class. The associate choir director teaches the other piano classes. This past spring, 218 students requested piano classes and this was the first time some students were closed out of the class. This fall there will be three Piano 1 classes, two Piano 2 classes, and one each of a Piano 3 and Piano 4/5 class. Because of larger class sizes, students now record scales using Audacity and save these to their school folder. They turn in their theory books twice every six-week grading period. This means more grading time spent outside of class but allows Kalmbach more time to hear individual students play their assigned literature. As well, the more advanced students help the younger ones. Ensemble music works well with this set-up since there is always a harder part and an easier part.

India D'Avignon teaches theory, musicianship, and class piano at the California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. She previously served as Department Chair of the Piano and Organ Department at The Conservatory of Music at Capital University where she also taught piano, harpsichord and accompanying. Research topics have included the music of Lili Boulanger, Maria Theresia Paradis, and Benjamin Franklin and the glass armonica. D'Avignon currently serves as the California State Chair for the MTNA Competitions and is on the Board of Directors of the San Luis Obispo Symphony.

Panel Presentation: Piano Pedagogy in Three "Smaller" Schools

by Michael Dean

There is great diversity in how small colleges and universities overcome the difficulties of providing quality pedagogical studies within their curriculum. In this session, Karen Schlabaugh, Paula Thomas-Lee, and Karen Thickstun presented the innovative solutions and continuing challenges faced by the programs at Bethel College, Reinhardt University, and Butler University.

Bethel College, North Newton, Kansas

Dr. Karen Schlabaugh, Professor of Music and Bethel's Music Department Chair since 1998, introduced Bethel as an academically excellent, four-year undergraduate liberal arts college affiliated with the Mennonite Church. Bethel ranks first in the state of Kansas in the percentage of bachelor degree students continuing to graduate school and completing doctoral degrees, with 1 out of every 17 graduates achieving a Ph.D. The college is noted for its excellent choirs, choral society and an equally strong instrumental area, with nearly thirty percent of the campus community involved in various aspects of the music program. Summer music and theater camps serve as important recruiting tools. However, as with many other institutions nationwide, Bethel has recently struggled with declining enrollment despite its academic and musical successes. Although the keyboard area occasionally utilizes adjunct instructors, Schlabaugh is the sole professor in the piano department.

In the early 1980s, Bethel joined with two nearby colleges in providing one piano pedagogy course each in a rotating sequence. This allowed for increased class sizes while reducing the teaching load required of each institution. The classes met once per week in the evening, and focused on the techniques for teaching music fundamentals and beginning students, intermediate level students, and advancing students. Schlabaugh noted that many community members enrolled in these classes, joined MTNA, and remain active teachers in the region. Students with strong piano backgrounds but with other majors also took these courses. The combination of the three colleges' resources produced a successful teacher-training sequence, which resulted in the founding and expansion of a preparatory academy staffed by many graduates of the program.

When one of the cooperating schools ceased participation in the sequence, the remaining two colleges successfully managed its continuation. Although enrollment numbers within the program decreased, community interest in the courses remained high. In an effort to manage teaching load implications with the reduced enrollment, the contributing schools postponed the sequence by one year, resuming it with only two courses. The institution partnering with Bethel recently restructured its pedagogy offerings, dissolving their longtime collaboration. Bethel College is now faced with the challenge of making its pedagogy program viable in both numbers and strength.

Reinhardt University, Waleska, Georgia

Dr. Paula Thomas-Lee, Assistant Professor and Coordinator of Graduate Studies at Reinhardt University, noted the School of Music's substantial growth over the last ten years. The school, located an hour north of Atlanta, once offered only a two-year associates degree to less than twenty music majors. Now it boasts more than one hundred music majors in bachelors and masters programs. The university opened a new music building in 2005, became a Kawai EPIC School in 2007, and recently added a Master of Music in Piano Pedagogy to its offerings. The piano area anticipated fourteen piano majors for the fall 2010 semester. Thomas-Lee credited these developments to the significant efforts and support of the school's current Dean. She also mentioned the commitment of both full-time and adjunct faculty to their students and the university, and to their involvement in the community at large.

Reinhardt's piano faculty includes three full time professors and one adjunct instructor, who in addition to their university duties support the activities of the local MTNA chapter. The healthy relationship between faculty and community piano teachers fosters positive experiences for pedagogy students by providing observation and internship opportunities, as well as promoting quality teaching by all. A strength of the school's bachelors degree in piano performance is the four semester piano pedagogy sequence, which in the first year focuses on teaching preschool age students through beginning adults, while concentrating on group teaching, observation, and teaching labs in the second year.

Thomas-Lee cited facilities and resources as major limitations to the program. Currently there are only two practice rooms for the fourteen piano majors, requiring them to use the choral and band rooms as well as faculty studios for practicing. Building a current library of scores and method books is a continuing challenge in the face of budget shortfalls. The university and its various programs utilize every free marketing possibility, including Facebook and Twitter, and continue to seek additional recruiting methods. Insufficient class sizes often force students to find independent study options or take courses out of sequence.

Butler University, Indianapolis, Indiana

Karen Thickstun, Director of the Butler Community Arts School and Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy at Butler University, described the institution's dedication to academic excellence and "the Butler way." As part of a liberal arts education, each student takes one course involving active engagement with the Indianapolis community and attends at least eight cultural events in the form of artistic performances, seminars and public lectures. The university welcomed its largest freshman class in 2010, due largely to the recent performance of its basketball team.

There are approximately 200 undergraduate and 40 graduate students in the School of Music, with arts administration and recording studies the fastest growing degree programs. The number of piano majors has declined over the last five years, to the recent level of only four piano performance majors and two piano pedagogy majors. Four new

masters students entered the pedagogy program in the fall of 2010 as a result of recently reinstated graduate assistantships. The pedagogy program, created by Steve Roberson, boasts four primary classes. The first focuses on teaching methods, business practices, and entrepreneurship. The second concentrates on teaching and maintaining healthy, injury free technique. The third and fourth courses in the sequence cover style and performance practice and psychological and cognitive learning theories. Students other than piano majors often elect to enroll in pedagogy classes.

Many of the college students become teachers for the Community Arts School following their experience in the pedagogy sequence. The school, established in 2002, serves a wide segment of the community and provides arts education to many who otherwise could not afford it. Butler University students teach private lessons, *Music for Little Mozarts* classes, and assist with camps. A new MTNA collegiate chapter encourages students to remain active in the community school and in music education opportunities in the region. Thickstun cited under-funding in technology, inadequate building facilities, and continued attention to the growth of graduate studies as the primary issues facing the Butler piano program.

In a brief question-and-answer session following these presentations, Schlabaugh, Thomas-Lee and Thickstun reiterated the importance of administrative support in developing and maintaining viable pedagogy programs. Thomas-Lee reaffirmed her praise of the Dean at Reinhardt University, who serves as a cheerleader for the School of Music. All of the presenters stressed the need for flexibility and creativity in dealing with the ongoing challenges confronting smaller schools and those larger schools facing declining enrollment. Creating education courses relevant to students of multiple majors might solve the problem of small pedagogy class sizes, for example. Instruction in the organization of private lesson content and structure or in the business elements of teaching are two examples of classes applicable across music disciplines. With many pedagogy programs nationwide struggling to maintain effective programming, it is important that music educators continue to share informational resources and creative solutions with each other.

Michael Dean is Assistant Professor of Music and Coordinator of Keyboard Studies at Oklahoma Baptist University. He also serves as East District Co-President of the Oklahoma Music Teachers Association. Dr. Dean maintains an active schedule as a workshop clinician, adjudicator, solo performer, collaborative artist, and faculty at summer music camps throughout the United States and Canada, and is a member of the Manno/Dean Piano Duo.

Breakout Session: Group Piano Adult Hobby Classes

by Kimberly Dreisbach

In this session Martha Hilley shared her experiences with Recreational Music Making (RMM) through adult hobby group piano classes held at the University of Texas at Austin. Topics included: initiating the project, classroom activities she finds successful in RMM situations, advice when approaching common difficulties associated with RMM, anecdotes from class participants providing insight from the students' perspectives, and resources for further reading.

The program referenced in this session developed through the University of Texas at Austin as a way to provide a laboratory setting for student teachers enrolled in a Group Piano Pedagogy course. To garner participants, Hilley sent a campus-wide email to University employees offering the class for no charge to interested participants who had no prior piano experience and could obtain permission from their supervisors to attend class during regular business hours. Even as someone who knew the potential of Recreational Music Making, Hilley was astounded to receive over 780 responses almost immediately! While RMM efforts are often geared toward participants who are pursuing additional leisure activities due to retirement, Hilley pointed out the enormous interest this project showed from young professionals. These classes were in 10-week sessions meeting once a week for 90 minutes and were conducted based on the assumption that students were not practicing piano outside the class meeting time.

When planning activities for hobby groups, Hilley emphasized the importance of focusing on rhythm throughout the beginning classes. Even when engaging in exercises that included finger numbers, dexterity, and reading, the instructors were also watching to see that students were both aware of and able to keep a steady pulse. Hilley also encouraged attendees to "send yourself home with students" through audio files of guided practice sessions that had an intentionally calm and casual tone. Both teachers and students found these recordings to be immensely helpful and popular in retaining material from week to week.

When setting goals for adult hobby students, Hilley emphasized the importance of being sensitive to the students' needs and a willingness to adjust the curriculum. If students can be led to set goals that they are likely to surpass, this can be an effective way of maintaining students' initial enthusiasm and preventing discouragement. When setting repertoire goals, Hilley suggested the use of lead sheets where they could sing and play chords and emphasized that literature choices must be student-driven.

Comments shared from class participants can be considered representative of many RMM students. They often wished instructors spoke slower and moved slower through class exercises. When they had questions or difficulty with material they were reluctant to raise their hands, ask questions, and otherwise indicate they were having trouble. Many of the participants gave notes of personal encouragement and gratitude to the student teachers.

Hilley emphasized that in addition to *Piano for Pleasure* there are many resources for teachers interested in hobby group piano classes and Recreational Music Making. She suggested beginning with *Teaching Piano in Groups* by Christopher Fischer; *The Recreational Music Making Handbook: A Teacher's Guide* by Brenda Dillon and Brian Chung; and Deborah Perez's website www.everylifeneedsmusic.com.

Kimberly Dreisbach teaches group piano and piano pedagogy at Bowling Green State University. Previously, she taught at Oklahoma City University, the University of Oklahoma, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, Langston University, and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp. She has also served as both church pianist and director of the Fine Arts Academy of First Baptist Church, Norman. A frequent adjudicator and clinician, she has presented at state and national MTNA and CMS conferences. Current research interests include the study of pedagogical four-hand piano duet literature and the development of a website: findpianoworks.com.

Beethoven Learned What?!? Discovering Lost Traditions as One Looks to a Career in Music Education

by Carol Gingerich

Richard Holbrook presented a provocative session that explored the idea that if we were to investigate how composers of the past, such as Beethoven and Bach, taught and created music, we might discover more effective tools for reaching a larger musical audience today. Holbrook is on the staff of the International Institute for Young Musicians and the Novus Via Music Group. He also maintains a pre-college teaching studio and is researching modern music education for his D.M.A. at the University of Colorado. Holbrook's past musical experiences have provided him with a broad musical perspective. He has worked with pop musicians in a Los Angeles recording studio. As part of his work with the International Institute for Young Musicians he has seen hundreds of students from all across the country, and through his involvement with the Novus Via Music Group he has spoken with numerous teachers about their teaching methods.

Holbrook began by contrasting the world of 1825 with that of the present. Composers from the earlier period, such as Beethoven, Chopin, Liszt, Schubert and Schumann, are still widely represented on modern concert programs. He described these musicians as having contributed to or built upon traditions of formal and compositional complexity, and as having advanced what we might call "intellectual" or "classical" music. He contrasted this with composers from today such as Adams, Bolcom, Corigliano, Crumb, Glass, Part, Reich and Tan Dunm, all of whose compositions are much less frequently performed. Holbrook offered several perspectives on why this may be so:

1. Today, with nearly six times as many people in the world and scores of music colleges, shouldn't new music be more abundant and accepted?
2. Pop music pleases millions. But a lot of pop musicians aren't university educated and the music tends to be simple. Are people today just not as smart as they were 200 years ago?
3. Were the great composers of the past inspired geniuses or did they know some secret?
4. Is it possible that our modern system of music education is flawed?

Holbrook chose the last item as his thesis and suggested we need to stop blaming the general public for "not getting it" and perhaps take a look at ourselves as musicians and teachers. He then referred to several sources and ideas to improve the situation.

He began with the work of Thomas Frey, a futurist employed by many large corporations such as ATT and IBM, whose work can be viewed on YouTube. Frey quotes Max Planck who is reported to have said "When you change the way you look at things, the thing you look at changes." Frey felt that systems can prevent greatness and gave the example of the old Roman numeral system, which actually prevented the Romans from doing more advanced math than the earlier Greeks.

Holbrook contrasted the modern day and "golden age" of music education systems. The modern day system focuses heavily on performance of pre-existing repertoire and artistic interpretation. In it, compositional (conceptual) understanding of most musical experiences is optional, and functional harmony acts as the primary tool for conceptual understanding. He defined the "golden age" as referring to the era from Bach to the early 20th century, after which we see a decline in the number of great prolific intellectual composers. During the "golden age" musicians were multi-faceted and functioned as composer, teacher and performer. At this time, compositional (conceptual) understanding of all musical experiences was commonplace, and counterpoint and figured bass were primary tools for conceptual understanding. Next Holbrook played a game with us in which he first showed sets of numbers that he asked us to memorize. The sets were difficult to memorize, except for one in which the numbers increased by 5 (5, 10, 15, 20, etc). He then asked us to transfer this conceptual idea to fill in the blanks in other sets including more advanced ones such as the Fibonacci series, which were also based upon conceptual understanding. He concluded that conceptual understanding allows for efficient learning and creation of new data, and that with the exception of aleatoric music, all music can be understood conceptually. He then provided examples of how a conceptual understanding of the elements of music can allow for more efficient learning as well as the creation of new music. The elements he mentioned are listed below:

Meter, Beat and Rhythm Individual sounds in time don't mean anything until our brains group them into recognizable patterns. The heartbeat is recognized the world over. Our brains automatically conceptually understand meter and beat in part because of the Law of Proximity defined in Gestalt psychology.

Pitch, Intervals and Scales The most common pitches and scales are based upon the mathematical relationships and the hierarchy of the octave and fifth of the Pythagorean Scale, and as found in nature. Studies at Harvard University, the University of Windsor and the University of Toronto have shown that infants prefer these pitch relationships before cultural influence can play a role in their preference of music. We are hard-wired to prefer the Pythagorean pitch hierarchy. The more popular Beethoven symphony melodies overlay a framework of important pitches in Pythagorean hierarchy, as do the most loved classical popular pieces. Holbrook then asked if it is possible that more recent academic trends in music composition toward free tonality or atonality could be the reason why contemporary intellectual music struggles?

Melody, Motive and Permutation The idea of motive is very important to music and helps to unify countless compositions. A conceptual understanding of permutations can help immensely when studying or creating a piece of music.

Form and Structure The concept of form is quite easy even for non-musicians to understand. Most people are aware of the verse-chorus form in pop music.

Counterpoint This is the layering of melodies and our natural instrument, the voice, is melodic. Composers can mix and match harmonic intervals to manipulate emotion.

Harmony Holbrook defined a chord as the conceptual tool we use to identify common note groups resulting from counterpoint and mentioned that chords, depending on their intervallic content, have a wide variety of emotional implications. He then suggested that the more effective system for a conceptual understanding of harmony is not the traditional functional harmony approach, but rather a contrapuntal analysis such as that found in CPE Bach's *Essay on the True Art of Playing Keyboard Instruments*. Holbrook pointed out that Haydn, Beethoven and Czerny all used this and that Mozart thought highly of CPE Bach. In fact, most of the great composers wrote using counterpoint, not functional harmony.

Holbrook continued with a defense of pop music. He believes art is a reflection of the world around us and that pop music reflects our world. Pop music is simple in its use of form and permutation, and innovative in its use of rhythm, timbre and texture. Advanced permutation and form complexities require education. So if classical music's form and permutations were studied and utilized by pop musicians we would have a new type of serious music. He reminded us that the pop musician Quincy Jones studied with Nadia Boulanger and went on to produce the best-selling album of all time. Holbrook then asked, if most pop music does not carry the torch for intellectual music, what would? He mentioned that serious music students rarely ask to compose because they are often daunted by the "genius" of great composers. This is due in part to the strong detail-oriented focus on performance and interpretation championed by their teachers.

Holbrook's session ended with an analysis of our existing music education system and with suggestions for improvement. He contended that college students spend too much time learning by rote, and that the tools for conceptual understanding have not kept pace with the high level of performance. In some sense our college students are like trained circus monkeys. These habits are not easily broken. He suggested that CPE Bach's Essay is not a book about composition, but rather a book for performers that focuses on the importance of composition. He reminded us that if Bach, Schumann and Brahms had been only performers, we wouldn't know them today. He mentioned that performance should be only one aspect of a musician's existence and that composition, critical thought and teaching should also be part of it.

Holbrook recommended that we teach conceptual understanding and composition to all students and use a contrapuntal and figured bass approach as the foundation for musical understanding, rather than functional harmony. He asked us to encourage all students to be great by not focusing exclusively on performance and thereby inadvertently implying that the great compositional traditions of the past are beyond our students. He asked us to do it for the greater good and reminded us that it's not that smart people make music, but rather that music makes people smart. In relation to the declining number of students taking music lessons, he inquired how many people would play soccer if they were told to just kick the ball around, but they were not taught to understand the rules of the game. He suggested that the great composers were not simply geniuses, but that they were educated and worked hard, and he admonished us to not just relive history but to go make it.

A copy of the PowerPoint may be downloaded at www.holbrookpiano.com.

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Can a 'Phases of Learning' Inspired Organizational Practice Approach Facilitate Flow and/or Better Learning in Group Piano Students?

by Susan C. Ha

Thomas J. Parente is an associate professor of piano at Westminster Choir College of Rider University, where he teaches and coordinates secondary piano. He is the author of *How to Teach Group Piano Successfully through Flow*. His presentation provided an overview of a study done on beginning class piano students using an organizational practice plan at Westminster Choir College for effective music learning. The practice plan was inspired from Skills Acquisitions Researchers Fitts and Posner's "Phases of Learning," which describes the three stages that one goes through when learning a new skill.

College class piano students sometimes develop a negative attitude towards playing the piano. Their practice could easily be enjoyable and effective, however, if they followed a learning model that would help them to enter the "flow state". Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi defined this state in 1991 as "a total involvement that people feel when they are engaged in an activity in which they feel both highly challenged and highly competent."

Parente's approach to "Phases of Learning" is based on dividing repertoire into segments of increasing levels of difficulty and achieving a high level of proficiency on each segment before moving on to the next. His observations suggest that the learning process accelerates when students are in the flow state, and their intrinsic motivation and satisfaction increase. Characteristics observed by Parente of pianists playing in this flow state include the following:

- Engagement in a challenging activity that requires skill
- Setting of clear goals
- Ownership of a sense of control
- Diminishing self-consciousness, resulting in one's perception of time being altered
- Merging of action and awareness

Students are not always capable of setting clear practice goals and do not know how to properly sequence practice sessions. They generally attempt to accomplish far more than what they are capable of doing at their skill level. This leads to feelings of anxiety and frustration. Often, students continuously make the same mistakes in the early stages of practice: this seldom allows them to progress to the flow state.

The three stages of "Phases of Learning" by skill acquisition researchers Fitts and Posner have consistently been acknowledged and referenced by professionals since they were introduced in 1967. The first stage is the cognitive stage. The individual thinks about what skills need to be mastered. In learning piano, the greatest amount of internal dialogue takes place as the pianist experiments on finding the best musical gesture for a given task. Poor rhythmical flow and coordination are often found in this stage.

The greatest amount of practice time is spent in stage two, the associative stage. Work in smaller units from the first stage is processed into a larger piece through repetition. The student makes fewer errors and attains the basic movement of the work. A sense of control and proper tempo are attained and the student starts to involve less mental resources in decoding the score.

The last of the three learning stages is the autonomous stage. Music is ready to be played with ever-increasing tempo, efficiency, accuracy, and expressivity. Cognitive mediation has become automatic, hence it is transformed into efficient movements - music begins to flow. The output of the performance is very consistent from one to another.

The Phases of Learning paradigm has been modified to fit the research that Parente conducted in class piano. Students were observed in order to view their ability to reach the flow state during their practice sessions. The study, conducted in the summer of 2010, involved assigning two pieces to nine incoming freshmen in the group piano setting. The pieces to be learned were Beethoven's *German Dance in A* and a piece of the participant's choice. The *German Dance* had been divided into segments of increasing levels of difficulty. Students were expected to structure their work by practicing from the simplest to most difficult segments in the order provided by Parente. At the end of the research, the faculty members of Westminster Choir College evaluated the students' progress.

Students were also evaluated via:

- Student self-ratings made on a Skills/Challenge Phase of Learning Reporting Form
- In-class observations of students made by Parente
- Student reports on their experience during home practice sessions
- Student comments during the final interviews at the conclusion of the research

Results for two of the nine participants were discussed in detail. These students were more advanced than the others.

Participant #1:

21. Barbara, 18 years old
22. Skill level: had relatively advanced piano skills compared to the other participants, had extensive performing experience in choirs in high school, and had taken AP Music Theory classes
23. Description: dressed casually but neatly, somewhat quiet but interacted well with fellow students and faculty, and worked very hard
24. Progress on required piece, Beethoven *German Dance*
    a. For the first three class periods, she did not adhere to the POL principle of attaining the autonomous stage before moving onto the next segment
    b. Although she never reached the autonomous stage, she was far into the associative stage during the time. Barbara generally stopped before the passages

became automatic
   c. She did not learn the segments in the provided order
   d. Although she did not achieve autonomous stage with each segment to the next, she achieved the flow state, and she was quite successful in learning to play *The German Dance*
   e. Her practice log indicated that she made an improvement in each practice session, and that she was having an "awesome" experience

25. Progress on student-chosen piece, Mozart *Minuet*
   a. She easily segmented the piece in a manner that was logical and well suited to her skill level
   b. Despite a lack of coaching, she was more aware of how the POL model worked and was more consistent at following the POL paradigm with this piece
   c. Barbara had learned to critically evaluate and self-direct her practice. She reported she did not get to the autonomous stage in her last practice session, so she decided to review the passage a few extra times in the next session
   d. Barbara generally worked to the autonomous stage
   e. The Flow state had been achieved with the piece as well. She mentioned that she was "very excited to finish the piece"

The organizational plan that guided her practicing seems to have aided both enjoyment of the learning process and the end result.

Participant #2:

- Sally, 17 years old
- Skill level: had sung in choirs, took AP Music Theory, studied voice privately, had toured Germany for singing with American Music Abroad, was deeply involved with the high school theater, and had little experience in the piano
- Description: was attractive, quiet, intelligent, hard-working, and interacted well with peers
- Progress on required piece, Beethoven *German Dance*
   a. Sally did a wonderful job adhering to the POL principle of reaching the autonomous stage in each segment before moving on to the next
   b. Although she did not always follow the suggested order, she sequenced the segments in such a way that she could play passages at the end of practice instead of working on various passages from different sections
   c. There were only a few segments that did not reach the autonomous stage
   d. She experienced the flow state
- Progress in the student-chosen piece, Clarke *King William's March*
   a. The piece was too easy for her skill level, she decided to switch to Burgmuller's *Le Courant Limpide*
- Progress in Burgmuller *Le Courant Limpide*
   b. As with the *German Dance*, Sally was consistent at following the POL paradigm with this piece
   c. Excellent practice decisions were made - she looked for recurring patterns and technique. Sally then organized her practice sessions accordingly

d. Sally reached the autonomous stage and the flow state. She indicated, "It was really fun. I didn't know how much I would enjoy it because I never really practiced the piano in the past...When I came, I had fun and the time went by so quickly because I wasn't even like thinking about what I was doing. I was just playing and having fun."

Parente concluded that the Phases of Learning model worked well as an organizational tool for every student at all levels. Students were relieved from the anxiety created by the perception that they were about to work on the entire piece at once. Pleasure was derived from the process, which was shown to accelerate the learning. Parente often stressed to his group piano students, "For successful learning to take place, it would be essential that they enjoy what they were doing and that they should continually strive to make it so."

Susan C. Ha is a DMA student in Piano with cognate areas in Piano Pedagogy and Theory at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. She has been studying piano with Awadagin Pratt and pedagogy with Michelle Conda since she began her MM at UC. Other major teachers include Eric Ruple, Gabriel Dobner (Collaborative Piano), and Hae Won Moon. Susan received her BM in Piano Performance from James Madison University. Currently, Ms. Ha holds a graduate assistantship in Secondary Piano and Piano Pedagogy at UC where she teaches group piano classes and private lessons. She also instructs adult group piano classes through UC's *Communiversity* Program and is on the piano faculty of the Cincinnati Music Academy.

Technology in the Group Piano Lab and Beyond

by Jyoti Hench

In this presentation Dr. Mario Ajero described how he uses computer-based technology to enhance the educational experience of his group piano students at Stephen F. Austin State University in Nacogdoches, Texas. He listed three important technological building blocks in his group piano classroom: (1) a notebook computer, (2) an overhead projector that can display anything from the computer, and (3) software. Specifically, Ajero discussed the use of slideshow presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint or Apple Keynote.

Why Use Slideshow Software? Ajero stated that there are three primary benefits to using slideshow presentation software in group piano classes. First, the software helps teachers save time and deliver information efficiently. Second, it allows teachers to address the "push notification mindset" of today's students, who expect to be reminded when important events and deadlines are approaching. Third, slideshow presentation software helps teachers develop organized lesson plans that are fun to create, as well as tangible and visual for students.

What Can Slideshow Software Do? Ajero uses a slideshow presentation for each class period. Each presentation essentially serves as a student version of his lesson plan for the day. Ajero acknowledges that it does take a "considerable" amount of time to create these slideshows. However, he considers this time a worthwhile investment, not only because the slideshows benefit his current students, but also because he is able to use the slideshows again for future classes.

Ajero begins each class period with a "For Today" slide that is displayed as students enter the classroom. The slide contains a few short, clear points - each in a different color - that inform students of what they should begin working on. This way, students can start working on headset right away, before class begins.

Slides can also serve to introduce and review material in class. Ajero obtained permission from Alfred Publishing to scan every page of *Alfred's Group Piano for Adults* and embeds excerpts from the text as needed into his daily slideshow presentations. He does this by opening the scanned textbook page in a PDF-reading software program (such as Apple Preview), and copying and pasting an excerpt from the page into his slideshow presentation.

By using text boxes, teachers can type helpful information onto slides. Ajero uses color and animation to make this information more visually appealing. For example, he uses different font colors to illustrate finger groupings in scales. He also uses animation features (called "builds" in Apple Keynote) to add excitement to sight-reading analysis. For example, for a sight-reading piece in E minor, Ajero showed teachers how to make the symbol "Em" roll onto the slide in a ball of fire. Whenever a "build" appears on a

slide, Ajero prompts students to write the corresponding information in their own books with a pencil.

Ajero ends each class period with a "For Next Time" slide that informs students of what they should work on for the next class. In case students miss this information, or do not write it down, Ajero also makes it available on the class webpage through the university's course management system, Blackboard.

Social Networking In addition to using the class webpage through Blackboard, Ajero uses Facebook to deliver content to - and receive content from - his group piano students. He created a Facebook group for his classes, adjusting privacy settings so that content is closed to everyone except his students. Using Facebook is a supplemental, non-required option for Ajero's students.

Sharing videos is perhaps the most practical use of Facebook for Ajero and his group piano students. Ajero posts instructional videos to Facebook for his students. For example, he shared a "video lesson" that he created for students to watch over spring break. Ajero's videos show him talking and playing, and also include visual aids - such as the piano keyboard and musical staff - through Classroom Maestro software. To make these videos, Ajero uses six components: (1) an external FireWire camera, (2) a Yamaha Disklavier piano, (3) a MacBook computer, (4) Classroom Maestro software, (5) ScreenFlow or Camtasia software to capture Classroom Maestro animations onto video, and (6) IMovie software to do simple editing. Ajero, along with Dr. Stella Sick of Hamline University, will give a presentation at the 2011 MTNA National Conference that will demonstrate, in greater detail, how to make these types of multimedia instructional videos.

Ajero also receives videos from students via Facebook. Students have the option of performing quiz material on videos that they record - usually with their cell phone cameras - and post to Facebook. Ajero never leaves grades on Facebook; instead, he refers students to the class Blackboard page to view their grades and comments.

Conclusion Ajero showed teachers how to create slideshow presentations for daily use in group piano classes, as well as how to use social networking websites such as Facebook to deliver information to - and receive information from - students. Although incorporating these applications takes extra time from teachers, the benefits that students receive from this type of instruction make this time worthwhile. In addition, this time can be considered an investment for future classes. Finally, computer-based technology allows teachers to communicate through media with which today's students are familiar and comfortable.

Online Resources

Classroom Maestro Software

ScreenFlow Software

Jyoti Hench is a doctoral candidate in Piano Performance and Pedagogy at the University of Oklahoma. She has taught pre-college piano students in her own independent studio, as well as in children's programs at California State University, Sacramento, and the University of Oklahoma. She has also taught collegiate group and applied piano as a graduate teaching assistant. Jyoti holds degrees from the University of California at Santa Cruz and California State University, Sacramento.

All in the Spirit of Friendly Competition: Using Contests to Motivate the Collegiate Class Piano Student

by Alexis Ignatiou

In-class contests have been known to promote interest in the subject matter and make the learning experience more enjoyable. With a little encouragement, class piano students are willing to step out of their comfort zone and become active participants. Dr. Terry Lynn Hudson, Assistant Professor of Piano at Baylor University, uses a variety of in-class contests to encourage collaboration and prepare her students for an upcoming exam. Even though there aren't any tangible awards for winning teams, students celebrate their "victories" by knowing that they have absorbed the test material and will do well on the upcoming exam. Isn't that a great reward?

While some in-class contests involve playing the keyboard, games like *Running Charades* don't include performance. In this case, the class is divided into teams; the objective is for each team to be the first to answer a series of questions. Following a correct answer, the next question is given and the game progresses. Sample questions include the following:

a. Which major and minor scales are fingered exactly like C Major?
b. Which arpeggio did we nickname "the claw," and what does this mean in terms of fingering?
c. Which minor arpeggios are fingered 5 4 2 1 in the left hand?

In the case of *Split-Class Contest*, teams are formed and judged on their combined performances. This is a quick activity that can be incorporated spontaneously and it works well for any skill area. The group huddle version of this contest includes a brief team discussion before presenting a skill at the keyboard.

In *Sudden Death*, the strongest individual participants are recognized. However, there is more than one version to the game. The "Survivor" version measures the ability to successfully complete a piece or exercise. The "Around-the-room" version reinforces first-time accuracy in technical patterns.

Scaleathon is another activity that incorporates fun with learning. The game is designed to make technical practice more interesting. It is especially valuable for review work, as other students can "play" along silently, while students perform individually. The performers contribute to a team score and the activity concludes with the "Final Jeopardy" round.

Even though Dr. Hudson's presentation focused on class contests that require minimal or no physical activity, she did stress the importance of being aware of our surroundings in a classroom setting. She encouraged instructors to consider space restrictions and classroom safety before undertaking any physical activities; the modern piano lab often contains wiring, power strips, headphones, and other contraptions that can obstruct and

endanger students. Safety first!

This report quotes directly at times from Dr. Hudson's handout *All in the Spirit of Friendly Competition: Using Contests to Motivate the Collegiate Class Piano Student*.

Alexis Ignatiou is completing the DMA in Piano Performance at the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music where he studies with Elizabeth Pridonoff and is also pursuing a minor in Arts Administration and Piano Pedagogy. He currently serves as President of the Graduate Student Governance Association at the University of Cincinnati. Ignatiou also served as President of the Graduate Student Association at CCM and from 2007-2010 held the teaching assistantship in secondary piano, working with Michelle Conda. He earned the MM at UNCG working with Paul Stewart and John Salmon. Ignatiou is the recipient of a 2004 MTNA StAR Award. In 2004-2007, he and his wife Connie (CCM-DMA Oboe Performance) worked in the Republic of Cyprus teaching music at the collegiate level and together organized a series of educational concerts with the support of the Ministry of Education.

It's True! Your Pedagogy Students Can Easily Graduate As MTNA Certified Teachers!

by Kari Johnson

Wouldn't it be wonderful if all piano pedagogy students were not only registered as MTNA members, but were also seeking MTNA certification as part of their degree? By incorporating certification into the pedagogy program, students will not only have additional help with their studies, but will also graduate holding degrees and national certification. In this fast paced and well-organized presentation, Dr. Rebecca Grooms Johnson explained how the new MTNA certification process easily coincides with an undergraduate piano pedagogy curriculum. The new certification process, which began on January 1st, 2010, is directed towards teaching ability and easily dovetails with a piano pedagogy curriculum. It also gets rid of the "red tape" of the previous process.

The goal of MTNA certification is to recognize and certify competent teaching. Unlike the previous certification process, the new system is streamlined and easy to understand. The Teacher Profile Process requires two steps. Step 1 is to complete and submit the application, which can be found at www.mtnacertification.org. Step 2 is to complete the five Teacher Profile Projects.

Before beginning the five Teacher Profile Projects, all applicants should read the instrument-appropriate Teacher Profile Workbook. This text contains detailed instructions about each of the required five self-study projects. Another required text is "Piano Teacher Profile Projects: What will the evaluators be looking for?" This text includes suggestions for the completion of each project.

The five projects for certification are:

1. Write your Teaching Philosophy The Piano Teacher Profile Projects workbook states that the teaching philosophy is a "written narrative" that "defines **how** you teach, **why** you teach, **what** you teach, and **who** you teach and impacts every determination you make in your professional life." This document should be no more than 600 words.
2. Analyze four teaching pieces Each applicant will be given four pieces to analyze. The analysis is done in essay format, and must touch on topics found in the Piano Teacher Profile Projects Workbook. Applicants will discuss each piece's significance in regards to music history, theory, and technical development.
3. Present your teaching Applicants will record a series of lessons to show how they introduce, develop, and polish a work with a student. Lessons should include clear instructions for student practice, supplemental theory or technique materials, and student incorporation of appropriate stylistic interpretation. A written self-evaluation is also required. This series of lessons should be submitted in DVD format.
4. Share information about your teaching environment All applicants must write a short (300 word) statement about their teaching environment. Pictures and other

documentation should be included to prove that each applicant creates a positive, clean, organized learning environment for their students.

5. Discuss your business ethics and studio policies Each applicant will be given three scenarios and must discuss how they would deal with a problem with a student, colleague, and parent. Applicants are encouraged to consult the MTNA code of ethics. Applicants must also provide a hypothetical business plan to demonstrate their understanding of basic economical principles of running a private music studio.

All materials must be sent in hard copy to the appropriate address. All applicants have one year to complete the process. The five projects can be completed ahead of time, making it ideal for students. In addition, when students graduate, they must become active MTNA members in order to maintain their certification, which is good for the organization as a whole.

At the end of the presentation, several audience members had questions. The questions and answers are listed below:

How does certification work for College faculty members? College faculty used to have to submit their transcripts. Now, all full and part time college faculty simply need to submit the appropriate form with their supervisor's signature. Transcripts and letters of recommendation are no longer needed.

Is there a special certification process for DMA holders who are NOT on a faculty? No; DMA and PhD holders who are not on a college or university faculty must complete the normal application process to obtain certification.

When should students apply? When they're done with their pedagogy sequence. Teachers can advise their pedagogy students on each of the five projects except for the analysis and the ethics scenarios. Since the material can be completed in advance, it is easy to include these activities in an undergraduate pedagogy curriculum.

Can students who are CMTNA members apply for certification? Yes, but they must become active members in order to maintain certification.

Who are the evaluators? Evaluators are divisional commissioners who are not from the applicant's division. Two evaluators are assigned to each application. In the case of a tie, Rebecca Grooms Johnson will be the tiebreaker.

How are evaluators trained? Evaluators receive written information. A committee also meets and watches sample videos to maintain evaluation standards across the board.

What feedback will be given? Rejected applicants will be given notes on what was missing from their application and what they need to do to improve. No feedback will be given to passing applicants.

What if you are unable to complete the process within one calendar year? You must request an extension in writing to receive an automatic second year.

What is the fee structure? The fees are listed on the application as $200 for MTNA members and $350 for non-members for the first area of certification. Each additional area is $150 for members and $275 for non-members. Some states will reimburse full or partial fees to students who become certified, but students need to be active at graduation.

Does the new process effect state level certification? No; state certification is up to each state.

When does certification expire? Renewal must begin on July 1st of each year. Completion of the process in October or after includes the next year. Reminder emails are sent at the end of each cycle. This is a change from the previous 5-year renewal; with one year it is easier to keep track of the teaching points. Now, you need only accumulate 3 points per year.

MTNA is excited and proud of the new streamlined certification process, and will measure its success by the number of new applicants, the number of renewals, and how the whole process works. More information can be found at www.mtnacertification.org.

Kari Johnson teaches applied piano as an adjunct faculty member at Avila University in Kansas City. She is currently completing her DMA in Piano Performance at the University of Missouri Kansas City where she serves as a GTA in group piano, applied piano, and chamber coaching. She holds degrees from the University of Central Missouri, Bowling Green State University, and the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

Transitioning From Student To Teacher In The Master-Apprentice Model Of Piano Pedagogy: Challenges, Solutions, Reflections And Suggestions For The Future

by Erika Kinser

Melissa Slawsky's session focused on the transition that occurs when adjusting from student to teacher upon graduation from college and the effectiveness of the master-apprentice model as a means of learning to teach. The report included suggestions for overcoming the hurdles during the transition time, which, in turn, furthers the field of piano pedagogy. Her information was based upon twenty-two questions that she asked during interviews conducted with eight piano teachers.

The problems identified were three-fold: 1) to discover the challenges faced during the transition from student to teacher; 2) to identify solutions and resources in overcoming these challenges; and 3) to share experiences that prepared the student for the challenges of the transition. The interviewed teachers were also asked what challenges they currently face, as well as curricula suggestions to enhance the future of piano pedagogy.

The Results

Early in the transition time from being a student to a teacher, the teachers discovered several challenges. Perhaps, the most crucial one in particular was an under-developed teaching style. Most felt it was necessary and natural to emulate their previous applied teachers. However, the interviewees all made specific comments on how much they desired this imitation. Some copied their teachers "very much so." Others tried to be the opposite of their master teacher, while others only followed the positive aspects of their former teachers. Other challenges included choosing curricula, dealing with disciplinary issues, enforcing studio polices, a lack of support, and acquiring new students. These teachers found solutions through various means, such as gaining experience through trial and error, reading articles, treatises, and books, having discussion forums with peers and mentors, joining professional organizations, and improving general communication skills within their studio.

After this initial transition time, the teachers were asked to comment on their current challenges. These also varied, and included competing with other extra-curricular activities, transitioning students from method books to intermediate literature, managing lesson time, and helping students develop their own performance style. Also discussed was the notion of the parents' and students' lack of value placed upon piano study as a serious endeavor. The challenges of teaching new populations of students arose, such as the pre-school student, a special needs student, or an adult hobbyist student. Current economic situations were seen as a challenge for some teachers as well.

The solutions to these challenges included the use of online music resources, fake books, and new forms of advertising. One solution that remained constant from the previous section was the discussion group with colleagues and mentors. Also, by this point in their careers, the teachers had learned how to tailor their curricula to the individual needs of

the student, which was seen by them as a solution to some of the previous challenges faced.

The Relevancy of the Piano Pedagogy Coursework to Professional Careers

The eight respondents were asked to comment on effective and ineffective contents of piano pedagogy coursework completed in their college educations. The respondents concluded that writing teaching philosophies, surveying method books, developing studio policies, observing experienced teachers, and partaking in a discussion group with experienced teachers and peers were all helpful components of their piano pedagogy experiences in school. Additionally, the respondents cited the development of lists of literature and curricula for individual and group teaching settings and the logistics of establishing a studio as beneficial aspects of their piano pedagogy coursework.

The areas in which the respondents felt they were ill equipped as a result of their piano pedagogy coursework were intermediate and advanced repertoire, special populations of students, and non-traditional notation-based playing methods (such as improvisation, lead sheets, harmonization, and playing by ear). Lastly, the interviewed teachers felt poorly equipped to manage the business aspects of their studios, ranging from taxes and insurance to record keeping and new forms of advertising. The area of their piano pedagogy coursework that teachers felt was most ineffective was inauthentic teaching experiences and scenarios.

The Future, as it relates to Piano Pedagogy

The eight interviewees were asked in hindsight what topics they would have liked to have received guidance in during their piano pedagogy coursework. The topics included hands-on teaching experience (not discussion only), filing taxes, record-keeping (including software for assisting in this area), advertising and marketing, improvisation, playing by ear, basic child development, learning styles, and new approaches to teaching technique. In addition to these topics, the teachers desired training in specific techniques for teaching students with special needs or new populations of students. Also desired was observation time of established professional teachers.

In retrospect, the teachers who were interviewed had varying opinions as to the relevancy of their coursework in college as it related to their professional careers. What is curious to note, though, is that "those who had a smoother transition into the teaching role taught throughout their time in higher education and did not rely solely on the curriculum to prepare them for teaching" (Slawsky). Lastly, the interviewed teachers recommended that studies in piano pedagogy be required of all performance majors. Also, they suggested that improvisation, business skills, and technology be a part of all piano pedagogy curricula.

Melissa Slawsky's interviews are going to be expanded into a large-scale study that will result in her doctoral dissertation at the University of South Florida. As a result of her

PhD in Music Education and the extensive research skills that she has acquired through her studies, she also has plans in the future to establish a Piano Pedagogy Research Association (PPRA) that will assist piano pedagogues in surveys, statistics, and research.

Erika Kinser is a doctoral student in the Conservatory of Music and Dance at the University of Missouri-Kansas City. She currently studies with Dr. Robert Weirich and teaches both group piano and applied piano to Conservatory music majors of all levels.

Creative Sight Reading

by Jun Matsuo

Cole Burger, Instructor of Music at the University of Nebraska at Omaha, presented a session that offered creative ideas for drilling sight-reading in group piano classes. He strives to present sight-reading activities to his classes in different ways in order to keep them from becoming monotonous. His suggestions for new and creative ways to sight-read were presented in two categories: preparatory steps and performance steps. Throughout the presentation, the importance of rhythm and continuity was emphasized.

The Preparatory Steps

1. *What do you see?* With a musical example projected on the screen, the first of three preparation activities was presented: show the example for a brief moment and then hide it from the students and ask them, "What did you see?" Burger expressed the importance of knowing what to look for as well as audiating what has been seen. In earlier stages, students usually begin with basic information such as clefs, time signature, and key signature. It is crucial to encourage students to see larger concepts such as chord shapes, broken chords, texture, etc. so that students are preparing to play the music the moment they begin looking at it.
2. *Focus on rhythm*. Students will only get to play the examples once when they are sight-reading. Including an opportunity for them to practice the rhythm is thus important. Burger suggested that students be prompted to read melodic/harmonic intervals in time without stopping. To foster this, Burger suggested making the sound "eh" in place of intervals that students encounter and don't recognize. Substituting a syllable for an unfamiliar interval encourages students to eliminate the undesired action (stumbling, stopping, or going back to the beginning) that does not help when they attempt to sight-read a piece.
3. *Tap your head and rub your stomach*. Since piano is a two-handed instrument, sight-reading with both hands is expected even though many group piano students tend to start by playing one hand at a time. Burger explored how to practice coordination skills before playing two-handed examples. Having students speak one part while they tap the other part may be a helpful activity before they actually play both parts at the piano. This will encourage students to engage in reading and executing both parts even though they are not yet playing both parts at the same time. He emphasized that this should also be done in rhythm, placing a sound like "eh" in places where the student can't figure out what they are reading so that the concept of keeping time is reinforced.

The Performance Steps

1. *Preview for counting*. Counting while playing is important and he emphasized that selective counting is better than no counting. Burger encourages students to look for places in the example where they will need to focus on the counting such as rests, longer notes, and especially dotted notes.

2. *Focus on the left hand*. Harmony is most often present in the left hand. Burger suggests that students "smush" the right hand part if they encounter measures in which it is difficult to maintain continuity.
3. Look at the music. Burger recommends covering up students' hands so that they keep their eyes on the music and away from their hands. He also suggests possibly taking the music away, which may seems opposite to what you want them to do but this may get their attention back to the music they are attempting to play.

In conclusion, Burger expressed how the importance of competent sight-reading skills, which was explained as "can you play what sounds like what is on the page," is essential to schoolteachers who have little time to practice with their busy schedules. The surface learning that is highlighted in sight-reading activities may help students perform better. Reinforcement of the importance of not stopping when you make a mistake may also transfer into their solo performances, which could help strengthen their performance ability. He also pointed out the importance of integrating other musical concepts/knowledge into sight-reading activities. For example, theoretical concepts can be reviewed or composer background information can be provided. A brief casual discussion between the presenter and attendees followed that focused on counting and rhythm. Martha Hilley commented on the importance of encouraging students to count with the inflection with which they would perform the music.

Jun Matsuo is Assistant Professor of Music at Coker College where she teaches piano and music theory. She is versatile as both a solo and collaborative performer, appearing as guest artist up and down the east coast. Over the last few years, her performance and teaching activities have expanded internationally to include Japan, Malaysia, and France. She is presently on the board of directors for the South Carolina Music Teachers Association and is also active as an adjudicator in the southeast region. Dr. Matsuo earned her DMA in Piano Pedagogy from the University of South Carolina, and prior degrees from Binghamton University and the State University of New York at Plattsburgh.

Improvising Is For Everyone

by Hannah Mayo

Jazz educator Bradley Sowash presented effective ways of helping students attempt improvisation at the piano. After a quick philosophical discussion about the imbalances of traditional piano teaching (too much eye, not enough ear), he explained the importance of improvising in student's lives. Whether it be playing lead sheet praise music at church, vamping at a school musical, or just forgetting notes of that Bach minuet and needing to "kill time until remembering a cadence" all musicians are called upon to improvise at some point.

Sowash recalled a story about Louis Armstrong that helped connect the dots for all the classically trained audience members. Someone once asked Louis Armstrong what his recipe for music was. He responded, "First, I plays the melody, then I routines the melody (enhance or embellish the melody)." Although Armstrong didn't say it, he always came back to the melody. Sowash helped bridge the gap from reading music to improvising by describing a possible teacher-student interaction. First, take a Haydn tune (for example) and tell your students to play the tune. Next, tell them "All those notes worked fine for Haydn so they will work fine for you." Then have the students mix up the notes to create a new tune. Sowash continually accompanies on a jimbay drum to keep an interesting beat for the student, but also so he "wouldn't get bored."

Sowash called an audience volunteer up to the piano and went through the improvising process with his new "student." He wrote out a progression consisting only of primary chords (I, IV, and V) in the key of C Major. He had the volunteer play the C major scale and primary chords until she was comfortable with the key. He then had her play the C major scale (in eighth notes) over the progression he wrote out for her. Then he told her to do the same thing, only this time randomly changing the direction of the scale (only steps, no skips). He later directed her to add longer tones. He avoids saying "quarter note" or "half note" because they tend to eliminate syncopations. Finally, he directed her to add occasional leaps to her melody. Then she had officially improvised a new tune.
Sowash ended the discussion with a few secrets to help traditional piano teachers and their students improvise more.

1. Do not correct a student's ending note if it doesn't match the chord: eventually they will figure it out. When they do, offer them this advice: "Always remember that if you don't like a note you ended on, a better one is only one step away."
2. It matters a little what note you start on, a lot what note you end on, and what you play in between doesn't matter much at all.
3. Classical players like clear directions. By using the process described to the volunteer, even classical players can improvise.

Although Sowash was unable to give his entire presentation due to time restraints, his detailed handout offered a valuable step-by-step guide on playing by ear. The first step is to choose a song and work out the basic tune. Teachers should stick to songs with mostly

primary chords (i.e. folk, Christmas, and pop songs). Working out the tune in the key of C comes next. The student should play the scale a few times to get the sound in their ear, then find tonic. After locating tonic, the student should find the starting note (it might not be on C). The student should "hunt and peck" the melody and memorize it. After figuring out the melody, the chords should be added. Melody implies harmony so the students should use notes that come on strong beats to make educated assumptions about what chord fits. If the melody has a note on a strong beat that is in more than one chord (i.e. F is in the F and G7 chord), test which one is better. Then the student is ready to put the melody and the chords together. Once the basic melody and harmony are figured out, the student should add style. The teacher can accompany using a common left-hand pattern while the student continues playing blocked chords. Beginning students combine a left-hand pattern appropriate to their level with a right-hand melody. Intermediate students can add stylistic embellishment to the melody. Advancing students can include harmony in the right hand alongside the melody. Harmony notes should always be below the melody. Sowash compiled a variety of left-hand patterns including Rock, Latin, Swing, Boogie, Reggae, Fifties, and Lyrical Styles.

For more information visit www.bradelysowash.com.

Hannah E. Mayo holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in Piano Pedagogy and recently received a Master of Music Degree in Piano Performance from the University of Louisiana at Lafayette where she was awarded the Phi Beta Kappa Masters Award. As a graduate assistant, she taught applied piano, class piano, and music theory. Currently, she teaches group piano classes at UL Lafayette, private/group piano lessons at the Acadiana School of the Arts, REACH (an after school child development program), and in her own private studio.

Project-Based Instruction in the University Group Piano Program for Music Majors

by Emily Book McGree

Dr. Christopher Fisher, Coordinator of Group Piano Studies at Ohio University, offered a multitude of possible projects to benefit music majors in group piano sequences. Fisher provided examples of both individual and group projects. Most students at Ohio University take three years of group piano courses. Fisher stated that within the 3rd year, classes are almost exclusively project based, with two projects every quarter, one individual and one group. In addition, students also participate in mid-term and final exams each quarter. Students are evaluated and given grades on each project from the viewpoint of a potential future employer. They are required to video record and include each project in their professional portfolio.

Sample Individual Projects:

1. *Choral Rehearsal Project*: Students select a middle/high school level choral score that they will hopefully use in the future. They must prepare each part and be able to play all combinations while running a 15-minute sample choral rehearsal. Students must also present an overview of the composition, be knowledgeable of the composer, and keep the choir engaged with questions.
2. *Art Song Accompaniment Project*: Students must prepare the accompaniment to an art song in various tempi, as well as play and sing the melody line. They are responsible for preparing a performance with a singer, providing knowledge of the work and composer, and discussing pedagogical techniques for teaching and rehearsing the song.
3. *Composition Project*: Students must compose a 24-measure piece, provide a computer-generated score on Finale or Sibelius and perform their composition for the class. Fisher also proposes variations: 1) Compose and perform piano accompaniments for beginning band/vocal methods, 2) Compose and perform piano duets or ensembles, 3) Compose/improvise and perform a score to accompany a children's book.
4. *Popular Music Transcription Project*: Students select a pop song from a CD, determine the chord progression, notate the melody and accompaniment, sing and perform a similar version, and transpose to a closely related key. For extra credit, students may also record each part on sequencing software, adding additional instruments.
5. *Styles Improvisation/Compositional Project*: This project is for 2nd year students. They must select a melody and compose variations in at least four different styles. Students submit a computer-generated score and perform their improvisation/composition for the class.

Sample Group Projects:

1. *Piano and my Profession*: This project is for all 1st year students and requires them to research and demonstrate ways the piano is used in each profession. Each

group interviews a professional in their area, presents their findings to the class, and submits a written essay to the instructor identifying specific goals and strategies necessary to use to realize the goals.

2. *Styles Improvisation Investigation*: The instructor offers a presentation on different styles of piano playing (i.e. jazz, rock, blues, etc.) and students form groups with class members interested in the same genre. Each group must research their choice, create an ensemble improvisation, and teach classmates about the style.
3. *Annotated Choral Warm-Up Compendium/Demonstration*: This project is for Choral Music Education majors. Each student in the group must compose four original choral warm-ups, give a class presentation explaining the objective, and play the warm-ups in ascending chromatic order while directing the class from the keyboard. Students must compose a creative accompaniment and provide a computer-notated copy to be compiled with all the warm-ups from the class.
4. *Ensemble Accompanying*: This project is for Music Therapy majors. Students must collaborate on an ensemble composition that includes at least four instruments with a piano accompaniment. Instrument parts should be easily playable for clients and may be rhythm cells or ostinato patterns on rhythm instruments. Students present a class demonstration with students rotating on the piano part and a computer-generated score.

In conclusion, Fisher mentioned all of the above projects are included in his recently published text, *Teaching Piano in Groups*. He also commented on various trends he has noticed in his classes that participate in these group projects, including a greater ownership from students, a higher level of preparation for class, and an increase in commitment to the subject matter. More information, including sample projects and study guides, can be found on Fisher's companion website to the text: teachingpianoingroups.

Emily Book McGree is currently a doctoral candidate at The University of Colorado at Boulder. A native of Delaware, Ohio, Emily received a Bachelor's degree in Piano Performance from Ohio Wesleyan University and a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Louisiana State University. She served as graduate assistant at both LSU and CU and is currently the director of piano studies at the Parlando School for the Arts. Emily has also presented research at state and national conferences of the Music Teachers Association.

Breakout Session: Group Piano For Non-Music Majors In The Small College

by Miroslava Panayotova

The morning session of group piano day was a panel presentation entitled *The View: Innovative Formats Within Group Piano Teaching*. Four teachers in different group piano venues introduced their programs and shared their experiences and expertise. This was followed in the afternoon with breakout sessions in which each of the panelists presented more in-depth discussions of their particular teaching venue. Introduced were the Yamaha Music Education System for children, group piano in a public high school setting, college classes for non-music majors, and hobby classes for adult beginners. This report highlights the afternoon breakout session presented by Dr. Michael Benson. His presentation focused on *Group Piano For Non-Music Majors In The Small College Environment*.

Dr. Michael Benson, NCTM, is on the music faculty at The Ohio State University in Lima where he teaches piano, group piano and serves as the music director for the University Chorus and the Chamber Singers ensembles. Three group piano classes are offered for non-music majors during the autumn, winter, and spring quarters (ten weeks each). These include Music 101.01 (two sections offered in autumn and one section in winter), Music 102.01 (one section offered in winter and one in spring), and Music 208.01 (one section offered in spring).

Music 101.01 is designed to introduce and develop basic music reading and performance skills at the piano. The required textbook is *Piano for Pleasure*, written by Martha Hilley and Lynn Freeman Olson. Music 102.01 is a continuation for students who have successfully completed Music 101. Music 208.01, *Small Ensemble Course*, is designed for students who have completed Music 101 and Music 102. This class focuses on the development of ensemble playing and was added to the curriculum at the request of students who wanted to continue their piano lessons on campus. Students work on duets from *Piano for Pleasure*, learn teacher accompaniments of their Music 101 repertoire pieces, and explore supplemental duet repertoire.

In his presentation, Benson shared teaching strategies and assessment techniques that he uses in his non-music major group piano classroom. The main topics he discussed included:

I. Involving students in self-evaluation while implementing a performance checklist and blogging
II. Introducing music composition
III. Initiating a small piano ensemble course within the curriculum

Involving students in self-evaluation is an instrumental component of Dr. Benson's curriculum. His techniques include videotaping of students' own performances, asking students to write descriptions of their personal experiences with the videotaping, and requiring their self-assessment of the performances through checklists and blogging.

Representative examples of each of these techniques are discussed below.

I. Student Self-Evaluation through "Carmen." [1]

A. Incorporating Videotaped Self-Evaluation Checklist

During the first weeks of the term, beginning non-music major students videotape their performances and complete a self-evaluation checklist of ten behaviors in regard to proper sitting position and posture. (See Example 1)
Example 1: Checklist - Proper Physical Adjustment to the Piano/Keyboard (Video Self-Assessment)
YES__NO__
_____ _____ 1. Proper sitting position on bench (front half of bench, closest to piano)
_____ _____ 2. Knees below front edge of keyboard
_____ _____ 3. Bottom of feet on floor
_____ _____ 4. Elbows at key level (adjust bench up or down)
_____ _____ 5. Hands in lap (starting position)
_____ _____6. Fluid motion in arm and wrist (during performance)
_____ _____7. Finger leads to the keyboard before each note (during performance)
_____ _____8. Curved fingers that support weight of arm (during performance)
_____ _____9. Wrist leads away from keyboard after each note (during performance)
_____ _____10. Hands in lap (ending position)

GRADE: * Each "Yes" answer is worth 10 points. So, multiply the number of correct behaviors times 10 to find out your grade. For example, if you had 9 "Yes" answers you would multiply 9x10=90 and your grade would be an A-.

B. Blogging to Assist Student Learning and Discussion

Blogs function as a personal written expression of each student's understanding and self-assessment of in-class activities and out-of-class practice techniques. Students use the blogs as open forums for discussing both their videotaped performances and their self-assessment checklists. Blogging is essential in addressing and clarifying concepts studied in class, practice techniques, fingering, sight-reading, and repertoire performances, among others. An example of the implementation of blogging was presented from the assignments of Music 102.01. Dr. Benson requires responses to the questions for the final grade. He will intervene to include an encouraging comment - "I liked your description," or if a student described a concept incorrectly. The following are three example questions and students' responses to the questions posed:

Blog question: What is the most challenging issue you face when sight-reading a piece for the first time?

That's simple. The rhythms. I can normally get the notes no problem. Just trying to figure out the rhythms throws everything else off. (J.B.)

I just have to read ahead when sight-reading before I can play. Bass clef takes me a wee bit longer, but I'm handling it. I also feel like I change the tempo while playing and thus, mess up the rhythm. (C. D.)

Blog question: Do you read or see the piano fingering provided in the score when you first sight-read a piece? Do you ever change the fingering? Why?

I try to figure out what scale the piece is in and go from there. The only time I move my position is if the piece requires my hand to move, or if my hand just decides it doesn't want to listen to what I am telling it and moves on its' own, which happens a lot. (A. E.)

Blog question: How would you describe the technique we used to learn "One-Four-Seven" on page 194? Did it work for you? Why?

I really enjoyed the rote part of learning to play because I like to be able to have confidence of knowing I can play it and then looking at the written version to put it together. This is the same method I use when I write a composition. I play something, then write it down and put the two together. (B.S.)

I liked learning "1-4-7" by rote as it was easier for me to play and get the hang of, and it was easier for me to do a composition on also. The piece really worked for me and it is actually one of my favorite pieces. (T. T.)

II. Introducing Music composition within the Group Piano Classroom

Benson introduces music composition during the first class meeting. Taking advantage of the fact that *Piano for Pleasure* brings in tapping of finger numbers as a pre-staff reading approach, he asks students to create finger-number compositions (right- and left-hand) and tap them, starting with a single finger number composition. The activities that follow include incorporation of quarter- and half-note rhythms, succeeded by the addition of note names within the C Major five-finger pattern. The creative process of the composition contributes to a simultaneous assimilation of rhythm and technique during the first class.

After students have performed a collection of repertoire pieces in class, Benson asks them to compose their own piece. The only limitation is to incorporate musical elements similar to those introduced with the piece in the textbook. The students enjoy sight-reading and performing each other's compositions. Blog questions address challenges faced by the students during the composition process. In the course of the presentation, Benson highlighted compositions fashioned after various pieces from the textbook *Piano For Pleasure*: "Dreamer," "Happy Feet," "Change of Pace," and "D Minor Coolness."

III. Initiating a Small Piano Ensemble Course within the Curriculum

Dr. Benson played a videotaped ensemble performance of "The Little Chapel" during the

presentation. He explained that after video-recordings are uploaded to "Carmen," students answer questions on challenges they discovered during the learning process, how they incorporated practice techniques, and their experiences in working as a team to assemble the different parts together.

Blog question: Would you choose to learn and perform other duets or ensemble pieces? Why?

I would do other ensembles in the future if I had the chance. Playing with someone else brings a whole new dynamic to playing because you have to play more confidently and you have to know how or what the other person is going to play. (D. S.)

In the age of university online courses, course management systems like Blackboard, and communication tools such as Skype, Benson's presentation inspires a quest for using cyberspace as a group piano teaching medium to an even greater extent. His presentation provided a glance into his innovative and successful application of technology in the non-music major group piano classroom.

Notes

1. "Carmen" is a computer-based learning management system. Its name is a reference to The Ohio State University's alma mater, "Carmen Ohio." The system offers an integrated set of online course tools for instructors and students to collaborate and share course materials, including discussion boards and audio and video clip integration.

Miroslava Panayotova is Visiting Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of South Florida where she teaches studio piano, piano pedagogy and class piano, coaches chamber music, and continues her long-lasting association with choral ensembles as an accompanist. She has made numerous appearances as recitalist and concerto soloist in the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia, Romania, and Mexico. Panayotova has appeared at many music festivals including the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival in Vermont, XXI Festival Dr. Alfonso Ortiz Tirado 2005 in Mexico, and the Orford Festival in Canada. Her numerous awards include the first prize at the Green Valley Piano Competition in 2007, the Silver Medal at the Svetoslav Obretenov National Piano Competition in Bulgaria, and a semifinalist at the 2002 Missouri Southern International Piano Competition. As a winner of the 2006-2007 President's Concerto Competition, Panayotova appeared with The Arizona Symphony Orchestra. Panayotova holds performance degrees from the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria where she studied with Daniela Andonova, and an M.M. Degree from the University as South Florida where she studied with Svetozar Ivanov. Presently, she is a DMA candidate at the University of Arizona, where she studies with Tannis Gibson.

Breakout Session: Yamaha Music Education System

by Miroslava Panayotova

The morning session of group piano day was a panel presentation entitled *The View: Innovative Formats Within Group Piano Teaching*. Four teachers in different group piano venues introduced their programs and shared their experiences and expertise. This was followed in the afternoon with breakout sessions in which each of the panelists presented more in-depth discussions of their particular teaching venue. Introduced were the Yamaha Music Education System (YMES) for children, group piano in a public high school setting, college classes for non-music majors, and hobby classes for adult beginners. This report highlights the afternoon breakout session presented by Kathy Anzis, director of teacher training for the Music Education Division of Yamaha Corporation of America. She discussed the process for becoming a certified Yamaha teacher and the different courses that comprise YMES.

Teacher Certification Process

A teacher candidate must demonstrate skills in performance, theory, harmonization, improvisation, sight-singing and sight-playing. Upon passing the entrance examination, the candidates attend *Certification Seminar A*. After the completion of Seminar A, teachers are certified to teach beginning levels (Junior Music Course and Young Musician Course). The teachers submit DVDs with videotaped teaching sessions of these levels. Approximately twelve certified teachers are involved in the evaluations of the video recordings. A year after completing *Certification Seminar A*, the candidates attend *Certification Seminar B*. Again, they submit additional DVDs for evaluation. Yamaha Corporation continues to update the training of its teachers through seminars and workshops.

Teacher Candidate Exam Certification Seminar A Begin Teaching (Junior Music Course, Young Musician Course) Teaching Evaluations Certification Seminar B Teaching Evaluations

YMES Courses

The Yamaha Music Education System offers unique music courses that are tailored to the age, ability, and development of the students. Music Wonderland, Yamaha's nine-month program, is designed for three-year-old children. The Junior Music Course (JMC) is the "cornerstone" of the Yamaha Music Education System. This is a two-year curriculum, designed for four- and five-year-old beginners. After a student has completed the Junior Music Course, an audition is administered to assess the musical achievement and to determine the student's placement in one of the following programs: Junior Extension Course (JXC) or Junior Special Advanced Course (JSAC). Both courses are designed for six- and seven-year-old children. Most of the JMC graduates continue their studies in the two-year program of the Junior Extension Course after a successful audition. After

students complete this course, they may enroll in the Junior Advanced Course (JAC), a two-year program for eight- and nine-year olds. JMC graduates who demonstrate advanced capabilities continue their music study in the four-year accelerated curriculum of the Junior Special Advanced Course. A different program, the Young Musician Course (YMC) is an entry-level course for six- to eight-year-old beginners and offers three years of study.

Features of the Junior Music Course

Two-year course (four semesters)

- Offers group lessons for four- and five-year-old children
- Parent participation is required
- Extensive work on the development of general musicianship
- Serves as a foundation of the Yamaha curriculum

During the first semester of the Junior Music Course, students are exposed to a variety of activities including: singing solfege, playing the keyboard, singing songs with words, rhythm exercises, and introduction to music rudiments and music appreciation topics. One of the unique features of the Yamaha method is its outstanding ear-training. This is possible because solfege is the core of the method. The use of "Fixed-Do" solfege (without altered syllables) enables students to internalize the pitches and to learn their pieces by singing. During the first semester the students experience singing in the keys of C Major, G Major and F Major. The teacher sings melodic patterns, which the students imitate. Anzis played a video showing a class in which the students were learning the song *Happy Elephan*t (based on an alternation between "Do" and "Re"). The teacher sang with the children and created gestures, images and movements that stimulated the students' attention.

Music appreciation segments focus on the character, form, and orchestration of studied compositions. CD and DVD recordings accompany each of the method books. The CD recording includes orchestral arrangements of the pieces studied and serves to accompany students while they play their repertoire at home. The DVD recordings incorporate fun animations created specifically for the pieces. Anzis demonstrated a video accompanying the *Ballet of the Chickens in Their Shells* from Modest Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition*. She pointed out that the students do not watch the DVDs in class; they are intended for home practice.

During the second semester of the Junior Music Course, students work on singing the solfege of their keyboard pieces. A video recording of a JMC class at the playing stage was shown. The students focused on the expression and the accompanying gestures for the contrasting phrases in the piece (march-like detached first phrase and smoothly connected cantilena second phrase). Students sang the piece and played with the parents who attended the course. Through singing solfege, students develop a strong sense of pitch training, singing by ear, rhythm, harmony, form, phrase structure, key, articulation,

dynamics, and mood. In the Yamaha method, "keyboard solfege" is the main process, which connects the ear and the keyboard. It refers to the established internal association between sound, keyboard topography, gestures used while playing, and the physical motion that would be required to create the specific articulation and dynamics, in order to match the manner of the singing.

The Advanced courses (JAC and JSAC), which consist of group and private lessons, continue with the solfege training, keyboard harmony in more complex keys, and chord progressions played by ear. In addition, the teachers emphasize correct hand position and technique. Introduction of black keys into the pieces follows the principle "Listen - Sing - Play - Read."

Students from Yamaha Music Education System schools throughout the world perform their compositions at the Junior Original Concert (JOC). Since 1972, over 28 countries have hosted this prominent event. Ensemble is another important element of the Yamaha curriculum. Its ultimate celebration is the Yamaha National Summer Music Camp, which educates students and teachers from across America's YMES network. A brief glance into the world of the Yamaha ensembles demonstrated that their members do not use headphones - the pieces are taught to them as a group.

Various teaching materials of YMES were presented and exhibited during the presentation. These materials form an extensive collection of student textbooks, workbooks, CDs and DVDs, which are integral to the program and of the highest quality. They are colorful, engaging, and attractive for "kids of all ages." Only teachers certified by Yamaha may receive these materials. Through the unique Yamaha Music Education System, students acquire fundamental skills, develop their musical sensitivity and creativity, and fulfill the desire to express themselves through music.

Miroslava Panayotova is Visiting Assistant Professor of Piano at the University of South Florida where she teaches studio piano, piano pedagogy and class piano, coaches chamber music, and continues her long-lasting association with choral ensembles as an accompanist. She has made numerous appearances as recitalist and concerto soloist in the United States, Canada, Bulgaria, Russia, Slovakia, Romania, and Mexico. Panayotova has appeared at many music festivals including the Green Mountain Chamber Music Festival in Vermont, XXI Festival Dr. Alfonso Ortiz Tirado 2005 in Mexico, and the Orford Festival in Canada. Her numerous awards include the first prize at the Green Valley Piano Competition in 2007, the Silver Medal at the Svetoslav Obretenov National Piano Competition in Bulgaria, and a semifinalist at the 2002 Missouri Southern International Piano Competition. As a winner of the 2006-2007 President's Concerto Competition, Panayotova appeared with The Arizona Symphony Orchestra. Panayotova holds performance degrees from the State Academy of Music in Sofia, Bulgaria where she studied with Daniela Andonova, and an M.M. Degree from the University as South Florida where she studied with Svetozar Ivanov. Presently, she is a DMA candidate at the University of Arizona, where she studies with Tannis Gibson.

Discussion Groups

by Thomas Swenson

Attendees divided into ten groups to discuss three topics. The first topic, assignments that never fail, has become a traditional discourse of this conference. The second topic explored the unique environments of teaching piano pedagogy at smaller schools. The third topic questioned what we, as piano pedagogy instructors, are doing in response to a number of challenges in academia. These three areas inspired passionate and open discussions, revealing environments that, despite the challenges, invite us to deepen our commitment to the field of piano pedagogy. This report is based on the compilation of discussion leader notes submitted from each group.

I. Pedagogy Assignments that Never Fail

One of the highlights of the GP3 conferences is the opportunity to share assignments, old and new, which are meaningful and successfully motivate our piano pedagogy students. The thrust of these discussions was on repertoire, business and marketing aspects, and creative projects. In addition, real teaching experience within the degree program was discussed.

The repertoire available for teaching is vast and ever changing. Choosing the right piece at the right time can make the difference between a student being successful or feeling under- or overwhelmed. The following assignments allowed students to thoughtfully become acquainted with the teaching repertoire:

- Provide the students with a number of pieces, as many as 20, and ask them to level the pieces, from easiest to most difficult. In addition, some instructors asked for performance goals for each piece or some type of rationalization for the ordering of the pieces.
- Have piano pedagogy students prepare a number of pieces for a professional-level recording. In so doing, the students thoroughly understand the technical, stylistic, and artistic subtleties of the repertoire.
- Provide an intermediate to early-advanced level piece to the students. The students' assignment is to identify pieces that would precede (prepare for) the given piece.
- The instructor invents a fictional piano student (age, level, gender, interests, strengths, weaknesses, etc.). The piano pedagogy students seek to find a "diet" of repertoire for the fictional student.
- Playing through ensemble repertoire allowed pedagogy students to experience the joy of chamber playing and identify challenges and teaching strategies.
- Also related to repertoire was an assignment that required students to edit a score. The instructor would find an unedited piece and have students provide articulations, dynamics, and fingering. In doing so, the students synthesized concepts from their previous training.

The business of professional music teaching requires skills, knowledge, and an entrepreneurial mindset that can be advanced in piano pedagogy courses. Assignments designed to propel the student for business acumen included:

- Creating a mission statement or a teaching philosophy to guide them in creating an independent studio or a community music school.
- Creating "real" items such as a statement of policies, business cards, websites, an advertising plan, an annual budget, newsletters, a teaching schedule, and/or an interior design (which included computer workstations, listening area, restrooms, etc.).
- Writing a grant proposal requesting funds to open an independent music studio.
- Creating a resume to be used in applying to teach at a community music school.
- Participating in mock interviews for a teaching position.
- Determining the repertoire, filling out all registration forms, etc. for a fictional student who will be participating in a local or state competition.
- Requiring students to become actively involved in local, state, and national associations/conferences.

Teaching is at the core of piano pedagogy. Providing students with a number of opportunities to hone their skills and prepare for future teaching is crucial. Observation, assisting, and mock teaching were most commonly mentioned. Technology was used extensively in providing observational experiences for students to grow in their skills. Participants mentioned how easily it is to access web-based videos of student performances. These served well for pedagogy students to practice adjudicating and also provided a stimulus for discussions on what and how they might work with the student they observed. Assisting in group lessons or providing tutorial assistance allowed piano pedagogy students to interact with students directly. Many instructors noted that mock lessons between piano pedagogy students were not very successful, since these students could not adequately role-play fictional piano students.

Hosting a master class, for the students of local piano teachers, seemed to be another wonderful route for piano pedagogy students to interact with less-experienced pianists. The students who performed gained insight, and the piano pedagogy students acquired meaningful experiences in teaching and presenting. A tangential benefit was that the piano pedagogy program garnered attention from the local music community.

Several groups discussed when to allow pedagogy students to actually teach. While most students begin teaching in the second or third semesters after their first pedagogy course, a couple of instructors wanted their students to teach very quickly: right from the start or after only four weeks of classes. They defended this in noting that college students (and adults in general) are accustomed to educational environments that require them to use new knowledge immediately - not just store up knowledge for a nebulous future occasion. The piano pedagogy students might teach other college students, tutor students in class piano who required extra assistance, or teach local high school students. In the latter case, a local booster club provided financial assistance so the pedagogy students would receive some remuneration for their teaching. Most pedagogy students who participated in actual

teaching were required to keep a journal for future reference.

Successful assignments/projects in piano pedagogy courses that had a large creativity component required students to reflect seriously upon objectives and diverse pathways to understanding. Some of the assignments mentioned included:

26. Composing teaching pieces (presumably pieces with a certain amount of repetition),
27. Composing accompaniments for given pieces (for the teacher to perform, and/or a MIDI-type accompaniment),
28. Creating either an outline of, or an actual, method book
29. Inventing games to reinforce music concepts.

A number of other excellent assignments were discussed that bear inclusion:

- To facilitate clarity of directions one instructor had her students write out directions to make a peanut butter and jelly sandwich.
- While journals were mentioned earlier in this report, other student-created resources were also brought up by a number of pedagogy instructors such as charts and comparison tables.
- Reflective assignments, such as writing an essay on their favorite teachers, encouraged students to become more thoughtful about the teacher they hope to become.
- Personality tests, such as the Myers-Briggs Personality Types, were both enlightening and enjoyable for students.
- One interesting assignment involved behavioral modification. Pedagogy students began by identifying a way to improve their own practicing. They then attempted to teach that skill to others.

The present economic situation was clearly on the minds of many participants in these discussions as many instructors included assignments that required their students to articulate clearly the value of piano lessons. Whether the assignment was to record a 5-7 minute podcast or record a live speech, many participants affirmed the value of these activities.

II. The Nuts and Bolts of Teaching in Smaller Schools

A second topic of discussion revolved around piano pedagogy courses and programs at smaller schools. After identifying some of the advantages and disadvantages, many groups discussed the importance of recruitment and retention.

Teachers at smaller schools felt they had a greater degree of flexibility in tailoring courses to meet individual student desires. They felt their relationships with the students were closer than at larger schools. As such, they could advise students more thoughtfully. In smaller schools, some instructors liked the fact that they get to wear a variety of "hats," sharing administrative responsibilities and teaching an array of courses. Teachers at smaller schools enjoyed collaborating with the music theory teachers and felt this

contributed to a strong curriculum.

Challenges in teaching in a smaller school were few, but very important. Personality conflicts that arise between faculty members can intensify and disrupt growth and retention. Classes with low enrollments at smaller schools can be quite anxiety-producing. Many instructors mentioned teaching courses as Independent Studies, which had negative consequences on their teaching loads or salaries. Low enrollments have even dictated that class piano sections be combined, including both music and non-music majors. Lastly, it was felt that smaller schools tend to be slow in obtaining and repairing technological items.

Recruitment and retention of students were discussed in all ten of the groups. Piano pedagogy courses/programs, along with entire music programs, seem to be under great scrutiny by administrators. Ideas, useful to all programs seeking to build enrollments and receive greater support from the administration, were shared. The following actions, related to recruitment and retention, were stated:

- Bringing important pedagogues to campus brings exposure of the school and program to the local music community.
- Hosting MTNA events at the school attracts both pre-college and college-level instructors. In addition, sponsor organizations, whom often attend many peripheral events, attend these conferences and bring unique ideas and perspectives.
- Concerts and recitals demonstrate a commitment to growth and artistry.
- Being actively involved in state music teachers associations allow college faculty to network with other teachers.
- Presenting at various conferences demonstrates a commitment to research and innovation.
- Collaborating with non-music faculty on projects encourages innovative and multidisciplinary approaches to learning and teaching.
- Performing at events where the college president is present allows the administration to experience the power of music.
- Adjusting performances to meet the needs of the administration demonstrates that we can be flexible.
- Targeted marketing allows each dollar spent to be used most efficiently.
- Working closely with the admissions staff allows them to be more equipped to talk with potential students.

III. How Has Your School Regressed and What Are You Doing About It?

The final topic of inquiry asked participants to reflect upon how their schools may have regressed and how, as class piano and piano pedagogy instructors, they have dealt with these changes. Clearly, the present economy has had a significant impact on colleges and universities. Programs and instructors are seeking creative solutions to deal with these challenges. These "regressions" included:

12. Fewer scholarships are available to attract the best students
13. Incoming students seem less prepared for serious music study than previous generations
14. A reduction of fulltime music faculty (adjunct faculty are usually not active in recruiting events)
15. The need to justify courses with small enrollments
16. Merging multiple levels of class piano into a single class
17. Allowing over-enrollments in piano classes since attrition is common
18. A decrease in funding to purchase or maintain instruments
19. A manipulation of course credit hours in ways that require additional contact hours with less compensation (sometimes referred to as "hidden" credits)
20. A push to "economize" our teaching through distance or online learning components.

Creative responses or solutions to these burgeoning challenges were offered. While the recruitment ideas were included in the previous section, additional actions included:

- Teaching "pair lessons" (which some have found to be extremely successful)
- Peer-tutoring
- Incorporating technology and online resources (especially regarding keyboard classes)
- Looking to other models, such as language courses, which require students to spend 1-2 hours each week practicing in a supervised lab
- Demonstrating the success of the curricular sequence by making "before" and "after" videos of students
- Collecting data from former students about how they use their acquired piano skills as professionals
- Offering online and distance-learning courses when appropriate
- Offering "certificate" programs, which can build enrollment in smaller classes and meet the professional needs/desires of non-degree-seeking adults.

One participant enthusiastically shared how their program has grown in these turbulent times. Their music department decided to "corner the market" on technology. In so doing they were able to acquire a number of grants, advance the curriculum, and serve the needs of the students. While there was certainly a learning curve for the faculty, this instructor seemed to believe their efforts were celebratory.

Another participant thoughtfully reflected on the growing number of graduate degrees in Piano Pedagogy. They questioned whether we are doing a disservice to the field in accepting so many graduate students in piano pedagogy, knowing there are limited careers in academia.

As always, these small group discussions were a highlight of the GP3 conference. Participants networked in very productive ways and brainstormed the future of our field.

Dr. Thomas Swenson, Assistant Professor of Music and Director of the Salem College Community Music School, is regarded highly for his work in piano pedagogy, group piano, applied piano lessons, music

theory, music technology, and composition. In addition to his work at Salem College, he has taught at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts and is a regular piano instructor at the University of North Carolina Greensboro Summer Music Camp program. He received Piano Performance degrees from Minnesota State University (BM) and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (MM). His Ph.D. in Piano Pedagogy/Music Education is from the University of Oklahoma. His dissertation, focusing on specific traits of adult piano students, has contributed important information to this area of piano pedagogy. Additional areas of interest include the art of practicing, teaching composition, successful partner lessons, and keyboard ensemble literature. He has presented nationally at the Music Teachers National Association, Music Educators National Conference, and the World Music Symposium in addition to many state and local conferences and workshops. Dr. Swenson now is serving a second term as a Vice-President for the North Carolina Music Teachers Association.

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Ten Characteristics for Teaching Students with Special Needs

by Beth Bauer

When I started teaching piano to students with special needs, I had no background in special education. I began working with this population recuperating from surgery on my left ulnar nerve as a result of too much piano practicing. Following the surgery, I returned back to graduate school and was informed that I needed to write a research paper during the last semester of my Master's degree. I decided to research and test out whether or not a high functioning student with Down syndrome could learn to play the piano. At the end of the semester, the student accompanied me to the class and played two pieces for the class. This led to further research in special education and music education and the pursuit of a doctorate in music education. My dissertation is entitled, "What is an appropriate approach to piano instruction for students with Down syndrome?". Following graduation, I began teaching in a community music school where I was asked to start a music program for students with developmental delays. This led to the start of "Beethoven's Buddies" and speaking to parent groups for children with disabilities, to MTNA teacher's groups, and to National Conferences. Currently, I oversee music internships and pedagogy student teachers at a college while also coordinating and teaching in the Beethoven's Buddies program and instructing precollege piano students. The studio is fully integrated and all students participate in the yearly recitals, competitions, and service projects. Since the beginning of this journey in 1996, I have taught over 50 students with different disabilities including: Down syndrome, autism, Fragile X, dyslexia, ADHD, vision impairments, and hearing impairments.

When I started this journey, it was overwhelming, but I soon realized that what I was learning was having a profound impact on my overall teaching strategies. It also brought a new level of joy and acceptance to the students who were making a radical impact on my life. Below are ten characteristics that any teacher working with students with disabilities will find both necessary and beneficial.

Consistency

For students with special needs, consistency is crucial. Everything that we do in the piano lesson must be consistent with what the student is doing in school, at home, and in other therapies. We must be consistent in the rewards we provide for positive behavior and good work, the lesson routine and home practice routines, and the studio setup. All of my students with special needs have an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that determines their academic, social, and behavioral goals for the school year. The IEP is the basic starting point for my lesson planning. This document will be of a great help to you, and parents are usually willing to share this information.

Consistency in the lesson routine includes a lesson schedule for the student. This can be a picture schedule or a simple checklist of the order of events in the lesson. By having a consistent schedule at all lessons, you are providing a level of comfort for the student so that she knows the order of the lesson as well as what is expected of her for the 30-minute

lesson. Furthermore, students gain a sense of accomplishment when they finish each of the scheduled items.

Consistency also applies to the time, day, and location of the lesson. When piano teachers have openings or cancellations in their schedule, it is common to adjust teaching schedules so that there are no open spots. Changes in lesson time, day, or location can be very upsetting to a student with special needs, and this extends to events outside of the studio as well. For example, one of my students got very anxious when we discussed an upcoming recital. He kept asking me if the recital was going to take place in the piano studio. When his mother and I explained that it was in a different setting, he got very nervous and started reciting different advanced geometric shapes. Whenever he did this it was a clue to his mother and me that he was nervous about something.

To prepare for a positive recital experience, this student was allowed to walk around the performing hall several weeks prior to the recital. At first, he rearranged the windows, organ pipes, and other architectural features of the recital hall into advanced shapes. Thirty minutes later, he was simply walking around without saying anything. The simple task of allowing him to see the recital hall was calming and led to a positive first recital.

The importance of consistency was illustrated in a recent anecdote from the parent of one of my students. The parent informed me that one night her son with autism was getting ready for bed. He had a very specific, consistent routine for finishing homework, after school activities, getting dressed, and getting ready for bed. After putting their son to bed, the parents went on with their work around the house, but they heard piano playing. They went into the living room and found their son practicing. He had forgotten to practice piano before he went to bed, and he couldn't sleep knowing that his normal routine had not been completed.

Adaptability

Everything you learn in your piano pedagogy classes and conferences is still useful and necessary when teaching piano to students with special needs. However, you will need to adapt this information to include the special education research on teaching math, reading, speech, physical therapy, and behavior management. A great resource for this is Woodbine House Publishers — they have published many series on teaching students with autism, Down syndrome, and other learning disabilities. These books address methods on teaching reading and math, setting up schedules, and behavior management. Furthermore, these books are very easy to understand and the ideas readily apply to teaching piano.

This body of literature changed my teaching strategies for both hand position and note reading. When teaching hand position, I can never give a verbal description of proper hand position to my students with disabilities. Instead, I need to find something that makes sense in their world. Many of my students participate in physical or occupational therapy and are familiar with stress squeeze balls. These balls can be easily implemented in the piano studio. Our first lesson assignment for practicing is to go throw a ball with

both the right hand and the left hand. Since the students are familiar with the balls, I can use them to teach the concept of hand position for the piano.

For note reading, I use the computer program Boardmaker to make visual images that represent line and space notes. Boardmaker is a program used in schools for the teaching of reading, and it is also used to make pictorial schedules for students. For the treble clef, we use food (eggs, grapes, brownies, donuts, French fries) and for the bass clef we use animals (ant, cat, elephant, goat). After laminating a large staff and the visual images for the different notes, we play games placing the images on the appropriate line or space on the staff. This transfers very easily into staff reading.

Flexibility

This characteristic is a MUST. Some days, your lesson plan may not be used because a student comes to his or her lesson following a bad day at school. This bad day may carry over to the piano lesson and trigger a meltdown. As the teacher, you will have to be flexible and find a way to work on something that will redirect the student away from whatever is bothering him and still be applicable to the piano. This can be accomplished by reviewing the things that the student perceives as "easy" such as flashcards, workbooks, or simple music games. If there are persistent meltdowns during the lesson time, it is necessary to keep a log that denotes the time, setting, people, and activity that may have caused the meltdown. You may see a pattern emerge that can be easily fixed.

Flexibility can also pertain to the actual studio setup. My studio contains a large wall calendar, a birthday poster, a trampoline, and several teaching clocks to indicate the start and end time of the lesson. These items are all found in school classrooms for students with special needs. Having these familiar things in the studio creates a level of comfort that translates into successful piano lessons.

Flexibility is also important in the pacing of the lesson. Students may need to take breaks between lesson activities. These breaks can include jumping on the trampoline, throwing a ball, drawing, asking questions about the student's day, or another break activity found in the student's IEP.

Setting expectations

The expectations for my students with special needs are no different than the expectations and goals I have for my students who do not have disabilities. For example, all of my students with special needs participate in the yearly recital, group lessons, and competitions when appropriate. I do not segregate my students with disabilities from the rest of my studio. This also requires me to inform my "typical" students that my students with special needs may do something they would not expect at the recital, but that behavior should not be acknowledged. By setting consistent, high expectations for everyone in the studio, the students know that I believe in them and that I know they can be successful.

Patience

When working with this population, you will need to be incredibly patient. Many of my students have an inherent fear of failure when learning new concepts. This requires me to patiently point out all of the concepts the student does know. Patience is also required in the amount of repetition and multiple methods that are often needed before a concept is truly learned. Furthermore, progress as normally evaluated and assessed by piano teachers will be in significantly smaller strides than we are accustomed to with other students.

Patience is also required when initially communicating with and getting to know your students in the first lessons. Many students with disabilities interpret language very literally or have a limited vocabulary. When you are first getting to know your students, it is appropriate to ask the parent to help with interpretation of the student's speech and body language.

Compassion

Parents of students with special needs do not want you to feel sorry for them or their son or daughter. Instead, it is easier if you imagine walking a day in the parents' shoes. For many of my students, the parents have been told what their child CANNOT do instead of what their child CAN do. Compassion is treating the student as a child first, without regard for a disability label. The disability is only one aspect of the student's total character. The parents are not expecting you to turn their children into prodigies; rather, they just want someone who will treat their children with dignity, value, and respect.

Children with disabilities are capable of learning how to play the piano; however, the process for learning requires the teacher to be compassionate in interactions with the parents and the students. In addition to the special education literature, the parents will be your best source for information on the student. Compassion is also needed when handling student meltdowns. Do not focus on the meltdown as the most important activity of the lesson. Instead, focus on one positive aspect of the lesson, and communicate this to the parent at the end of the lesson.

Sense of humor

Another key characteristic is having a sense of humor. Sometimes your students will say the funniest things; often saying things you would never expect at the most interesting times. Many students with disabilities are very concrete thinkers and interpret language literally. This means that sarcasm, idioms, puns, and metaphors will be challenging for the student to understand. For example, saying a section of music is "a piece of cake" could be misinterpreted to mean there is a piece of cake in the piano studio. Therefore, the teacher needs to choose words very carefully when making illustrations. In addition to being concrete thinkers, it is not uncommon for students with special needs to be a walking encyclopedia on a topic that highly interests them. Some examples I have seen

include a complete knowledge of all Disney movies (and directors), the ability to reprogram smartphones, learning multiple foreign languages independently, knowledge of music history and composers, and knowledge of advanced science and geometry concepts.

I learned that one student's understanding of language was very literal and concrete. She had an extremely advanced knowledge of composers, and I learned what a sense of humor she had when she was performing at a conference where I was speaking. We had prepared her piece for performance and discussed what she could expect on the day of the conference. She stopped me to inform me that the dead composers could be compared to the Seven Dwarfs in the Disney movie Snow White. I was not sure what she was talking about and asked her to explain. She said, "Happy is Mozart because his music is happy; Doc is Bach because he is sort of in charge; Debussy is Sleepy because he puts me to sleep; Beethoven is Grumpy because his music gets so loud, bold, and dramatic; Sneezy is Offenbach because Can-Can is in fits and starts like sneezing; Dopey is Saint-Saens because his Carnival of the Animals seems silly and simple but there is more there than it seems, just like Dopey in the movie who is not as Dopey as we think; and Bashful is Ravel." At the conference, she stopped what I was explaining to tell the group of teachers about the comparison of the Seven Dwarfs to the famous Dead Composers. How do you argue with that or not laugh? This student has Asperger's syndrome and was only six-years-old at the time. Wow, was that eye opening!

On another occasion, one student was working on playing with smooth legato and piano and pianissimo dynamic markings. This was very challenging for the student, and I suggested that he think it was a lullaby to put a baby to sleep. As the lesson progressed, whenever he would play too loudly I would tell him the baby is crying. He thought that was so funny. One of his favorite toys was a stuffed yellow M & M that he proudly announced was named Mindy. I asked him to bring Mindy in the living room when he practiced to see if his playing would put her to sleep. At the next lesson, he played with an excellent legato and beautiful piano dynamic marking. He quickly informed me that Mindy liked his playing and fell asleep quickly. Several weeks later, he started laughing while he was playing a new piece of a different style. When I asked him what was so funny, he said "If I play loudly I will make the audience cry." His mother and I could not stop laughing at the impact of the lullaby and piano dynamic marking examples for practicing. He recently reminded me of this example almost two years after the initial lesson where it was discussed.

Learn from your mistakes

When I first started teaching students with special needs, I was very fearful of making mistakes. One wise parent said, "We don’t expect you to know everything or be perfect, we are just so happy you want to work with our child and are willing to try." This statement really helped me realize what was important. Teachers should always try their hardest, but they should also realize they will make mistakes. Mistakes are acceptable and the important lesson is in what you learn from the mistakes.

At the first recital where I included students with special needs, I learned a very important lesson. A student with Down syndrome enjoyed taking a bow. It got to the point where he was just being silly and the importance of the bow in the recital lost its meaning. To address this problem, the student was told that he could only bow when people would clap for him. Later in the recital, students received awards for their work throughout the year in piano. When this student received his award, people starting clapping for him. The student immediately ran to the piano, took his place to bow, and started bowing. I quickly learned the importance of choosing my words carefully!

You will make mistakes when teaching any of your students. It is all right to make mistakes and admit to your students that you made a mistake as a teacher. It is how you learn from these mistakes and how you fix the mistake in future teaching situations that matters.

Lose the ego

In piano pedagogy and performance, we are trained to focus on attention to detail, the final polished piece, the recital program, the repertoire list, and meeting the demands of practicing and performing. All of these things point to perfection and personal attainment of goals. Since starting to teach students with special needs, I learned the valuable lesson that perfection is not everything and it really is not all about me. I have learned far more from my students than I ever thought was possible.

Many children with disabilities find fitting in at school to be a challenge. However, while they find it hard to fit in, they also want to be appreciated and accepted for who they are. Sometimes something as simple as playing piano in the school music class, or recognizing the quarter note on the bulletin board in music class can lead to social acceptance for a student with special needs. Typically developing students will also see students with special needs in a different manner after these experiences, because everyone is participating in similar activities. Furthermore, social acceptance by peers can lead to increased self esteem in students with special needs. These simple accomplishments that many of us take for granted are truly more profound than whether or not we play a piece perfectly or build a bigger repertoire list. This is the true meaning of teaching and making a difference in the lives of our students.

Have FUN

Many teachers might view teaching piano to students with disabilities as very daunting and overwhelming. However, I argue that it is really does not seem like teaching; it is having fun. The strategies and techniques learned from special education are a part of good teaching in general. It is much easier to work with students with disabilities if we view them as typical students who might go about things in a different manner. Once we understand that this is just another student with unique strengths and weaknesses, the teaching does not seem so overwhelming.

As teachers, we all have a special "bag of tricks" we use to work with our students. By adding strategies and learning techniques that are commonplace in special education, the piano teacher is adding to that “bag of tricks.” I now use these strategies with all of my students if it is something that will help them understand the goal we are trying to accomplish. This makes both the teaching process and the learning process fun. I can honestly say that I look forward to each student who comes in my door because each one has a unique learning style, unique strengths and challenges, and will accomplish great things. I believe I have learned far more from my students with special needs than I have ever taught them.

You might ask what is the difference in teaching a student with special needs piano versus teaching a typically developing student piano? I would answer there really is not a difference in what I am teaching, but there is a difference in how I am teaching. The student is still learning how to read music, count rhythm, play with different dynamics and articulations, and perform in front of people, but how I teach might be a little “out of the box” when compared to traditional piano pedagogy. It also may require a little extra planning time. These strategies are not hard to learn or apply in the studio. It does take time, but there are people and resources to help you throughout the process, and it is truly rewarding and worth the extra effort.

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Beth Bauer received her doctorate of music education from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. Her dissertation is titled "What is an appropriate approach to piano instruction for students with Down syndrome?" Additional degree work includes a Master of Music from Northern Illinois University where she studied with Bill Koehler, and a Bachelor of Arts in Music from the Wheaton College Conservatory of Music where she was a student of Daniel P. Horn. Additional pedagogy instruction occurred with Karin Edwards, Larry Rast, and Karen Taylor. Currently, she is an instructor in pedagogy at the Wheaton College Conservatory where she teaches Introduction to Pedagogy, Studio Administration, Group Instruction, and Music to Special Learners and oversees pedagogy student teachers and music internships. In addition to her faculty work in the Conservatory, Dr. Bauer is the founder and coordinator of Beethoven's Buddies, a music program for students with developmental and intellectual delays, at the Community School of the Arts, Wheaton College and teaches precollege piano to beginning through advanced students in the Community School of the Arts. Prior to her work at Wheaton College, Dr. Bauer was a visiting guest instructor in music education at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. She also was the assistant to the director and an instructor in the Young Pianists Program at Indiana University. Additional positions included the Education Director at the Columbus Indiana Philharmonic and the Program Director at the Suzuki-Orff School for Young Musicians in Chicago. Her work with students with special needs has been featured in The Chicago Tribune, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, the Indiana University Alumni Magazine, and the Wheaton College Alumni Magazine. Publications include articles in Clavier Companion, the Philosophy of Music Education Review, and the Manitoba Registered Teachers' Association. She chairs the Special Education Research Committee for the National Conference of Keyboard Pedagogy. Dr. Bauer is a sought after clinician and speaker to professional teacher's organizations, national conferences, and parent groups. She has been teaching piano for 20-years and working with students with special needs for 14-years.

All in a Day's Routine: Piano Teaching and Autism

by Scott Price

We are fortunate to live in a world where children with disabilities increasingly have equal access to educational opportunities. In recent years, it has been more and more common for parents of students with special needs to knock on our doors and inquire about piano lessons. These wonderful and deserving students are really no different in most respects from our other students, and they can be wonderful and vitally active contributors in our studios and musical culture. With some careful thought, patience, and persistence these students can be a rewarding part of any piano studio.

Any new or transfer student can be challenging prospect, but a student diagnosed with autism may appear to be an especially daunting proposition. A student with autism will demand more than just traditional piano instruction - the teacher will be challenged to manage and develop social relationships, social communication skills, and imaginative thought.[1]

Autism is a spectrum disorder. Individuals who have been professionally diagnosed by a team of specialists may exhibit few signs of autism and be considered high-functioning, or they may exhibit any degree of impairments to the point of being considered low-functioning. Each case is different and unique and requires a child-specific approach to learning.

While there is no "magic bullet," instructional method series, or even teaching technique that is guaranteed to reach every child with autism, there are several ways of proceeding with the process that will allow us as teachers to enter their worlds and interact with them in vital and positive life-affirming ways.

Entering their world

As piano teachers, we often see our role as that of bringing students into our world of serious art music, and of helping them experience the joys that we have experienced through this medium of expression.

When children experience the world from the perspective of autism, their impairments do not allow them to easily enter into the interpersonal communication constructs familiar to all of us as teachers—the interpersonal communication that is crucial to sharing the joys of music. Students with autism simply will not enter our world. We have to enter their world and find a way to understand their language.

In my experience with these wonderfully intense students, I have found that life as a teacher is easier, and my ability to reach them is more effective, if I focus on the following:

Shared experience

I accept the fact that the child is "typical" and I am the person with autism. I need to change my thinking to experience his world in the way he experiences it. I need to leave behind the social skills, communication skills, and imaginative skills that I take for granted in my everyday life. These skills simply do not exist in the world of a student with autism, and they are no longer effective in my teaching process. I have to let the student teach me and show me new teaching tools, and I will have to be able to use those tools in new and unfamiliar ways.

Vocabulary

I need to realize that a student's cognitive age may be very different from her chronological age, and that the generalizations, word associations, and vocabulary that we use in typical teaching situations simply no longer exist. These students may not understand some of the words we use, and they may not have developed many of the associations we take for granted in our every day lives. As much of their world is self-focused, they may not have experienced any of the life situations and coping mechanisms we have come to expect from our other students

Precision

I need to say exactly what I mean, and mean exactly what I say. In our everyday lives, we communicate with each other through a combination of gestures, word associations, slang and pop-culture references, and shared experiences. We often come to an agreement without ever actually saying exactly what we mean to express. We find that the other person gets the "gist" of what we are expressing and we agree and move onto the next subject. Students with autism simply cannot function in this type of social situation. They need us to say what we mean in exact and specific language. They need step-by-step breakdowns of the tasks they need to learn and complete. Try asking yourself how many times a day you actually say what you really mean, or if the people you interact with have said what they really mean. The answer is probably "not often." Isn't it extraordinary that we communicate at all? If we are able to make this realization, then we have a beginning understanding of what students with autism experience all day long in their everyday lives.

Under this three-part mindset, I always try to remind myself that I have the impairment, that my standard and accepted practices in teaching just aren't very useful, and that what I normally say and the way in which I say it often doesn’t have meaning to the student. Those are daunting concepts, but they force me to think and act in a way that provides my students the step-by-step, specific, and brutally honest and accurate information they need to be successful at the piano.

Once this realization is made, we have to find a way to approach these students on their terms and enter their world. Students with autism often thrive on order and repetition.

They do very well with predictable, stable, and repetitive routines, and working with their personal everyday routines is a way to enter their world and begin the learning process.

Routine

The establishment of routine is nothing new to teachers, and it works well with students challenged by any disability, but routine is especially useful when teaching students with autism. The establishment, maintenance, and facilitation of a routine under the mindset mentioned earlier may be just the teaching tool we need to travel on a musical journey with these wonderful and deserving students.

Much of what I have to say about the building and establishment of routine is related to the ideas and practices of "task analysis" and "Applied Behavior Analysis." Any internet search will provide you with information on these practices and some basic resources are included at the end of this article.

We are all familiar with the importance of the Parent/Teacher/Student triangle and how those three (or four) people interact in the support and education of our students. In the case of a student with autism, I might argue that the parent/teacher/student triangle becomes a square with the parents at one corner, the teacher and student at additional corners, and the team of professionals diagnosing the student's conditions (including the professionals who counsel us on the education and care of the student) at the other corner. This team of professionals aids the parents in developing an Individual Education Plan (IEP) that outlines the student's goals for the year and helps each person in the process chart success and progress toward those goals. If you are worried about the IEP and how it works, rest assured that the student's parents will be your best resource. The IEP is required by the Federal Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, and it can serve as a springboard in creating detailed procedures for developing and learning the skills necessary for success. These detailed procedures, referred to in this article as routines, are crucial for success with an autistic mind that thinks in details and not in generalizations.

The goals of the IEP provide an opportunity to build detailed and repetitive routines in the student's life. Routines provide a sense of normalcy and stability for the student and help avoid outbursts or a complete shut-down of the student's attention or behavior.

Routines may be many and varied, but a workable format usually includes long-term and short-term routines, in addition to task-specific routines for individual components within the lesson. These routines can involve schedules for the week, for the individual piano lesson, and for each component of the piano lesson. Some examples are listed here—these are actual routines used by parents and myself with children who have autism.

Weekly Routine Example

Each day the parent says, "Tomorrow is Monday" (or whatever day of the week happens to be on the calendar). "On Monday, we are going to:"

Wake up.

Take a shower.

Get dressed.

Eat breakfast.

Brush our teeth.

Get in the car.

Go to school.

Come home.

Practice piano so we can have a piano lesson with Dr. Price on Thursday.

Do homework.

Eat dinner.

Put on pajamas.

Go to bed.

The same schedule is followed on each day, and it always includes a reminder that the student will have a piano lesson on the given day of the week.

Lesson Routine Example

When a student comes to my studio, we always enter and begin the lesson in the same manner. We enter the room and sit down at the piano, and I begin with a little chat. I ask the same questions such as "How are you today?" I then ask questions about what the student did during the week and questions about activities and/or school. Following the short question and answer session, I always read to the student a list of what we are going to do in the lesson. Here is an example of list I have read with a student:

Today, we are going to work on right hand and left hand.

Then we are going to work on finger numbers.

Then we are going to work on white key names.

Then we are going to work on black key names.

Then we are going to do your pieces (and I list each piece in order).

Then we are going to do your harmonic minor scales.

Then we are going to a duet.

Then we will be done.

We then proceed through the list of activities. I have found that it is important to bring closure to each activity and to ask the student's permission to begin any new activity. Even if they say "no", I ask again, and the instructional process is much easier once the student has said "yes" and invited me into his world. You may be wondering how you will remember all of the routing and what will happen if you forget one of the elements. It is fine to keep a list on the piano. If you forget the list or don't have time to make one, don't worry. Students with autism have excellent memories for lists and routines. Just ask your student "what's next?" and he will tell you—usually without missing a single step.

The routine gets more detailed and intensive when dealing with individual portions of the lesson where you are teaching the student a specific skill or piece. This is where we have to say exactly what we mean in specific language. Vocabulary and tone of voice are both crucial to the success of the lesson component.

When teaching the concept of playing two black keys to a student without autism, we often use a variety of teaching tools including modeling, finger number and key color associations, verbal cues, or any combination of physical/aural/visual cues. A typical student is able to absorb all of those things, perform the task, and then transfer the concept to another group of black keys.

A student with autism may not be able to pay attention to a model performance (and may often refuse to do so), or may be startled by any element of the physical, aural, or visual cues in the teaching. Any one of these things might be a trigger that prompts any number of behavioral problems. Your student may not be able to understand the association of numbers to fingers, may make the association between actions and the words that describe them, or may not be able to generalize and transfer the concept to the performance of another group of black keys. A traditional method of explanation is simply too layered and leads to intense confusion.

Lesson Component Routine Example

The following routine is an actual routine I have used with a student with autism when teaching the particular skill of playing a black piano key:

This is your hand.

This is your right hand.

This is your finger.

This is your finger number 2. (The number 2 may be just a name to them and they may not be able to understand cardinal or ordinal numbers. In this case, it may be just a finger name.)

This is the piano.

This is a piano key.

This is a black piano key.

Touch the black piano key with your finger number 2. (You may have to actually ask permission to take the student's hand and finger and show them how to touch the black piano key with their finger number 2.)

You are touching "C-sharp/D-flat".

Push down the black piano key "C-sharp/D-flat" with your finger number 2.

You just played the black piano key "C-sharp/D-flat" with your finger number two.

Do it again.

Good job!

This routine may seem very overly detailed, repetitive, and impossible to remember. But this is how a student with autism thinks—in details, not in generalizations. Details are the key. As we build up basic skills in this detailed-oriented way then the student begins to learn how to approach new skills and execute new tasks. The step-by-step process (or task analysis) must be more explicitly examined and stated for a student with autism. This process can seem difficult, demanding, and even mind-numbing, but it becomes easier for the teacher over time. The process will become second-nature with time, practice, and a lot of patience.

I ask that a parent is present at each lesson, and parents often take notes and practice the same way at home as I taught in the lesson. Conversely, if the parents have specific routines they use at home, I try to use the same vocabulary or routines in the lesson to foster a greater sense of normalcy in the student's life.

I have found that this is the reality of the process in teaching a student with autism. When the details are followed, and the routine is established, the lesson goes far better than it

does without details or routines. Without routine, the lesson may not happen at all.

The process is highly detailed and organized. It is difficult, time consuming and exhausting intellectually, emotionally, and physically. The process requires a great deal of forethought and planning, constant observation, reaction and improvisation during the process, and a great deal of reflection and evaluation afterward. And the lessons aren't always good. When they are good, however, they are fantastic, and the result is worth every bit of the effort. From these lessons I believe I learn far more about myself as a person and teacher, and much more about music and its true place in the world. These students deserve attention, and they just might have wonderful things to teach us about how we approach and communicate the art of music and piano playing to all of our students. All it takes is a little adjustment in our pedagogy to accommodate them. If each of us accepted just one of these students, then imagine how well we would serve this population.

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Scott Price currently serves as Professor of Piano and Piano Pedagogy, Head of the Piano Area, and Coordinator of Piano Pedagogy at the University of South Carolina School of Music. A graduate of the University of Oklahoma, The Cleveland Institute of Music, and Bowling Green State University (OH), his recent engagements have included performances and clinics at the national conventions of the Music Teachers National Association, the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and solo recitals throughout SC, GA, ND, OH, OK, KS, MO, TX, and Washington DC. Dr. Price is creator and editor-in-chief of the on-line piano pedagogy journal "Piano Pedagogy Forum". Now in its 12th year of publication, "Piano Pedagogy Forum" has published more than 20 issues with participation from more than 100 writers from 84 different colleges/universities, 28 different states and two foreign countries. The Music Teachers National Association named "Piano Pedagogy Forum" as the recipient of the 2008 Frances Clark Keyboard Pedagogy Award. Dr. Price has recorded 35 compact discs of educational piano music for Alfred Publishing Company, and has published educational compositions with Alfred Publishing Company and the FJH Music Company. He serves as chair of the Committee on Special Needs Students for the National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy, and served as chair of the Autism Task Force for the Music Teachers National Association, and served on the planning committee of the 2006 National Group Piano/Piano Pedagogy Forum National Convention. Special teaching interests of Scott Price include teaching students with disabilities, very young children, and teaching keyboard improvisation to piano students ranging from beginning to advanced levels. His work with disabled students has been featured on WISTV (SC) and WLTX (SC), and in Clavier Companion Magazine, The State newspaper (SC), Columbia Metropolitan Magazine, and was featured at the 2005 National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. One of Dr. Price's autistic students was featured on Dateline NBC, and CNN. Scott Price has been awarded the "Best of BGSU Outstanding Graduate" alumnus award from Bowling Green State University in Ohio in 2002, and was invited back to the University of Oklahoma as a "Distinguished Guest Alumnus" in March of 2005 to perform, lecture, and present a piano masterclass. Other engagements include performances and masterclasses in Thailand, Singapore, and in Kuala Lumpur and Penang in Malaysia, lectures at the 2005 Georgia State Music Teachers State Convention, the 2007 Ohio Music Teachers Association, and the 2007 International Collaborative Conference of the Music Teachers National Association/Canadian Federation of Music Teachers/Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Canada, the 2008 Georgia Music Educators Conference, and the 2011 Indiana Wesleyan Pinao Pedagogy Conference, and the 2011 National Conference on Keyboard Pedagogy. He was named a Foundation Fellow by the Music Teachers National Association in 2009, and is a member of the Board of Trustees of the Frances Clark Center for Keyboard Pedagogy. Dr. Price is the founder of the Carolina LifeSong Intitiative which is dedicated to providing piano lesson and music experiences for students with special needs, and in fostering best practices in teaching and teacher training.

Dreaming of Collaboration: The Challenges Facing the Graduate Collaborative Piano Degree

by Dominique Edwards

Beginning in the 1970s, universities, colleges, and music conservatories across the United States began to establish collaborative piano degrees on the graduate and doctoral levels. The graduate collaborative piano degree offers pianists a focus on collaborative piano literature, instead of the solo repertoire study of a graduate piano performance degree. Pianists pursuing this degree typically study in either choral or instrumental literature, with some programs offering students a blend of the two. The degree was established to meet the needs of today's pianists, who are needed to work in a variety of musical settings after graduation, most of which require more than a strict solo repertoire education. The degree also provides a solution to schools' accompanist problems by hiring graduate students as accompanists, while simultaneously providing the students with training needed for their degree. Schools also can advertise free accompanists as a recruitment tool for singers and instrumentalists alike.

There are, however, setbacks associated with the collaborative degree. Issues of scheduling and timing constraints, exhaustion, improper training, under-developed technique, degree validity, and lack of focus on solo repertoire are a few of the criticisms that departments face. Further problems include exploitation of graduate students as free accompanists, as well as a lack of professionalism amongst music majors while in lessons, rehearsals, and recitals. Music schools must balance the needs of their music program along with providing these pianists with the proper skills needed for collaboration without exploitation. The paper provides a background as well as an explanation of the issues and solutions associated with the collaborative piano degree. While still in its developmental stages, advocates strongly believe that the collaborative degree prepares graduate students with the skills and technique requisite for today's pianists' career.

In 1972, Jean Barr became the first keyboard artist in the United States to receive a doctoral degree in piano accompanying. The degree was the first in its field to recognize the study of instrumental and vocal accompanying repertoire on the doctoral level. Barr has been a pioneer in her field, developing the collaborative piano curricula for the master’s level at Eastman School of Music. In the past few decades, many schools have adopted variations of the degree and have implemented the graduate collaborative piano curriculum most commonly at the master's level.

After World War II, America was greeted by an influx of European immigrants who had fled their native countries in search of work in the United States. Musicians headed out west in the hopes of finding a job in the entertainment industry and California was a place where they could find work playing for musicals, entertainment venues, and Hollywood film sets. Gwendolyn Koldofsky first established the degree in 1947, at The University of Southern California when she recognized the gap between the study of piano repertoire and the working world. Koldofsky realized that the pianist trained in solo repertoire would not have the skills needed for this genre of music and convinced the University of

Southern California to allow her to develop the collaborative performance degree. She began implementing the skills and repertoire displayed by pianists in the working world into this new curriculum.

Building on Koldofsky's program, faculty members from schools around the nation recognized the potential for such a curriculum to act as a solution to another inescapable problem: hiring staff accompanists. The degree track was a way for the universities to solve the accompanying needs of its music programs. Traditionally, one system that schools across the nation have used to solve its accompanying needs has been to employ *staff accompanists*. Staff accompanists can be defined as professional accompanists hired by the school to work with vocalists and instrumentalists belonging to its music program. Some music schools have large vocal or instrumental programs, which require many staff accompanists. When a school hires staff accompanists, the school must find money to pay each pianist a salary. Depending on the size of the program, this could add up to a large sum of money. The significant problem with this arrangement is that the schools must allocate a budget to pay the staff accompanists. However, having on-staff accompanists is a big recruitment tool for many schools of music. According to Paul Green, "Colleagues expect accompanying as a service and recruitment tool. It is a strong recruitment incentive to tell a student that if you come to University of North Carolina at Greensboro, you will be provided an accompanist during your entire degree."[1] Schools that can provide vocalists and instrumentalists with a staff accompanist can quite often be favored over schools that lack this resource. Schools also can hire accompanists to work as *subcontractors*. This means that professional accompanists are affiliated with the school of music, but the students bear the responsibility of paying for their services. College students usually operate on a small budget and good accompaniment can be a huge expense.

With the implementation of the collaborative degree, faculty members of schools and conservatories across the nation discovered a possible solution. Performance undergraduates wishing to pursue the graduate piano degrees should have acquired the technical skills needed for accompanying. The idea was that students who were proficient in higher-level solo repertoire would be able to play collaborative repertoire with ease. Schools began to award aspiring graduate students with an offer of a graduate assistantship. The assistantship was set up so that the pianist would play for the vocalists and instrumentalists of a program in exchange for waived tuition and a small stipend. With this solution, however, some ethical problems surfaced. Barr pointedly asks, "Is it fair? Is it appropriate for a school to solve its accompanying needs by using their students that are still developing their craft?"[2] A situation can occur where the amount of work demanded in the assistantship could be too much. The intense workload poses such threats as exhaustion or even injury.

One result of excessive playing without the proper training is tendinitis. Tendinitis is inflammation, irritation, and swelling of a tendon, which is the fibrous structure that joins muscle to bone.[3] Tendinitis occurs when a pianist repeatedly strains his or her wrists. When pianists are not properly trained, they run the risk of injury with extensive practice. If tendinitis is not treated in a prompt fashion, it could potentially damage a pianist's

wrists for the remainder of his or her career. One factor that has been linked with tendinitis amongst pianists is the physical demands of the piano. A keyboard player with relatively small hands, for example, may not have the same flexibility as a player with larger hands.[4] Both players, however, must play the same size piano. Another factor is the virtuoso repertoire that has been popular amongst pianists since the early romantic era. The technical demands of a piece by Liszt or Chopin place more strain on the hands than the earlier works of Bach of Haydn.

Another threat associated with the accompanying assistantship is the time it takes each individual student to learn the music. If a student were not a facile sight-reader, he or she would need to spend a considerable amount of time learning the repertoire. Devoting the time to learning accompanying music would take away from learning solo repertoire on the graduate level. Dr. Barr acknowledges that there are professors who are skeptical of the accompanying degree or assistantship because of the time it takes away from solo repertoire study: Some teachers do not want their students to study this degree [accompanying], because they feel that it is distracting. Good sight-readers are often put in great demand, and hopefully these students will be able to juggle both the solo and accompanying repertoire."[5]

Despite the drawbacks, however, schools hire graduate assistants to accompany a music school because it is an easy solution. Schools are able to recruit instrumentalists and vocalists offering the attraction of free accompanists. The school is able to save the money previously allocated for a staff accompanist, and pay graduate assistants less money. The drawbacks of the assistantship also indicate a solid point; the point that the collaborative degree provides the proper training needed for this type of work.

In 2008, a panel of five professors who specialize in collaborative playing discussed the issues and requirements of the graduate collaborative degree, including graduate assistantships. The panel members included Jean Barr from Eastman, Carolyn Bridger from Florida State University, Anne Epperson from the University of Texas at Austin, and Paul Stewart from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro School of Music. Paul Stewart from UNC discusses the graduate assistantships:

“We currently have 11 piano graduate assistantships (GAs): six in accompanying and 5 in piano performance. The audition for piano GAs includes sight-reading, and an interview about teaching experiences. The needs of the school for piano GAs usually includes class secondary piano instructors and accompanying, as well as theory instruction. We have tried several methods to distribute the load of the accompanying GAs, including developing a formula to evaluate sight-readable repertoire for up to full chamber recital programs. Currently, Harley (collaborative professor) creates a repertoire list of needs from faculty requests and matches those with his accompanying performance studies students' repertoire needs, as well as the availability of the small ensemble students, the accompanying assistantships, and the staff accompanist. Also, all accompanying GAs must accompany prospective undergraduate and graduate vocal students at our audition days.”[6]

Stewart and his colleagues at UNC seem to have an effective system whereby they observe the pianists' ability to sight-read and play with vocalists. Then, they match the pianists' repertoire with his or her skill level. Stewart also mentions the different demands required of the repertoire:

"We all know the differences between vocal and chamber accompanying, but trying to make equitable assignments for GAs compounds the issues. Voice students require the accompanist for every lesson, but the instrumental students wants the accompanist a few weeks before the performance or jury. Further, the opera accompanist may be sparsely needed for many weeks and then expected to put in the long hours leading to the opera performance."[7]

Anne Epperson from the University of Texas at Austin discusses her approach to properly executing the graduate assistantship assignments. During the audition, the three characteristics Epperson looks for are strong pianistic skill in high-level repertoire, the pianists' ability to adjust to a partner, and sight-reading ability. Epperson strongly supports the assistantship program.

"I view the collaborative or accompanying assistantship as an all-win situation for the whole school. Not only do the collaborative majors receive broad experiences in their repertoire, but also this is one of the most economically efficient ways to cover most of the studios in the school. I provide lessons for my collaborative students on every piece of music, whether it is for their assistantship assignment or not."[8]

Though she recognizes the benefits of the assistantship, Epperson emphasizes that the collaborative degree needs to be equivalent to a performance degree:

"Traditionally, the role of an accompanying pianist has been thought of as secondary or as a default for those who couldn't "make it" as soloists. My approach is to elevate the relationship on both sides, but it's not enough to just stand up and say accompanists are not appreciated. We need to make the reasons for respect happen by developing a professional attitude and enthusiasm for our craft."[9]

Dr. Barr also believes that collaborative work is done best in a school where the student wishes to pursue accompanying, and later work in the collaborative field. Teachers across the country agree with Barr and Epperson's idea of a professional attitude and enthusiasm. Kevin Class is the director of the Opera Theatre department at the University of Tennessee and is the former conductor of Indiana University. He suggests that the first step in equating collaborative piano degrees with performance degrees is to point out that "piano literature" includes all music written for piano, not just solo repertoire.[10] Class cites the master composers as a vital and valuable source of some of the most brilliant collaborative piano literature. The list includes Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and other classical masters who have written magnificent operas, chamber arrangements, concertos, etc. If these composers had thought that solo piano literature was the only important literature, then we would not have many of the masterpieces that exist for us today.

Class outlines strategies for successful collaborative training. When a pianist begins collaborative training, he or she should begin learning vocal literature. Vocal literature includes a written text, which a pianist can study to gain a better understanding about the piece of music. Once the pianist knows the mood of the piece, he or she can integrate musical techniques. These techniques could include playing legato, staccato, using soft pedal, and so on. Class recommends that a pianist should be familiar with some German, Italian, and French to interpret vocal text in the proper context.

Once the art of collaborating with vocal literature has been mastered, Class advises moving to instrumental repertoire. Class states, "Matching the articulations of a legato cello passage or the softest dynamic reaches of a clarinet demands that a pianist have a wide palette of sounds and control."[11] He believes that the collaborative pianist must be sensitive to all the timbres and nuances of every instrument, including the human voice. When playing vocal and instrumental repertoire, a pianist must maintain a high level of sensitivity. For example, a pianist playing a flute concerto would have a to play with a different touch than if he or she were playing a cello concerto, or vocal recital. Anne Epperson comments on the wide range of skills a collaborative pianist must have:

"Collaborative pianists are expected to have additional skills in sight reading, understanding of languages and diction and to be familiar with an enormous amount of repertoire in all style periods, including music not written for piano. Understanding the role of the conductor and the subtleties of orchestral textures and rhythm are vital tools in the world of opera and in the vast repertoire of concerti for all instruments."[12]

Class suggests that organization is a top priority of collaborative pianists and points out that those pianists wishing to succeed must be extremely organized. Class makes his point through comparing the demands of the soloist with those of the collaborative pianist. A soloist, for example, may present one or two programs a year. The collaborative pianist, even as a graduate assistant, is often responsible to accompany a few recitals per semester. This type of work requires that the pianist utilize as much practice time as possible. The collaborative pianist must decide which measures of a piece need practice, which measures can be sight-read, and which measures need more control.[13]

Skills of organization and teamwork are all components of practical training, necessary for real-world survival. The ultimate goal for any student graduating college is to be properly equipped with skills necessary to succeed in the workforce. Unfortunately, because students are not trained enough in collaboration, it decreases their confidence level about their chosen major. By placing students in real-life settings, such as vocal or instrumental recitals, students are exposed to situations that are similar to the working world. Dr. Patricia Stowell, former president of the Maine Music Teachers Association, emphasizes the importance of collaborative training for the well-rounded musician in her article, *Preparing the Young Collaborative Artist*: "A solo career is difficult and sometimes lonely, and there are few musicians pre-destined or suited to its enormous challenges. But this does not require abandoning the music field; what a tragic void that would leave in the life of a gifted musician whose musical gifts could be shared."[14] Stowell points out the importance of educating students from a young age about financial

stability and career choices: "One reason I discuss financial issues with students is to educate them, as well as their families and others, about the value of music as a profession. While few choose it as a primary career, many can still earn money from their musical accomplishments when they are properly trained."[15]

Supporters of the degree also believe that that training in collaboration promotes quality and professionalism amongst all musicians. Quite often, it is routine for vocalists or instrumentalists to provide a pianist with music on short notice with the expectation that he or she learn it quickly. The assumption is all pianists should be able to quickly sight-read and learn repertoire. Barr asks the question, "Is it professional to slap things together?"[16] She believes that with increased awareness of the collaborative degree and the skills it underlines, that musicians will be less likely to throw pieces together. A vocalist or instrumentalist who is aware of the skills demanded by such a vast range of repertoire might take collaborative work more seriously. This notion, coupled with the knowledge of job placement, will prove that the collaborative degree is a justifiable degree track. Anne Epperson, from the University of Austin at Texas, agrees: "With these skills and good training, the career options will be plentiful and rewarding."[17]

In conclusion, the degree emphasizes professionalism in the field and provides a student with the necessary training and skills for success in the workforce. At the end of studying a graduate collaborative piano degree, a student should be equipped with the sight-reading abilities, technique, and diction knowledge needed for today's society. When asked what her thoughts were about the recent popularity of accompanying degrees, Barr stated, "The degree has come so far in fifty years. We can hope and assume it will be a part of society in twenty years." Colleges and universities that offer the degree will be able to provide their students with some of the best training necessary that is demanded by today's workforce.

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Effective Practicing

by Ryan Fogg

All of us have heard the old adage, "Practice makes perfect." I shudder to think how many poor souls have bought into that piece of fiction. Years ago I had a basketball coach who slightly altered that statement but significantly changed its meaning: "Practice makes permanent." The new slogan may appear less catchy, but it is much more representative of the truth. A student can practice a particular musical passage incorrectly for weeks, and the end result is certainly not perfection. Consequently, the student will have a very hard time undoing the bad habits that have settled. Why? Because the lack of tonal variety, the incorrect fingerings, or the unsteady tempos have become permanent through consistent, but incorrect, practice. The solution to such dilemmas is to know how to practice effectively in the first place so that the *good habits* become permanent and subsequently contribute to a secure musical performance.

I studied the piano for years before I learned how to practice. In my mind, practice was equivalent to mere repetition. I would practice the length of time for the week required by my teacher, then she would "fix" any mistakes or incorrect habits that had developed. The vicious cycle continued until I finally realized that I could get much more accomplished if my practice time consisted of not only repetition, but evaluation as well. As I learned how to correct my own mistakes before they became habits, I began to enjoy my practicing more and more. Practicing was no longer a chore to me; it was now a tool that enabled me to extend the limits of my playing to a level far beyond what I had ever imagined.

As I have been teaching over the past few years, I have learned that some deficiencies students may have in their playing are due in large part not to a lack of understanding of the concepts or even a lack of technical facility, but to a fundamental problem of not knowing how to practice. In these cases, I spend the majority of the lesson time showing the student exactly how to practice a particular passage; not surprisingly, these lessons turn out to be very productive. After practicing *correctly* for the week, the student returns with marked improvement and with the encouragement that his or her hard work has reaped substantial benefits.

Many teachers advocate practicing a specified number of hours per day. For intermediate and advanced students, this number is usually anywhere from one to four hours. While such structure is often helpful to establish a practice regimen for students, quality must be emphasized more than quantity. One student may accomplish in an hour of efficient (but thorough) practice what another may do in two hours at minimum. The time must be spent wisely so that any potential problems are isolated, corrected, and no longer repeated. The key to such efficient practicing is to have a plan in advance. Before students sit down on the bench, they should know exactly what their goals are for that practice session. Without a plan, students will likely play through all of their pieces repeatedly without truly "practicing."

The following ten guidelines are useful in developing a practice plan. They are general, non-specific reminders that can be applied to a variety of repertoire. Some of these guidelines are supported by quotations of various pianists and composers cited in Reginald Gerig's *Famous Pianists & Their Technique*. This is not an exhaustive list by any means; rather, it is my intent that these guidelines may be adapted as a starting point for those looking to increase the effectiveness of their practicing.

Guidelines for Effective Practicing

13. Set a specific goal to achieve in each practice session. For example, rather than, "I will practice Beethoven today," consider, "I will memorize the first theme of the exposition of my Beethoven today," or "I will work on making all trills in the Beethoven light and continuous."
14. Listen to recordings of your piece, not to imitate, but to become more aware of interpretive possibilities.
15. Analyze the overall structure and significant chord progressions. A clear understanding of the form and harmony will not only help in the memorization process (see #8 below), but it will also influence your interpretive decisions.
16. Consider the following three questions regarding sound quality:
    - What should my piece sound like?
    - How does my playing differ from the desired sound?
    - What can I change so that my playing matches the desired sound? (When students become more aware of their own sound, a more musical result is inevitable.)
17. When deciding on fingering, be sure to test it at a faster tempo – it may not work! *"Awkward fingering interferes with gracefulness in the hand, without which beauty of tone and phrasing are impossible." – Marguerite Long*[1]
18. Be disciplined with regard to rhythm and tempo – these elements are foundational. *"When you think you are practicing very slowly...slow down some more. You spoil everything if you want to cut corners. Nature itself works quietly. Do likewise. Take it easy. If conducted wisely, your efforts will be crowned with success. If you hurry, they will be wasted and you will fail." – Franz Liszt*[2]
19. Avoid doing too many run-throughs; focus on smaller sections. For example, if you have a 10-minute piece but have only 30 minutes to practice, practice efficiently by emphasizing one particular section in detail or by working only the 'trouble spots,' rather than by playing through the entire piece 3 times.
20. Memorize as you go – it is a part of the learning process, not something that happens later. Once a piece is memorized, continue to use the music – you may find something you missed the first time around!
21. Avoid mindless repetition – your practice should consist of focused listening and adjustment. (The student must learn to listen more carefully while he plays because in the practice room, he becomes his own teacher.) *"Always play as though a master were present." – Robert Schumann*[3]
22. Know your limits. While it is important that you practice regularly and thoroughly each day, be sure that you're never practicing with excessive tension and that you take multiple breaks. If you cannot concentrate anymore, stop practicing. If you're hurting physically, stop practicing. *"Through intelligent practice it is easy to*

achieve that which can never be attained by excessive straining of the muscles." – C. P. E. Bach[4]

Conclusion

So how can one know whether he or she has practiced sufficiently? When is it enough? Well, as many musicians would say, you can never practice enough, and you can always find more ways to improve. But I believe one of the surest ways to tell if your students are ready to move from the practice room to the recital hall is the level of mental and physical relaxation at which they execute their playing. Although concentration must always be present, there must also be a point of release in which the performer becomes part of the audience and is able to enjoy the music effortlessly. Of course, a performance such as this is ideal but at the same time very rare. I have found that some of my better performances have occurred when I stopped trying to make everything work and was able to let go and enjoy the music again. Performing in front of a live audience can be one of the most grueling experiences in life, but it does not have to be. The goal of one's performance should match one's original impetus and inspiration for playing: musical enjoyment rather than note-perfect accuracy, personal expression rather than a pedantic adherence to the score, and pursuing artistic endeavors rather than seeking to win the approval of others. Practicing more effectively will ensure that such an inspired performance is within the student's reach.

Notes

1. Reginald Gerig, *Famous Pianists & Their Technique* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 321. 2. Gerig, 184. 3. Gerig, 206. 4. Gerig, 29.

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Beliefs About Teaching, Teaching Strategies and Assessment Methods: A Case Study of Two Piano Teachers in Jamaica

by Mark Minott

Introduction Borg (2001) states that a belief about teaching is an idea consciously or unconsciously held. The individual accepts it as true and it serves as a guide to thoughts and behaviours. In other words, beliefs about teaching cause one to lean to a particular way of thinking and acting in the classroom (Richards, 1996). This thought corresponds with Tylee's (1992) idea. She points out that teachers need to understand their beliefs about teaching for these influenced the way they carry out their teaching.

While these writers spoke generally of the relationship between beliefs and teaching in the regular classroom, the actions of piano teachers are also driven by their beliefs about teaching. This is true of those who participated in this study, as will be shown later. However, for piano teachers, beliefs about teaching cluster around what they should know and do. For example Chinnapha (2007), and the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (2001) made the point that piano teachers should be responsible for managing and monitoring student learning, they should also be aware of students' weaknesses and problems, know the subject they teach and how to teach the subject to students. Implicit in these statements is the belief that piano teachers should be knowledgeable about their subject area and function in a managerial and supervisory role. Also, piano students often articulate what they believe their teachers should know and do. For example, students believe that piano teachers should know many kinds of music and be able to explain and compare musical differences of each period and composers (Chinnapha, 2007).

Closely associated with teachers' beliefs are teaching strategies (Tylee, 1992; Richards 1996). These strategies–of which there are many–have both advantages and disadvantages. Examples of general teaching strategies includes: Lecture, Lecture with discussion, Small-group discussion, Brainstorming, and Individual Instruction (McCarthy, 1992). Piano teaching, however, is dominated by routines such as: students starting a lesson with warm-up exercises, allowing advanced students to teach beginners and giving advance students the freedom to experiment with their instruments so as to develop their own style of playing and the ability to engage in instrumental improvisation. These routines tend to occur within an individual/one-to-one, small-group, or to a lesser degree, computer-assisted learning framework (Dannenberg et al 1990; O'Neill 2003; Daniel 2004). Daniel (2004), arguing for the use of the small-group strategy in piano teaching at the tertiary level states:

"The teaching of piano performance has, for many centuries, taken place predominantly within a one-to-one context, and often according to the master–apprenticeship relationship. However, this has not been the exclusive approach, and other forms of teaching such as the master class and group instruction have been in existence for some time. In general, however, the master class and group teaching appear to be adopted as additional forms of tuition to the one-to-one model, rather than as a principal

methodology (p.23)."

From Daniel's statement one can infer that individual/one-to-one teaching strategy has been the core of piano teaching and small-group teaching has been used as an "add-on" and not as the main teaching strategy.

There are advantages and disadvantages to the individual/one-to-one teaching strategy. Daniel (2004) points out that 'the one-to-one strategy generally promotes the transmission of information from teacher to student...' (p.35). While this is the main advantage, another is that it is teacher-centered and this should ensure that appropriate techniques are taught. Still another advantage is that students' individual needs can be studied and appropriately addressed. There seems to be very few disadvantages using the individual/one-to-one teaching strategy. The one identified most is that of boredom on the part of students, and this is sometimes attributed to the teacher's use of archaic teaching tools and/or techniques (Smitty, 2008; Seidova, 2011).

The advantage of utilizing a small-group teaching strategy is that it allows the participation of everyone, people are often more comfortable in small-groups and group consensus can be reached (McCarthy, 1992). Daniel (2004), points out additional advantages: it helps to create a holistic learning environment, increases greater level of interactions between teacher and students, and students are encouraged to be critical and active, which can result in the development of independent learning. Magrath (2006) outlines how small-group teaching might be practically utilized in piano teaching. She states that it should complement the individual/ one-to-one teaching strategy, focus on beginners and elementary students, and should be one hour in length. Disadvantages of this teaching strategy include the fact that it needs careful thought and must be planned according to the purpose of the group. The preparation process also includes the need to prepare specific tasks or questions for the group to answer which can be time consuming. Another disadvantage is, even with well-laid plans, the group may get side-tracked (McCarthy, 1992).

The introduction of music software has also impacted the way piano teachers teach. In addition to the traditional individual/one-to-one teaching and small-group strategies there is now computer assisted learning strategy. Computer software—similar to a small-group teaching strategy—is used to supplement the individual/one-to-one teaching strategy. Dannenberg et al (1990) in their study of the use of computer-based instruction to teach beginning piano students, made the point that the introduction of state-of-the-art musical computer software provides a stimulating learning environment that tailors instruction to the students' needs. This is of particular importance in an era which is saturated with student-centered thinking and teaching.

An integral aspect of teaching and learning generally, and for piano teaching specifically, is the assessment of students. Fredericks (2005) suggests that to assess a student is to gather information over a period of time about his/her level of performance, achievement or learning and understanding. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998) and Bryant (1992) point out that in the assessment process, written or mental records should be made of skills

students have acquired and those on which they are working. Ferris and Hedgcock (1998), and Reid-James (1983) state that teachers, during assessment, need to ask themselves questions about students' response to, involvement in, and preparation for planned activities and learning new content.

Piano teachers do employ these and other forms of student assessment. For example, Montemayor (2008), in his study of a particular music studio, pointed out that students who did not attend a required performance were given a tape recording of it, and were expected to produce a typewritten report of what they learned from the recording, in order to maintain membership in the studio. The success of this kind of stringent assessment contributed to the excellent reputation of the studio. Montemayor (2008), cautioned the use of this kind of stringent assessment in piano studios, without the same kind of reputation or better.

This literature review discussed–from the perspective of piano teachers and general classroom teachers–the idea of teachers' beliefs and what constitutes teaching strategies and assessment methods. What is still unknown is what beliefs about teaching are held by local piano teachers in Jamaica? What teaching strategies do they utilize? What assessment methods do they utilize? This research explores these questions and uncovers: the beliefs held by two Jamaican piano teachers about piano teaching, their teaching strategies, and the process of student assessment they utilize. This is important because references to these aspects within the instrumental teaching literature are scarce. Additionally, there is no known local research which addresses these aspects in the Jamaican context.

Participants and Method

An instrumental case study approach was used. Creswell (1998) and Stake (2000) define an instrumental case study as a type of case study with the focus on a specific issue, rather than on the case itself. The case then becomes a vehicle to understand the issue or to provide insight into the concerns of the study.

Participants were two male piano teachers–Smith and Blake (pseudonyms). The process of purposeful convenient or opportunity sampling (Creswell, 1998) was utilised in their selection. This is based on the fact that I have known both teachers for a number of years. They have over two decades of experience teaching piano, and were willing to participate in the study.

Interview was the data collection method employed. The main instrument used for the collection of data was a semi-structured interview schedule. I chose to use interview, for there was the need to get in-depth information. However, another reason for employing this method is the fact that it provides the opportunity to include follow-up and supplementary questions thought of during the actual interview and used as necessary to illuminate or clarify, thus facilitating depth in responses (Joffe, 2001). Interviews focused on participants' experience and personal observations of their practice as piano teachers and were approximately one hour in length.

As indicated above, three broad research questions were formulated: What beliefs about piano teaching are held by local piano teachers in Jamaica? What teaching strategies do they utilize? What assessment methods do they utilize? The responses to these questions were analysed using content analysis, and despite the limitations of the sample size of this small-scale study, the responses produced rich data for analysis. Results of the process of analysis are used in the next section of this paper which discusses the findings. The discussion also utilizes the three research questions as a guide.

Results and Discussion

What participants believe about piano teaching?

The analysis of the responses to the question of what participants' believe about piano teaching revealed that both Smith and Blake believe that piano teachers should not attempt to teach what they are unable to manage. When asked to elaborate on this point, both state that they believe that piano teachers should be strong in content and pedagogic knowledge. This is important because both are essential to the artistic development of piano students (National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, 2001; Chinnapha, 2007). Further probing reveals that essentially, they believe that piano teachers should only teach at the level (i.e. beginner, intermediate or advance) for which they were trained or, in which they had some expertise. This belief influenced their practice, for Smith, who is the holder of the Licentiate of the Royal School of Music (LRSM) degree, teaches beginners through to advanced students, while Blake who does not have such a prestigious qualification, confines his teaching to beginners and intermediate students.

Smith made the point that he believed strongly in the importance of students practicing their instrument and that they should be supervised during the process.

"I do believe in the importance of practice for students. However, I also believe that they should be monitored both here at the studio and at home. They must also be given the opportunity to perform publically. I sometimes give promising students—who performs well and who are finding it hard to pay fees—the opportunity to continue their lessons until they are able to pay the fees (Smith)."

The importance of practice is also highlighted by Montemayor (2008), for it was a requirement for the studio that he studied. In addition, students were required to perform at selected public performances.

There is also the belief that an effectively operated piano studio should have certain equipment which aids teaching and learning. Blake states:

"I believe that a studio can only be efficient in its operations if it has a listening area or room, a library (and this does not have to be 'fancy' but it must have literature for the piano that caters for students at all levels of playing) and students should participate in the examination process of a recognized examination body (Blake)."

While there were similarities in beliefs, there were differences. For example, Smith spoke of what he believed about exposing students to a variety of music and the impact of doing so. He stated:

"The average Jamaican child is not exposed to music of different styles therefore, that child can become intolerant of what he/she considers to be a 'classical piece'. There needs to be, or what should be aimed for is a balanced use of both forms of music, i.e. classical and popular (Smith)."

When questioned further on this statement, Smith revealed that he believes, and is concerned with developing students' tolerance of 'differences' i.e. racial, sexual or cultural differences, and that through music, this can be achieved.

Blake spoke about what he believed about exposing students to a variety of instruments and the impact of doing so. He stated:

"If other instruments are taught in the piano studio, I believe this could be an advantage, for this exposes piano students to other instruments. They are also exposed to playing in parts in ensembles, and are also exposed to ensemble playing in general. These experiences can develop their listening and coordinating ability (Blake)."

While at one level these beliefs seem different, greater analysis of the differences reveal a similarity. Which is, that both men believe in exposing students to variety, variety in style and type of music taught, and in instruments they encounter during training.

What teaching strategies are utilised by participants?

Piano teaching is dominated by individual/one-to-one and small-group teaching (O'Neill, 2003; Daniel, 2004). These dominant teaching strategies are also utilised by the participants in this study. Smith however, used only the individual/one-to-one strategy.

He states:

"I only give individual instruction. This gives students a longer time on the instrument. I also use the advance student in the studio to teach the beginners. I do supervise what takes place though. I believe that students learn better from other students and I don't see doing this as a disadvantage to the development of the beginning students (Smith)."

When asked why he chose this particular teaching strategy, he said that it was always done that way, and that was the way he was taught. This supports the thought of Daniel (2004) who insists that piano teachers use the individual/one-to-one teaching strategy because of their personal experience of being taught that way. Daniel (2004) states:

"The literature reveals that approaches to piano teaching often emerge from personal experience, and several authors reflect upon the fact that experience of instrumental teaching is a major influence on the choice of teaching approach… Mills and Smith (2003) give evidence of this in a recent study where 57% of participants stated that the primary influence on their teaching approach was the way they were taught (p.24)"

In contrast, Blake uses primarily a small-group teaching strategy. This gives each student in the group a short time at the piano, while the others watched, listened, and are encouraged to ask questions. When asked why he uses this teaching strategy he points to economic reasons. Blake's students' intake is sporadic. So, using this strategy allows him to at least 'break-even' at the end of each month. Additionally, he made the point that sometimes the economic situation of students cause them to opt for small-group teaching. Blake states:

"Sometimes economics encourage the use of small-group teaching, for the student may say 'I really want to do piano lesson but I can't afford ten dollars per hour, but I can do five dollars,' 'what can you do for me?' In these cases, I place them in the small-group sessions (Blake)."

Computer assisted teaching strategy, for example state-of-the-art interactive music software are not utilised by the participants due to cost, and to a lesser degree, the disposition of the teachers who hold dear the traditional forms or teaching strategy i.e., individual/one-to-one and small-group.

What assessment methods do participants utilize?

The respondents in this study engaged in student assessment. For example, Smith states:

"I take in about eight students at the beginning of each year. I watch their progress and then ask those who are not progressing as I am expecting, to leave, I usually give the parents a letter or if they are adults, I give them the letter explaining my actions and request. I always believe that there will be others to fill the openings created (Smith)."

In his assessment and decision to keep or dismiss a student, Smith also takes into consideration their progress in external examinations and their overall deportment and behavior at the studio.

Blake, on the other hand, assesses his students, but does not dismiss those underperforming. Here too, it is a matter of economics, for he needs the students to keep the studio running. So, in face-to-face sessions, he encourages underperforming students and telephones those who have missed a number of sessions to encourage them to return. The need to motivate students to continue their piano lesson, and not just for economic reasons, is supported by Houser (2006) who states that the piano teacher should wear the "hat of a daily motivator", motivating not just students, but 'self'.

The need to encourage students' self-assessment was also mentioned by one participant. For example, when asked if he taught students how to assess themselves Blake stated:

"Yes! They will not have the teacher for the rest of their lives. A teacher should teach a student how to be independent of the teacher. It is important that they are helped to correct themselves. A beginner needs to learn how to listen to him/herself, learn correct note values, proper posture and hand position before he/she would be able to self-assess (Blake)."

One thing is obvious, it is that assessment and the outcomes are highly subjective, for much is left to the discretion and professional judgment of the teacher in determining what aspect of the students' learning to assess and how to utilize the results of the assessment.

Summary of findings

So what beliefs about teaching are held by these local piano teachers in Jamaica? What teaching strategies do they utilize? And what assessment methods do they utilize? Answers to these questions are displayed below:

Participants' beliefs about piano teaching

- Teachers should not attempt to teach what they are unable to manage.
- Students should be exposed to a variety of music for this helps to develop tolerance of differences.
- Students should be exposed to a variety of musical instrument for this helps in developing an appreciation of playing in parts and in ensembles, and also their ability to listen and coordinate.

Participants' teaching strategies

- Both individual or one-to-one and group teaching methods are utilised.
- Main reason for using individual or one-to-one teaching method was that the teacher was taught using that teaching strategy.
- The main reason for using small-group teaching method was 'economic', and the need to 'break-even' monthly.
- Computer assisted teaching methods are not utilised.

Participant students' assessment process utilised

30. This is highly subjective; for much is left to the discretion and professional judgment of the teacher.
31. Results of external examinations are used to aid in teachers' assessment of students.
32. Students are encourage to self-assess

Implications of the findings for piano teaching and teachers

Firstly, the study points to the need for local piano teachers to deliberately explore the potential of state-of-the-art computer-assisted teaching strategies and not just as complementary to the traditional strategies but also as a principal methodology. For example, they could incorporate 'Finale' or 'Sibelius' music notation programmes which allow students to notate their compositions and 'Cakewalk' which is mainly a music recording program which allows them to record and create professionally sounding pieces. Zdechlik (2003) made the point that generally, technology should be included in any pedagogy. However, she also states that at the very least, independent teachers of 'tomorrow' need to know how to create a website and personalize tutorial help for their private students on these websites. The teachers' website can be used to re-enforce concepts that are already being taught and provide additional exercises and practice drills. Another advantage of the use of technology, primarily a computer assisted teaching strategy is that, if creatively merged with the human element, it can create a learning environment that powerfully addresses students' individual differences and needs (Zdechlik, 2003).

Secondly, the study highlights the need to further examine piano teachers' preference for the individualized instructional strategy over and above small-group. What are the advantages and disadvantages of these for teachers, students and instrumental teaching? Haddon (2011), in the conclusion of her study, holds that 'tradition of one-to-one lessons has led to a generally unquestioning attitude as to the efficacy of this learning strategy' (p. 82). Thirdly, piano teachers need to teach students how to self-assess. This is necessary, for teachers should teach so that students become independent learners. Fourthly, piano teachers should explore and incorporate into their teaching, the idea of developing not just future musicians but individuals who are tolerant of cultural, social, economic and religious differences.

Conclusion

This study provides readers with a quick view into the beliefs held, and teaching strategies and assessment methods utilised by two piano teachers on the island of Jamaica. Relatively general statements in these regards were made. However, given the nature of this small scale research which includes a small sample size, large-scale generalization was neither appropriate nor was it the outcome sought. While this study provides findings that might be similarly obtained from like groups or individuals and situations elsewhere, and sufficient details of the research context, data collection, and analysis provided, it is left to readers to make their own judgment about transferability of the findings to other contexts.

Readers should also consider that the study covered a number of areas that could easily form the core concerns of three separate case studies. In this study, these complex areas have been examined from a narrow empirical perspective, that is, two participants and my own. However, given the limited financial resources, this narrow focus made the

study both manageable and achievable.

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Integrating Aural Skills To Teach Piano Musicianship Skills

by Yeeseon Kwon

Musicianship programs across music schools and conservatories to some degree incorporate various aspects of integration in terms of comprehensive written theory, aural, and piano musicianship skills. Written theory, aural skills, and piano musicianship, or keyboard skills classes, are taught to provide the core and foundational training for aspiring music majors. But are we truly teaching these courses as an integrative process or as separate silos of musical skills?

Research in constructivist modes of instruction promotes the idea that aural skills training should occur in a fully contextual environment. When learning this way, the activities students perform are transferred in extended types of exercises within a single context, and confirming their success by performing similar activities in a different, but similar context.[1] I believe this can be demonstrated not only within methods of aural skills instruction, but through the application of knowledge to new situations- including acquisition of keyboard skills. Connecting the aural and keyboard musicianship skills in multiple ways - integration - can improve and reinforce the interconnectedness of concepts.

At Chicago College of Performing Arts - Music Conservatory at Roosevelt University, I have incorporated several pedagogical teaching and practice guides that integrate aural skills as a critical component in training musicians to develop comprehensive piano musicianship skills. These pedagogical classroom and practice activities developed from the process of integrating the theory musicianship, and in particular, the aural skills curriculum at CCPA. Through these highlighted integrated approaches I have discovered that students are able to successfully acquire various piano musicianship skills more readily and more comprehensively. Moreover, students gain a better understanding and appreciation for their keyboard skills classes as part of their wholistic training as musicians.

One of the important outcomes for music majors taking a keyboard skills class, or a group piano class is the acquisition and competency in a broad array of practical skills at the piano, of which sightreading is key. Successful sightreading at the piano is dependent on the ability of the pianist to hear what is seen on the page. There must be an aural image of the relative context and pitch before it is played.[2] This is an important link between accurate and inaccurate playing, provided that the student sees what is there, and if the technical approach to the keyboard is secure.

In addition to developing excellent reading skills, harmonizing skills at the piano requires the ear training and reading to occur simultaneously as well. I believe that students in piano musicianship classes can develop strong piano playing fluency by developing the strong reading fluency based on intervallic singing and rhythmic imaging. In doing so I have developed and implemented various ear training activities from aural skills classes to improve how students learn to play the piano and develop functional keyboard skills.

In my piano musicianship classes I have integrated the aural skills practice of singing and listening to reinforce intervallic reading and sight playing skills at the piano, as well as developed "say-then-play" activities to promote stronger harmonization and transposing skills.

These adapted activities that I have implemented are from the *Alfred Group Piano for Adults, Books 1 and 2, 2nd ed.*, by Lancaster and Renfrow, as these are the textbooks for the piano musicianship curriculum at CCPA - Roosevelt University. However similar examples are readily found in other class piano textbooks and can be similarly adopted for use in the piano lab.

Sightreading and transposing are among the most challenging skills for students to acquire in group piano or piano musicianship skills classes. The paradoxical nature of the topography of the piano calls for the playing pitches of the notes laterally on the piano, while reading notes vertically on the staff. These are visual and kinesthetic challenges. In addition, the fact that the left and right hand fingerings are reversed for scale structures present additional physical and muscle coordination issues. As pianists we already know these processes involve a high level of mental activity. However, training students to develop an aural image to augment their reading skills will lead to greater successes at playing the piano.

Many piano teachers already realize the importance of preparing the aural image of the rhythm by having students tap and count aloud the musical example using the correct hand before playing a sightreading example. However, rhythm alone does not provide the complete aural image and often students still do not read and play successfully, even after the rhythm has been prepared. Research in the area of reading fluency indicates that another element is needed to complete the aural image - a continuous sound that establishes the character of a rhythmic pattern. Vocalizing or singing the rhythm builds the complete aural image from the notation. In *How to Increase Reading Ability*, Albert J. Harris points out "Auditory perception skills is an important element in reading readiness and in some studies has outranked all other factors in its contribution to success in reading. Thus the teaching of singing and vocal sound becomes an essential skill in developing reading fluency."[3]

This will result in the subsequent transfer of the aural image to the keyboard much more securely. Students in the first level of piano musicianship classes practice this skill by singing single-line melodic examples first, and then again, while moving their fingers on the piano lid for the respective hand. This sight-singing activity transfers the intervallic reading to the intervallic association between fingers and improves reading and playing.

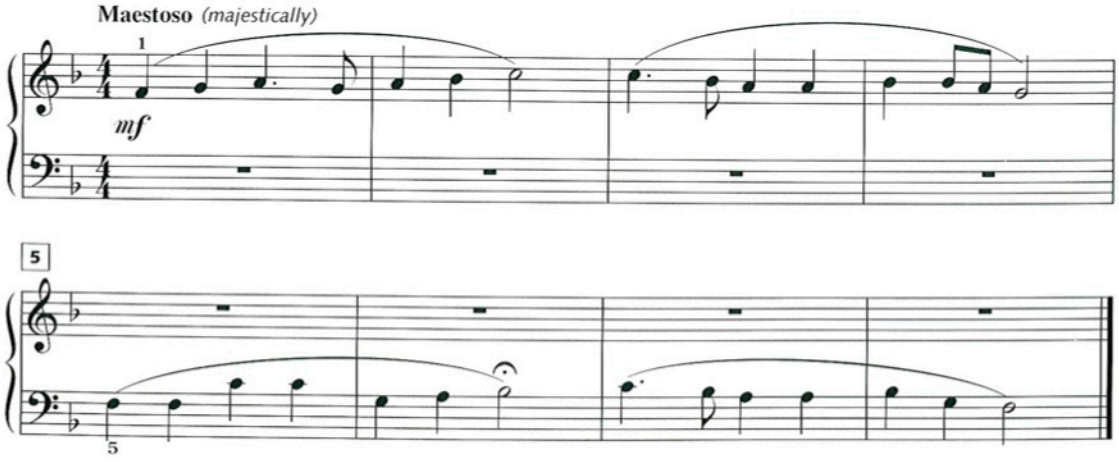
Sightreading and Transposing

In class I will often have the students sing the reading example on solfege first, then play while singing the melody again. Students are more apt to correctly play the correct intervals and transpose more successfully afterwards playing hands together, as the complete aural image of the music emerges.

The sequence of practice steps in my class to prepare reading examples involve the following steps:

23. Prepare the aural image of the rhythm by tapping and counting aloud with the correct hands.
24. Ask students to identify the starting solfege pitch of the melody. *At Roosevelt University, music majors sing using solfege in their aural skills classes*. However this can be adapted to match other systems as well.
25. Sing the melody a second time and move the correct fingers in the air to reinforce the intervals with the pitch being sung.
26. Play as is. Sight singing before playing the example has shown to be a helpful preparatory step for a successful sight playing experience.

Reading Example:



Afterwards it is quite helpful to have students transpose the same prepared or sightreading material to reinforce the intervallic reading. From the start, transposing reading exercises are one of the very best ways that I have found to develop solid sightreading skills. This will also significantly improve directional reading, as it prepares students to think wholistically about the musical context and reinforces intervallic reading.

Say-Then-Play: Chord Progressions

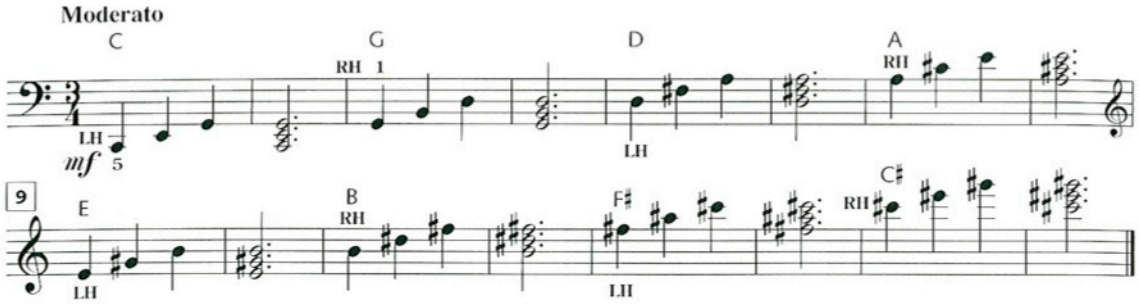
Learning how to harmonize and improvise is another practical piano musicianship skill that is required for music majors to successfully acquire in keyboard skills classes. In written theory classes, students are taught to instantly recognize chord qualities and chord types, which will ultimately help students to then develop a sense of harmonic progression and musical comprehension. In the keyboard skills classes, often times the

drill and practice of playing these chords progressions are reinforced as a technical acquisition of rote playing exercises. Obviously technical fluency is valuable, but the outcome of implementing this skill falls short of the mark in practical situations. To better connect the physical playing skill of chords and chord progressions, and relate it to the musical context at hand, I teach students to say THEN play, which reinforces the cognitive and aural musical comprehension and harmonization skills. I have found that by having students say the chords before playing chords in progression, develops better playing fluency and prevents harmonizing mistakes before they occur.

Lay a strong aural harmonic foundation

In the first level of a piano skills class, students learn to play the chord structures that will be the building blocks for harmonizing melodies in the subsequent levels. One of the first chord playing exercises in the first level of a piano class, involve students playing the cross-hand chords in a circle of 5ths reinforcing theory and key signatures.

Example: Playing root position chords crossing hands

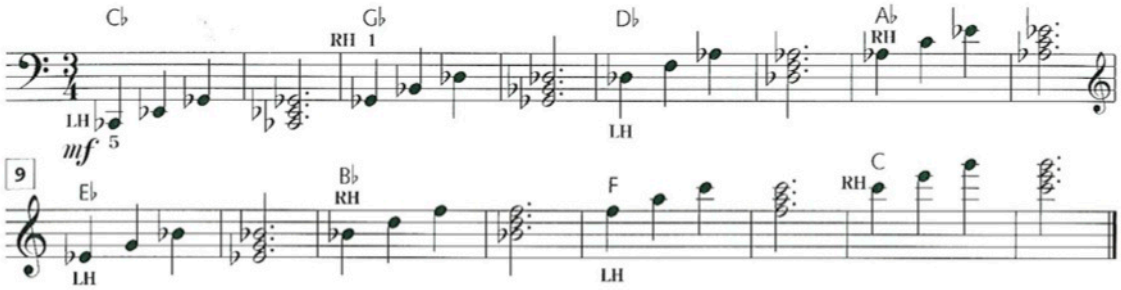


Adapted Sing-And-Play Exercise:

I have adapted this exercise to include a singing component while playing the broken and blocked chord exercise playing. Students sing "C-Ma-jor - Chord" while playing the chord tones in a steady quarter note rhythm.

This integrated activity focuses students to match pitch, develop ear training, and most importantly hear and sing the major chord quality.

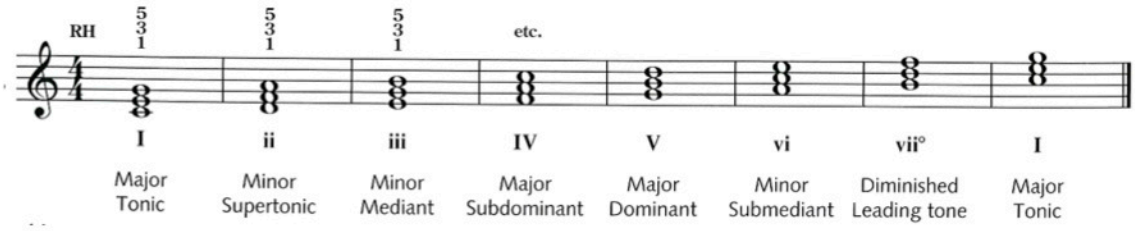
Repeat on the circle of flat keys:



A related "Say-Then-Play" activity involves having students say then play the diatonic chords for various major and minor scales, as part of their developing technical skill in the first year of piano musicianship classes. As musicians, identifying and playing harmonic chord structures is a fundamental part of musical fluency. To help students understand the context of the harmonic structure and progression in the music, I have them not only play the chords and chord progressions, but prepare the playing of chords by saying the chord names aloud before playing. This interconnected skill reinforces the playing of the chord qualities and links it to the aural expectation of the chord quality and comprehension of diatonic scale.

For example when the playing of scales are taught, students also have to play the diatonic triads for that key as a correlated concept that reinforces the tonality. I have students say-then-play the letter and quality of the chord so that their expectation of the aural sound matches their expectation of what will be played. This is done in a steady, rhythmic 4/4 meter. The following exercise has been adapted to half note divisions of speaking and playing patterns per triad.

Playing Diatonic Chords Example:



Adapted Sing-Then-Play Exercise:

"C-Major" - "Play-It" "D-Minor" - "Play-It" "E-Minor" - "Play-It" - etc.

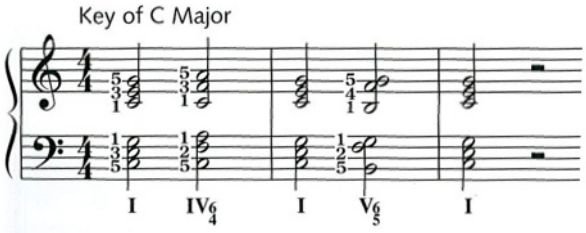
Be sure to apply to all the keys being studied. Transposition is key!

Chord Progressions

Similarly, when students are learning to play chord progressions, I have my students say the chord and inversion qualities, *before* playing the chord, so that they are always aware of their key and harmonic context, and not just the half and whole step formula for moving to the next chord. While memorizing the half and whole step movements help reinforce the muscle memory and keyboard topography, the musical context for the chord progressions could be better reinforced. Saying then playing each chord in the progression keeps the harmonic context and key relationships more present in student minds. This is quite helpful when students are asked to select proper chord choices for harmonization activities at the keyboard, as well as reinforces harmonic dictation in their aural skills classes.

The primary chord progression is usually taught in the first level of theory and keyboard musicianship classes. In particular, playing this progression in both the inversion and root styles can be confusing for students, and for some, a challenge to even distinguish the difference between playing the two styles on the piano. For this remedy I have found it helpful for students to say the chord letter name and inversion correctly - before playing the chord.

Inversion Style Primary Chord Progression

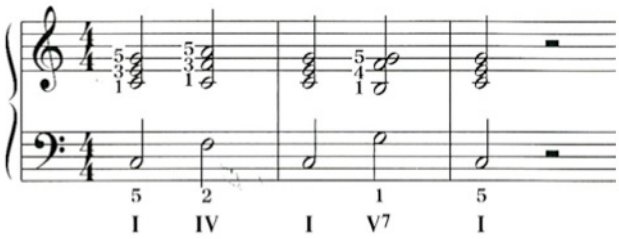


A more wholistic approach to learning and playing the primary chord progression involves saying - then playing the chord name and inversion in common time and in half note rhythms. There is a slower tempo to accommodate the saying - then playing of the chord progression.

Adapted Say and Play Exercise in Inversion Style:

"C-Major" then Play - "F 6-4" then Play - "C-Major" then Play - "G 6 - 5" then Play - "C-Major" then Play - etc.

Root Position Style Primary Chord Progression



Adapted Say and Play Exercise in Root Style:

"C-Major" then Play - "F Major" then Play - "C-Major" then Play - "G7" then Play - "C-Major" then Play.

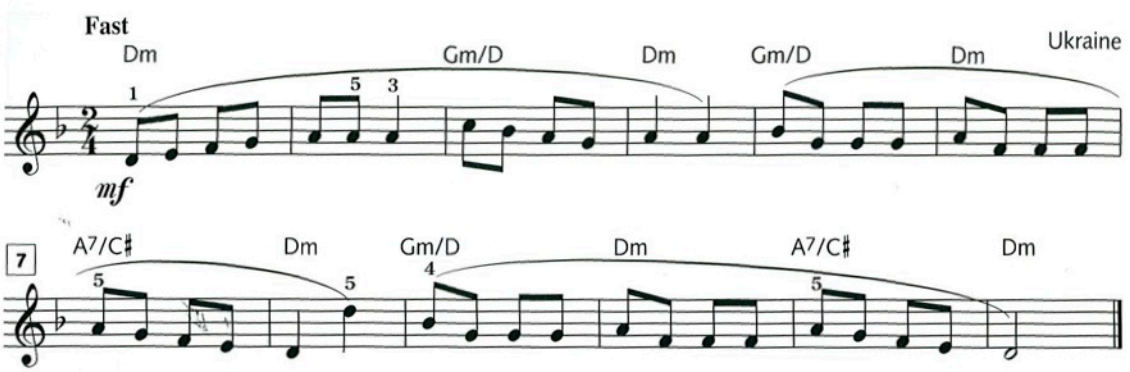
I have noticed significant improvement in the playing of chord progressions from students being taught this way because of their ability to recognize the sound of the chord and quality. Students are able to quickly correct their errors without fumbling around the keys when they play an incorrect chord or an incorrect chord tone and ably noting the difference between what was said and played. This process can be continued through the upper levels of keyboard skills classes when students are playing longer progressions with secondary chords and secondary dominant chord progressions.

Sing-and-Play: Harmonization

Learning how to harmonize melodies using various simple accompaniment styles is among the learning outcomes for students in keyboard skills classes. Many teachers familiar with the group lab setting, utilize various group instructional methods, including pairing students to practice playing of melody and harmony in two parts. This may include pairs of students playing either the right or left hand of a harmonization example in some combination.

I have adapted this activity for students to focus on playing the left hand where the motor skill of forming chord shapes or playing an *alberti* or broken chord style can be practiced, but having the students sing the melody at the same time. This is a preparatory step to playing hands together, as well to reinforce reading fluency. Singing the melody on solfege not only reinforces the harmonic context, but improves interval recognition and is particularly effective for reinforcing transposition skills. Keeping students in pairs during this activity increases student motivation and better pitch accuracy as well!

Harmonization Example:



Practice and Teaching Guide:

- Be sure to focus on the scalar and intervallic contour of the melody
- Ask: "What is the starting solfege pitch of the melody?"

Again, singing the intervallic pitch and rhythmic reading imaging serves as a powerful practice step to playing the melody accurately, and associating those intervals to fingers when hands are played together. Students are then asked to transpose the harmonization while in the "play left hand and sing melody" mode. I have discovered that the harmonic transposition work is more successfully played and becomes more fluent as a result of these preparatory aural images.

Sing-and-Play: Harmonization with Two-Hand Accompaniments

Another integrated aural and piano playing skill is the singing and playing of two-hand accompaniments. Playing two-hand accompaniments are among the practical skills that are taught in piano skills classes. Common teaching methods involve the instructor, possibly another student, to play the melody while the student plays the two-hand accompaniment. Otherwise, the student would play along with the recorded melody. While all of these methods have pedagogical value, including reinforcement of playing in a steady tempo, developing accompanying skills, among others, I have found that having students *sing* the melody and play the accompaniment to be a valuable musical activity. This also provides important training for vocalists and music educator majors.

Of course, there should be some consideration and leeway on tempi selections, as some students may not be able to play as quickly in the prescribed tempo. However, I have found that the added skill set of singing on pitch and developing the hand and voice coordination, soundly captures the comprehensive musicianship skill, and encompasses a fuller breadth of overall musical skill and aptitude.

At the 2nd and 3rd level of piano musicianship classes, students are required to sing and play two-hand accompaniments with some singing options- sing on a vowel of their choice, solfege, or words if it is a familiar tune. Other options include composing their own lyrics, thereby adding a creative element to the musical activity. Humming is not allowed, they must sing!

Sing Melody and Play Two-Hand Accompaniment:

The importance of keyboard harmony and its role in music training should be defined as one of reinforcing conceptual skill, as well as assisting the mastering of ear training. As Michael Rogers notes in *Teaching Approaches in Music Theory*, "The ultimate purpose of the keyboard component... from a music-theory point of view, is to train the brain, not the fingers; the goal is to become a musician, not a pianist."[4]

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Yeeseon Kwon brings with her expertise and scholarship in piano pedagogy as a teacher and performer. Her published research on strength-based teaching in piano pedagogy demonstrates how to implement best learning and teaching strategies for students and teachers. Formerly as Associate Professor of Music, Dr. Kwon taught piano and piano pedagogy at Greenville College (IL), as well at Ithaca College (NY), and Northwestern University (IL), among others. Author and formerly Associate Editor for Clavier Magazine, Dr. Kwon has written new music reviews for *Clavier Companion* as well as published numerous articles and books in the area of piano pedagogy, including *Written For You Collections, Books 1-4 with Teaching and Practice Guides* (F.J.H). She is active nationally as an adjudicator, workshop clinician, and featured conference presenter. As a performing artist, Dr. Kwon has been featured in international solo and collaborative performances in the United States and Russia. Yeeseon Kwon received her Doctor of Musical Arts degree in piano performance and pedagogy from the University of Oklahoma as well as M.M. and B.M. degrees from Northwestern University.

Identifying a Music Student's Learning Paths and Facets: Implications for Music Teachers and Teaching (An Exploratory Study)

by Mark Minott

Introduction

Student-learning and ways of understanding this phenomenon has been the source of research throughout the years (Panton 1956, Kolb and Fry 1975, Jarvis, 1996, Merriam and Caffarella, 1999 and Goorha and Mohan, 2010). Many of these studies occur in universities, higher education institutions and the general classroom. While there are studies in this area internationally, there is no known local research in the Cayman Islands which examines music students' learning. Therefore, researching this area locally would aid in filling a literary gap and make an original contribution to knowledge (Phillips and Pugh 2000).

The need to fill this literary gap and to contribute to the body of knowledge on music students' learning led to the launch of a small qualitative action research based exploratory study. The study utilized Jarvis's model of learning, participant observation and informal in-session interview as tools to identify the learning facets and paths utilized by a music student to acquire the knowledge and skills necessary to play a musical instrument. This paper reports on the study.

The paper commences with an outline of Jarvis's model of learning, succinctly discusses learning generally, and music specifically. It also outlines the study which forms the basis of the paper, discusses the findings and ends by stating the implications of the findings for Music Teachers and Teaching.

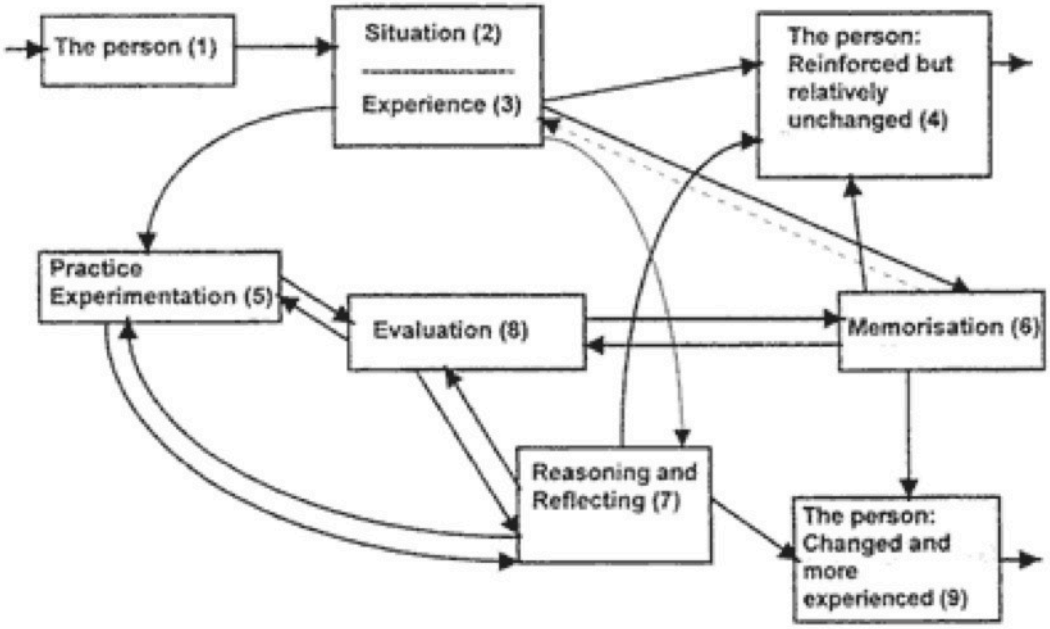


Figure 1. Jarvis's model of learning

A deep interest in the area of student-learning led Professor Peter Jarvis to modify Kolb and Fry's (1975) experiential learning cycle. His reason for modifying Kolb and Fry (1975) experiential learning cycle was that it was thought to be simplistic and did not capture the complexities of the process of learning in which individuals engage. That is, it did not capture the many facets and paths utilised by individuals as they engage in a learning activity.

An examination of Jarvis's learning model (figure 1.), shows that every encountered situation or experience will either result in learning or non-learning. Jarvis (1996) defines these learning and non-learning responses: non-learning i.e., a rejection of the opportunity to learn, non-reflective learning, i.e., the learner learns the information so it can be reproduced at a later time and reflective learning, i.e., critically thinking about the situation or experience, this may involve thinking about the situation or experience before it occurs and during the occurrence (Schon 1983).

A closer examination of his model of learning reveals these types of learning and non-learning responses to a situation or experience, facets of the learning process, possible learning paths and learning outcomes resulting from the encounter. For example, the model reveals that encountering a situation or having an experience may only reinforce an idea, but the person remains relatively unchanged as a result (path: 1, 2, 3, 4,). However, by reasoning and reflecting on the situation the person will experience change and may become more experienced (path: 1, 2, 3, 7, 9), or remains relatively unchanged as a result (path: 1, 2, 3, 7, 4). On the other hand, the person may reason and reflect on

the situation or experience and evaluate the findings and this may result in memorization and he/she remains relatively unchanged or experience change and may become more experienced (path: 1, 2, 3,7,8,6 and 4 or 9).

Learning (generally)

Jarvis (1996) is of the opinion that learning is a process, and this is reflected in the complexity of his learning model. He is not alone in this understanding of learning, see for example, McCulloch (2009), who sees learning as a process in which the student is involved with an ongoing engagement in the subject matter, the process of studying, and dialoguing with other students, and Deketelaere, Kelchtermans, Struyf and De Leyn (2006) who also define learning as a process and argue for the acceptance of both formal and informal learning in clinical internship.

While there is some consensus about learning being a process, there is no single universally acceptable definition of learning and there seems to be no agreement among scholars on this matter. However, there are a few communal characteristics noted in the myriad of definitions primarily the fact that it is about change in behaviour, and is the product of an interaction between the person and the environment. This thought is supported by Merriam and Caffarella, (1999) who state that while learning is defined in a variety of ways, most definitions include the concepts of behavioral change (psychological) and experience (social).

Jarvis (1996) also agrees with this understanding, for he states that learning occurs in a psychological and social context from the time of birth onwards. After birth, other factors affect learning for example mental and physical disabilities. Merriam and Caffarella, (1999) expand on this idea when they state that this way of thinking about learning is supported by social learning theory which posits that in addition to the behavioral and cognitive aspects associated with learning, people also learn by observing what takes place in a social setting. The writers postulate that observational learning is influenced by how much attention is given to the situation being observed, retention or memory, how much the situation is rehearsed, and the individual motivation to learn from the social situation.

What has been hinted at in the foregoing discussion, through the use of the term, cognitive, is the development of the mind as integral to the learning process. The mind is formed when the brain begins to store a variety of transformed experiences. In like manner, the 'self' is formed as we have every day experiences. This idea is also highlighted by Merriam and Caffarella, (1999). The writers refer to this idea as a cognitive orientation or information processing learning theory. The theory states that learning should not be viewed as primarily a stimulus-response activity, but involved thinking, interpreting sensations, and giving meaning to situations or events.

From birth, humans interact with others in socio-cultural-environments and process information; these also help to form 'self'. Jarvis (1996) states that learning involves transforming all the everyday experiences, internalizing them and making them a part of

us (self). Learning, however, does not only involve internalization but externalization, where the individual's learned social characteristics interact with his/her environment. Social situations then provide the avenues through which experiences can be transformed–through cognitive or information processing– thus enabling learning to occur (Gomez and Rico, 2007). An individual can respond to a social situation in one of two ways, by taking action to learn from it or withdrawing, in which case, non-learning occurs. An active response to a social situation will eventually facilitate some degree of learning.

In summary, learning involves information processing and occurs through experience and interaction with a socio-cultural milieu. All learning begins with some experience, primary or secondary. Primary experiences are immediate and personal, secondary experiences are relayed information or experiences that might be someone's interpretation of an event or situation, and since learning occurs through experiences in a social situation, the individual's perception of that situation gives meaning to the experience (Long, 1990).

Learning Music (Specifically)

The summary in the forgoing discussion provides a useful starting point for our discussion on how people learn music. The summary highlights the fact that to learn music involves information processing, primary and secondary experiences and interaction with a socio-cultural milieu.

Firstly, Scruton (1999) agrees with the idea that to learn music involves information processing when he states that to understand or learn music is partly a cognitive activity that requires the ability to mentally process information. It is this cognitive processing of information which concerns this study. The writer however extends this idea to include the ability to mentally and aurally connect sounds and register them as tones arranged in scales or tonal patterns. Based on these observations, learning music is a dynamic procedure which involves not just the processing of written or spoken information but the processing of qualitative information, in the form of sound quantity (*ff, mp, mf*), sound quality (*staccato, legato*) and sound characteristics (pitch lowness or highness).

Secondly, the summary also points out that learning involve both primary and secondary experiences. Primary experiences are immediate and personal and secondary experiences are relayed information (Long, 1990). Primary and Secondary experiences are inextricable facets of the music learning process especially in a music studio setting. This is so, because in all music studios the learner will have primary experiences taking the form of interacting with, or playing an instrument. They will also have secondary experiences for example, the teacher relaying information which may include proper fingering for a woodwind instrument, or background information to a ‘piece’ of music.

Thirdly, learning also involves interaction with a socio-cultural milieu. In other words, the resources that are available to students and the teaching approach utilized by the music teachers are aspect of the milieu which aids the learner. Minott (2012) in his study

of piano studios pointed out that there is the belief among music teachers that the resources in a studio such as a listening room and a library with appropriate literature, will aid learning.

Research Methodology

A qualitative action research design was adopted for two reasons. One, I was involved in researching my own classroom activities. Two, it allowed me to interpret and understand the actions and thoughts of the participant (Denzin and Lincoln, 1994). I employed the process of purposeful convenience or opportunity sampling in selecting the participant (Guba and Lincoln, 1998). This means, the participant selected was a student and friend, and was willing to assist me. The main reason for using a single participant was the fact that I was not interested in generalizing the findings, but in understanding the facets and paths used by the student to learn. I also utilised participant observation which involved the use of an informal in-session interview (Manheim and Simon 1977 and Creswell 2007).

The observation centered on the facets and paths of learning outlined in the model. For example, it was observed that one path of learning the student took at a particular point of the lesson involved 1, 2, 3, 5 i.e., person 1, situation 2, and experience 3 and practice 5. Periodically, questions were asked of the student during the teaching session. These were used to highlight the plausibility of the learning process being observed. A question such as, 'why were you pausing so often, during the playing of the piece of music?' solicited the response, 'I had to pause because I thought the tones were not clean and clear and I think this came from wrong fingering'. This point to the fact that the student was engaged in reflecting, this is facet 7 in the learning model.

The study was guided by the research question, "In light of the model of learning under investigation, what process of learning was utilized by the student?"

A description of the student

The student was female, aged 28, majoring in Business Administration at the university level. She has a very stable family life, her academic achievement is outstanding. She was placed on the Dean's list twice in a single year.

Her musical exposure is limited to extra curricula programmes such as singing on the university choir, being involved in movement and music workshops and productions. She has done some instrumental work on the piano, but just at the beginners' level, reading notes and playing by ear. She said that she recalls information better if she rewrites it in her own words and also if it is repeated a number of times.

A description of the learning situation

The student was taught a single lesson which lasted one hour in the teacher's studio. The

studio was equipped with all that was needed to facilitate the session, chairs, music stands, recorder books from beginners to advanced levels, charts depicting a number of musical concepts and signs. The studio was built with the capacity to reduce noise intake and outlet. There was a lesson plan to accompany the session.

The teacher and student were familiar with each other; this promoted a relaxed atmosphere and openness in communication. It was the desire of the student to learn to play an instrument in addition to the piano. She was also of the opinion that the playing of this instrument would be quite helpful to her in the future. The following is a description of the lesson.

A description of how the lesson was taught

The general objective of the lesson was to play the descant recorder using standard notation. The specific objectives include the fact that the student should be able to:

1. locate the notes B, A and G on the staff,
2. play the notes B, A and G from written scores,
3. produce a good tone from the instrument using proper tonguing,
4. describe how the instrument is made up,
5. hold the instrument in a proper playing position,
6. play a simple tune from a written score which made use of the notes B, A and G.

The teacher and student greeted each other, exchanged some casual comments and discussed what was to be achieved in the lesson. A seat was offered to the student and a music stand on which two books for beginners in the playing of the descant recorder were placed. The student was told a little about music notation such as the notes and their values and the proper names of the notes. She was then asked to examine the instrument and state any observable features.

She responded by stating the colour, how it was constructed, the shape and the number and size of the holes. The teacher then told the student how to hold the recorder, placing the left hand on the section nearest to the mouth piece and the right hand on the body of the instrument, then allow the thumb of the left hand to cover the hole at the back of the instrument, the index finger to cover the first hole on the upper surface.

She was also told how and where to blow to achieve a good tone. To assist her in holding the instrument in a correct playing position, a picture of a person doing so was displayed. This aided very well in achieving a proper playing position.

Next an introduction to the treble staff was carried out. The note B along with its fingering in one of the books was introduced. The student then proceeded to play the note B using the suggested fingering and tonguing techniques. This was a bit difficult at first, because she sometimes blew too hard and other times too soft. After a number of attempts, she was able to balance the air pressure going into the instrument and fingering, to produce a smooth sounding B note.

A short piece of music using only the note B was then introduced and the student was asked to play it. The notes A and G were introduced just as the note B was, followed by a short piece of music which made use of each note. It was worth noting that she was able to play a smooth sounding A and G note, now that she had already learned how to balance air pressure and fingering from her attempts at playing the note B.

After accomplishing all the above, the student was presented with two new pieces of music to play using B, A and G. At the completion of the lesson, the teacher then played one piece in full. As a means of review at the end of the session, which lasted for one hour, the student was asked to finger out the notes B, A and G on the instrument, then to play the notes as they were called out randomly.

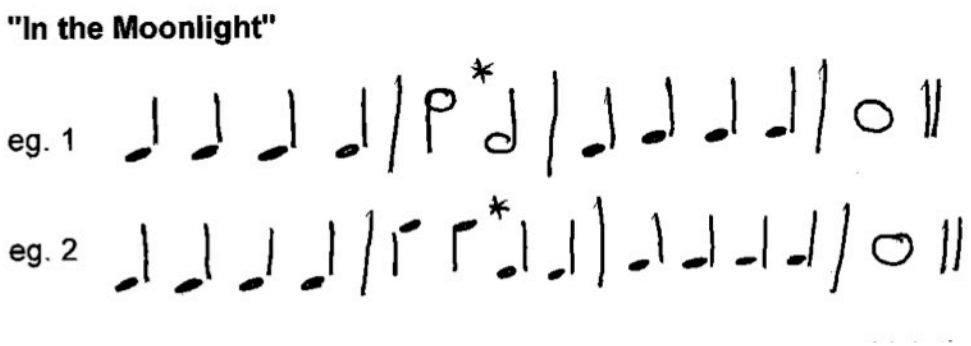
An advanced 'piece' of music was then handed to her and she was asked at random to locate and point out the notes B, A and G. Finally, the student was asked to describe the construction of the instrument. She was able to identify the notes and stated that the instrument was divided into three parts, one, a mouth piece, two, a neck and three, a body.

Identifying the Student's Learning Paths and Facets (Results)

It was the student's idea to learn to play an instrument. She thought that there was a need to do so, and also the ability to play would be quite helpful to her in her future plans. What was obvious from the discussion was that she was already exposed to the learning of some form of standard notation, though at a minimal level. As a result, her focus was not on seeing the notes and trying to recognise them, but more on the production of good tones. Her prior knowledge of standard notation also allowed her not to think long and hard about the letter names or the rhythmic values of the notes. She just applied her past learning to the present situation.

Throughout the actual practicing of the music, pauses could be heard. When she was asked about these she said she had to pause on several occasions because she thought the tones being produced were not clean and clear and this came as a result of faulty fingering, so she paused to correct the fingering and continued to play the piece.

The student was also able to hear when a number of notes were not played to their correct length and values. The two lines below is a rhythmic outline of one of the pieces that the student was given to play.



Example one of "In the moonlight" shows the correct way in which the music should be played. Example two shows how the student actually played the piece. Note well bar two of both examples (see*). The student was able (after pausing and reflecting) to highlight the fact that she played bar two incorrectly, doubling the crotchets or quarter notes instead of playing two minims or half notes.

It was quite clear that repetition was an integral part of the student's learning process. She repeated the pieces of music a number of times until she felt that she had played them properly which she thought was an indication that she had learned the skills necessary to play the tunes.

It was also the student's opinion that she already knew some of the information given, but hearing it again helped to reinforce what she had already learned. While other sets of information were new, (for example, the teacher spoke of crotchet or quarter notes having one beat) she was able to identify the notes by their shape and state their values. However, she did not know the proper names of the notes.

When a new piece of music was introduced, she took a few minutes to point at, and say the letter names of the notes to herself, sometimes, barely audibly. When asked about this, she said she did this in order to familiarise herself with the notes and to some extent to quickly memorise their names. This was possible because the piece of music was only four bars in length with a number of repeated notes and patterns. By the end of the session, the student had also memorised the names of the notes B, A and G, the shape and fingering patterns used with these notes on the recorder. This was apparent because she was able to find and name the notes B, A and G from a more advance and complex musical score. She was also able to finger the notes on the recorder without the use of a visual aid or the assistance of the teacher.

Connecting the Student's Learning Paths and Facets with the Learning Model (Discussion)

Slavin (2009) in considering learning in the first few years of life, is of the opinion that a

child is molded by the society. This molding is not confined to childhood but occurs even in later years. It is also noted that the development of society and the individual go hand in hand and condition each other. Jarvis (1996) agrees with this trend of thought when he stated that there is an interaction between the society and the individual.

It could be inferred from the opening statement of the discussion with the student participant that there existed what the student perceived as a need, which was to play a musical instrument. This reflects Knowles' (1973) view point when he stated that adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning can satisfy. This perceived need was influenced by a number of factors. However, the student spoke of the social benefits that she could derive in the future from being able to play an instrument. Here it is seen that there was an interaction between the student and the society. The student responded to the stimuli from this interaction by seeking out a learning situation that will in the future allow her to gain some social benefits from the society.

Seashore (1967) speaks of the "conscious memory" which is the making available of stored information and experience during the learning process in music. Jarvis (1996) referred to "biography" which comprises previous knowledge, skills or attitude. Each person takes to every learning situation his or her biography or conscious memory. The student in the report has had some past experience with notes and values; therefore, there was harmony in the relationship between her biography or conscious memory and the material being taught. So at times only reinforcement took place in the learning process. This is reflected in path 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the learning model.

There were however, aspects of the learning situation with which she was unfamiliar, for example, that of producing proper tones when playing the instrument. So some 'disjuncture' was quite apparent (Jarvis 1996). However, it should be noted that the level of 'disjuncture' was not too great, for the student paused, reflected, then decided to continue with the session. Rowe (1984) shares Jarvis' idea when she stated that although new sets of ideas can be incorporated or anchored into the existing cognitive structure, new material should not conflict too strongly, or be so unrelated that no link is provided. If this happens, then the new information or idea may not be absorbed.

The playing of the descant recorder was a new experience that demanded that the student acquired and practised new skills. Recognising notes and playing another instrument was already a part of her biography. However she had to practise the new instrument, its fingering, tonguing, breathing and posture in order to acquire the skill of playing it efficiently. This means, in learning, the student engaged in facet 5 and utilised path 1, 2, 3, 5 of the learning model.

When asked how she felt about learning a new instrument, she said doing so had caused her to become excited about the learning situation/session and having achieved the ability to play this new instrument brought a certain level of personal satisfaction and fulfillment.

From the learning model I recognised that reasoning and reflecting, evaluation and practice are also facets of the student's learning process. There were a number of places during the lesson that these facets were observed. For example, during the pauses in the playing of one of the tunes, the student was asked why she paused; she said that she thought the sound being produced was not clean and clear, so she had paused to correct the fingering. From this example, it could be inferred that throughout the periods of silence she was mentally evaluating the playing of the instrument. As a result, it can be assumed that evaluation and practice were facets of this student learning process. The path she used in this instance was 1, 2, 3, 5, 8, 5.

The ability to reason and reflect singularly was also evident in the student learning process. This is so because the student, after completing the time allowed for practice, paused, looked at the written scores then outlined to the teacher the bar and notes that she played incorrectly. She then practised again and was able to play the section correctly. This process involves path 1, 2, 3, 5, 7 5.

The repetition of the pieces of music facilitated the memorisation of fingering and notes. The fact that she was able to recognise the notes in more complex musical score, was able to finger the notes a number of minutes later, and to hold the instrument in the appropriate playing position, was sufficient evidence that memorisation had taken place and was a part of the student's learning process.

Each time a new piece of music was introduced, the student took a few minutes to recite the letter names of the notes. When asked why this was done, she stated that it was to familiarise herself with the letter names of the notes and also with the tune to be played. From this example, the student applied a form of non-reflective learning called "preconscious learning". Jarvis explained it as a form of familiarisation with the material to be learnt.

The teacher, having played one of the tunes in full, sought to help the student to concretize the skills learned. The playing of a piece of music 'in-full' was done so that the student could get an overall picture of sound, position, notes, rhythm and performance style of the instrument.

The outcome of the lesson was two-fold. One, the student had learned to play the recorder and was ready for other experiences and a change had taken place. Two, in some ways, ideas were just reinforced and the student went relatively unchanged. This is reflected in the fact that the path of learning this student took involves 1 through 3 (person 1, situation 2, and experience 3) to 5 (practice) then looping a number of times between 5, 8 and 7 (practice 5, evaluation 8, reasoning and reflecting 7) to 6 (memorisation). Some aspects of the learning led from 6 (memorisation) to 4 (reinforced but relative unchanged) while others from 6 (memorisation) to 9 (changed and more experienced).

Implications of the Findings for Music Teachers and Teaching

Firstly, a teacher armed with this information about students' learning will appreciate that each student will respond differently to various learning experiences and will come away from the experience in a number of states i.e. one, having previous learning reinforced, two, totally internalizing the new experience and coming away a changed individual or three, having both of the above experiences. This suggests the need to assess students at the end of each session to ascertain what outcome was experience and to make adjustments for future lessons accordingly, if deemed necessary.

Secondly, with this understanding of the variety of paths and facets of learning that a student may utilize in a single session, the teacher will need to establish objectives that will seek to facilitate the diverse learning processing and allow for the internalization and transformation of learning experiences into musical knowledge, attitudes and skills. For example, each time a new piece of music was introduced, the student in this study took a few minutes to recite the letter names of the notes, given this fact an objective of a future lesson could involve setting aside time for the student to familiarize herself with the letter names of the notes and also with the tune to be played. Another objective could be to encourage and facilitate the student's learning by periodically providing opportunities for her to engage often in the act of reciting letter names of notes and familiarizing herself with the tune to be played.

Thirdly, a teacher with this understanding of the various paths and facets of learning should also use questions to encourage students to evaluate personal thoughts and ideas. The teacher should willingly answer students' questions and a lot appropriate time for the completion of tasks and for student reflections. This process could facilitate memorization of information.

Fourthly, knowledge of the learning processes should encourage the teacher to make frequent use of the student-centered approaches or methods to teaching for example, discussions, listening and observing. These will allow students to apply their own learning styles and different types of learning to a learning episode. This should allow the teachers to also utilize a teacher-centered approach when it is necessary for him/her to guide the students' reasoning and reflecting on ideas or concepts.

Conclusion

It can be concluded that this study highlights the fact that learning music is a complex activity which is cognitive in nature, involves information processing and occurs through experience and interaction with a socio-cultural milieu. Specifically, learning involves a complex mix of facets and paths (Jarvis 1996). It was also recognized that a student participating in a learning episode could choose a number of facets and paths to complete the episode.

Limitation

While this study provides findings that might be similarly obtained from a like individual or group and situation elsewhere, and sufficient details of the research context, data collection, and analysis provided, it is left to readers to make their own judgment about transferability of the findings to other contexts, situations or individuals.

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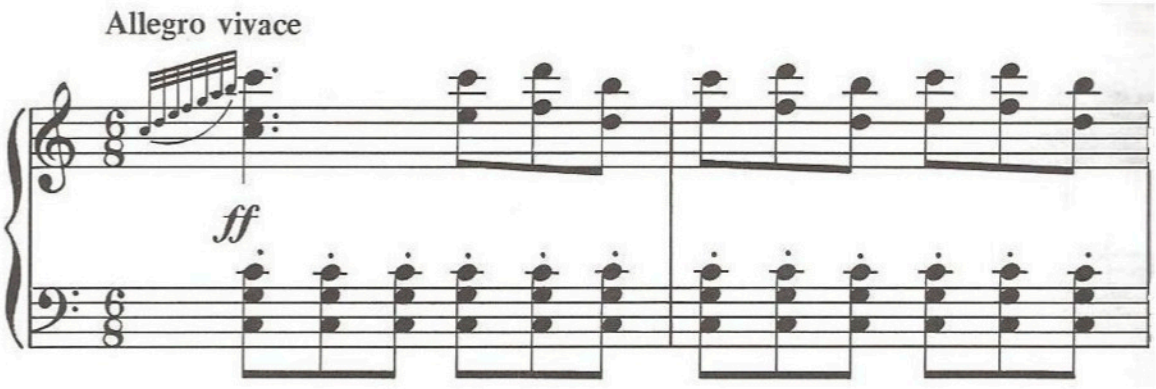
Breakin' It Down: The Art of Modifying Orchestral Reductions at the Piano

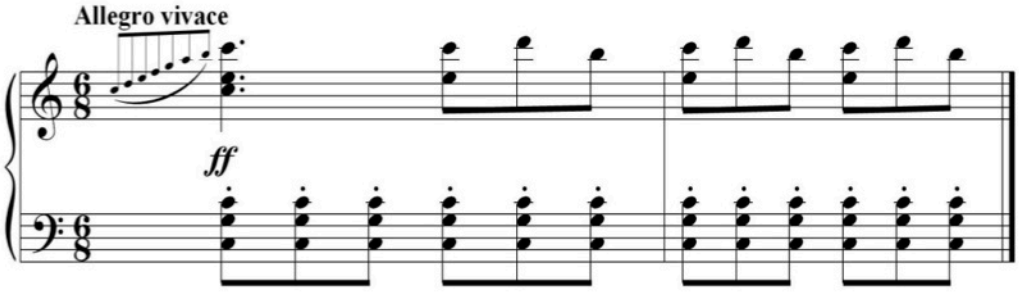
by Ron Petti

Many college and pre-college level pianists have not experienced the complexities of working with orchestral reductions. This is an essential skill for pianists to cultivate, since singers frequently perform works from the genres of opera and oratorio, and instrumentalists play concerti and other works originally written for a solo instrument with orchestral accompaniment. A similar situation is found in the choral setting as choirs often perform music with piano that was originally intended for a larger ensemble. This is done either out of necessity, or during preliminary rehearsals with piano that will culminate in a performance with the original larger ensemble.

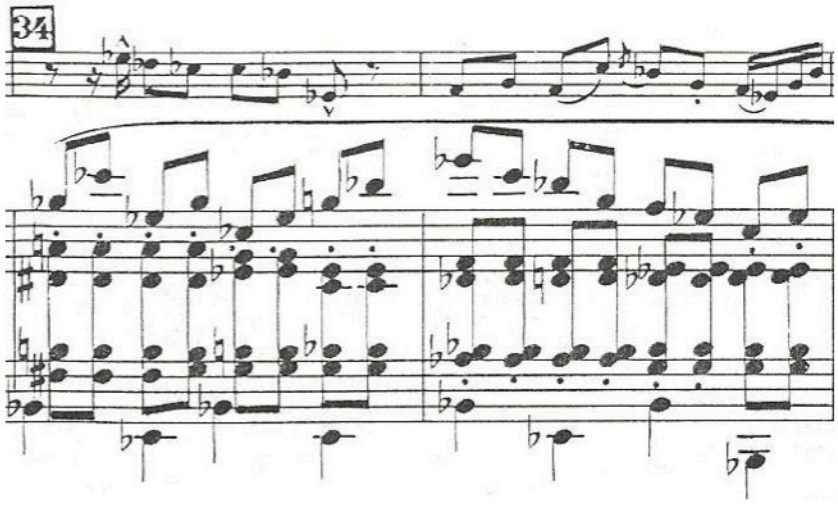
The art of modifying orchestral reductions at the piano often involves editing the score to make it more playable, since orchestral reductions often have too many musical lines or notes to execute with two hands. One of the most common editing techniques involves a procedure called thinning. Thinning is commonly done when there are simply too many notes for one pianist to play, and is generally done on a case by case basis. There is no steadfast rule on how much to thin as this will vary depending on the level of each pianist. A college piano major may have to thin slightly, where a more advanced pianist can play the score as is, and an intermediate junior high school pianist may have to do considerable thinning. The first example, shown below, is an excerpt of an orchestral reduction from a popular aria for baritone titled *Largo al factotum* from Gioacchino Rossini's opera, *Il barbiere di Siviglia* (The Barber of Seville). If you are not familiar with the work, you may have heard this aria played on television cartoons as a child. In the initial orchestral introduction, the pianist is asked to play parallel sixths in the right hand at a very brisk tempo. This etude-like pattern is very awkward and nearly unplayable at performance tempo. At the very least, it is a pattern with which many younger pianists will experience great difficulty in remaining free of excess tension. Similarly, the left hand pattern is severely taxing for most pianists and should also be modified (this will be discussed later in the article).



A thinned out version is shown below. Omitting the parallel sixths creates a more idiomatic rendering and through the inclusion of the E natural in the right hand on each strong beat, a fullness of sound is still present.

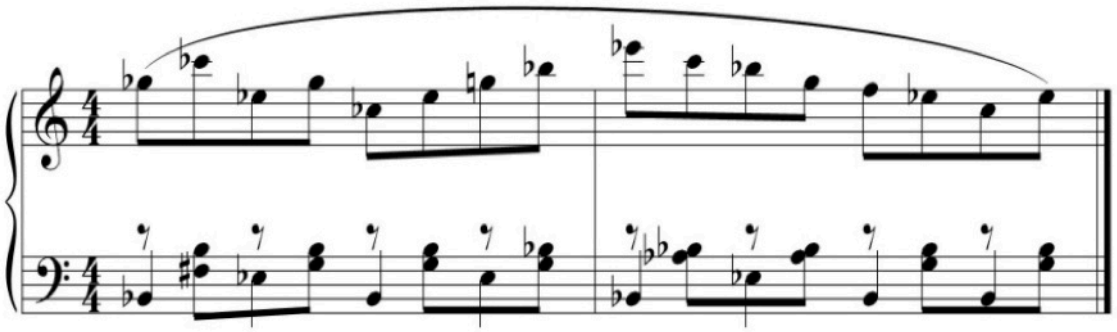


In some cases, severe pruning is essential to make a reduction even playable by one pianist at performance tempo. The example below is an excerpt from the last section of Jean Françaix's work for oboe and orchestra titled "*L'horloge de flore*" (The Flower Clock). A quick glance clearly reveals how unplayable this example is for two hands at an approximate metronome marking of quarter note = 132.



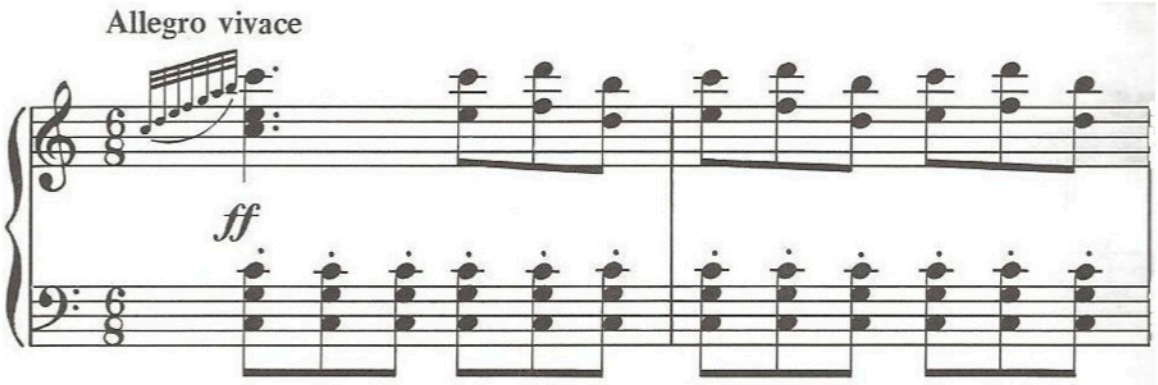
Not only is the above example unplayable at quarter note = 132, it is unplayable by two hands at any tempo due to the large, unrealistic intervals in each clef. It is possible, through octave displacement, to incorporate a portion of the upper alto line with the right hand and to also shift the lower alto line down an octave in the left hand; however, this is not recommended since it would tend to sound clunky and not light and delicate as it does when played by the orchestra. A better, more practical solution, shown below, is to omit both alto voices, and heavily thin the two tenor voices. Notice the use of octave

displacement in the bass line to eliminate leaping in the left hand. This is a common technique frequently employed in both hands to alleviate large leaps in orchestral reductions.



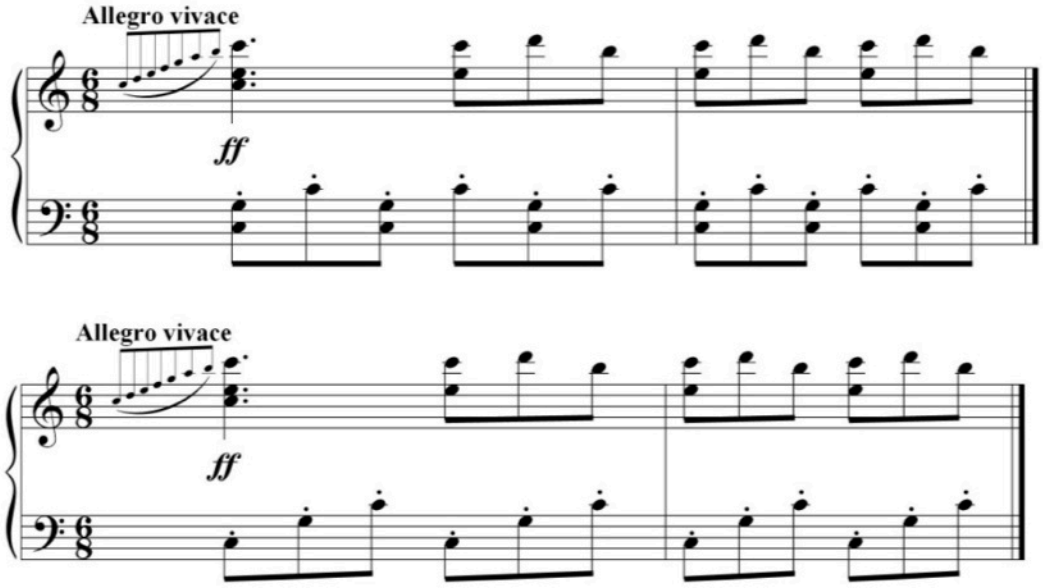
While the technique of thinning may be considered to be a pianist's bread and butter, the true art of deciphering an orchestral reduction lies in modifying orchestral patterns to make them more pianistic. Many patterns that work well on one instrument can be treacherously difficult or impossible on a different instrument. Common patterns found in orchestral reductions include rapid repeated notes, thick textures that require quick changes in hand position, large leaps in the left or right hand, and tremolo.

An example of rapid repeated notes in the left hand is shown below in an example utilized earlier in the article.



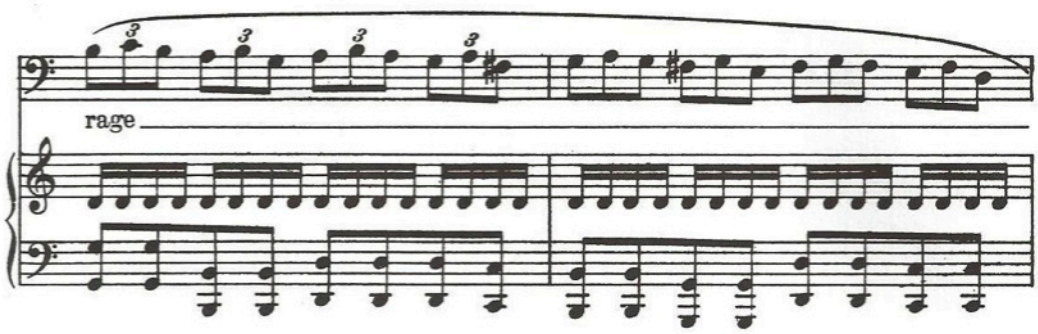
Many pianists will find this pattern of repeated blocked chords cumbersome, resulting in a great amount of forearm tension. It is permissible to modify the pattern, making it more pleasing technically, while maintaining the rhythmic vitality of the orchestra. Two

possible solutions are shown below.

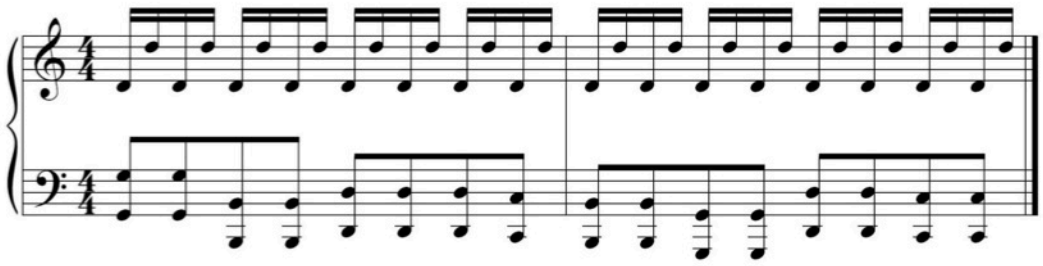


The second example is the preferred one since it incorporates a slightly thicker texture, resulting in a fuller, more orchestral sound. The first example is somewhat simpler and thinner, but the alberti pattern tends to sound more like a pattern found in a piano sonata or sonatina from the classical period rather than a full wall of sound we associate with an orchestra. Although the articulation in the left hand is marked staccato, it is advisable to use a fair amount of damper pedal to imitate the full resonance of sound heard in the original orchestral part.

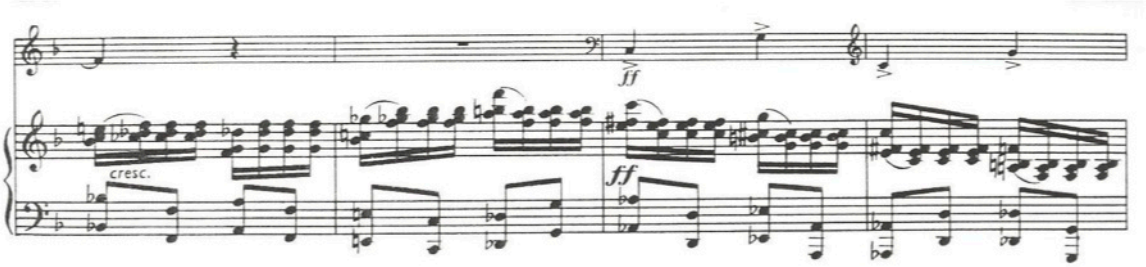
Another instance of an awkward musical passage which includes repeated notes can be seen in an excerpt from Handel's oratorio, Messiah. This example is extracted from the bass aria *Why Do the Nations So Furiously Rage Together?*



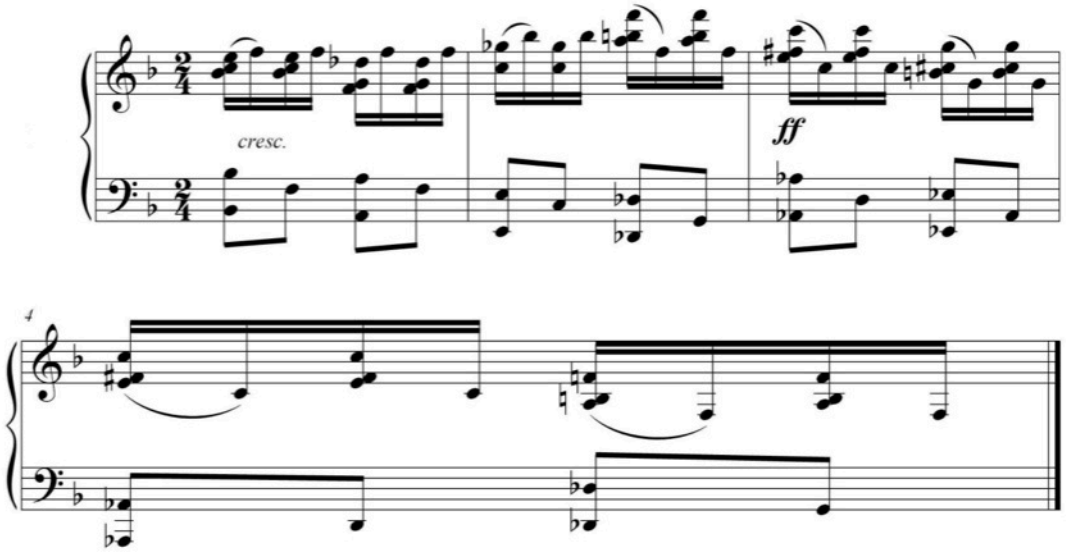
Originally, the repeated notes in the treble clef were scored for upper strings. This is a relatively common pattern found in string literature. Technically, it lies well on the instrument and can be played on an open string. In contrast, when transferred to the piano, this pattern becomes unidiomatic and hard to maintain over any lengthy period of time. Since the majority of this aria contains these repeated note patterns, it is essential to modify them in order to achieve clarity, note accuracy, and technical ease of playing. One solution is to play eighth note patterns in the right hand instead of sixteenth notes; however, the rhythmic excitement of the piece suffers greatly when subjected to this treatment. A far more superior rendering can be accomplished quite easily without compromising the rhythm, or technical difficulty by simply creating a broken octave pattern commonly found in many works for piano. This interpretation is shown below. Many pianists will find this pattern much more manageable, both technically and musically while maintaining the original rhythmically driven aesthetic found in the orchestral part.



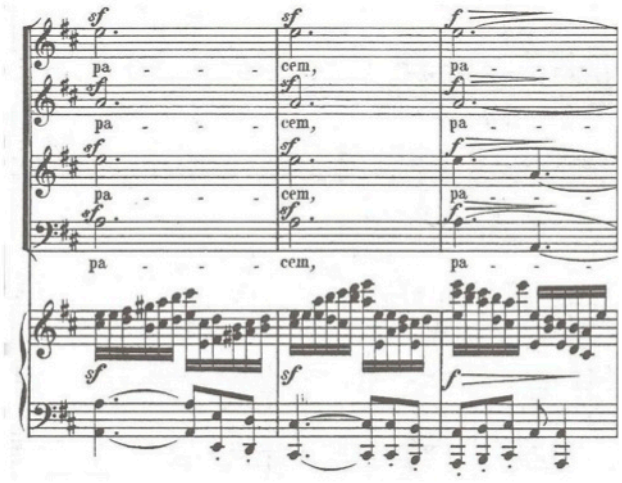
As demonstrated, repeated note patterns can easily be modified to be more pianistic; however, thick textures with repeated note chords that require quick changes in hand position can frequently prove to be more difficult when finding possible solutions at the piano. A specific case is found in the third movement of Gordon Jacob's *Concerto for Horn and Strings*.



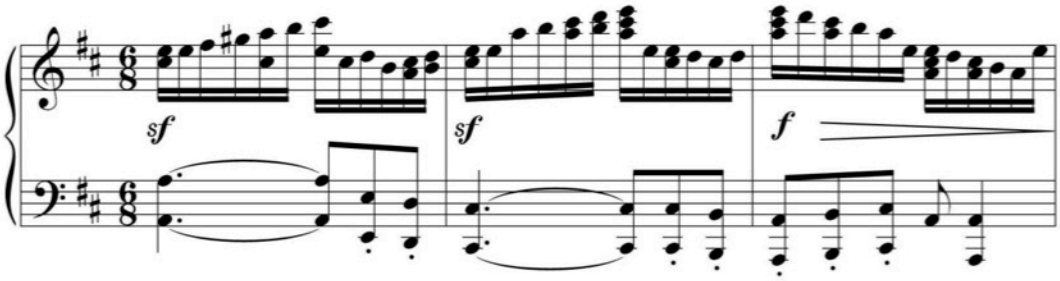
At a performance tempo of quarter note=132, the blocked chords in the right hand are unplayable as written for most pianists. There are several ways of reducing this example, but in order to be successful, it is imperative to retain the sixteenth note pulse and as much of the harmonic integrity as possible. Sometimes, this involves changing the pattern, reordering the notes, or even adding notes, as shown in the example below in measure one on the second half of beat one. A different formula might include playing the repeated note pattern in the right hand, but with only the top note, thus sacrificing harmonic fullness. Another possible option is to play the chords as written, but in an eighth note rhythm. A wealth of other choices is available to the pianist, but I believe the one shown below most concisely represents the harmonic content and rhythm effectively, all within a pattern that is comfortable for the pianist. Also, note the modification of the leaping octave patterns in the bass clef. By alternating between octaves and single notes in the left hand, a full sound is still heard in the bass, but the tricky jumps are avoided.



A similar situation also exists in an excerpt from Beethoven's choral masterwork, *Missa solemnis*, shown below. In this particular example, thick textures in the right hand combined with large leaps at a vigorous tempo produce a wide range of awkward, technical difficulties for the pianist. While it is certainly permissible for the pianist to simply play the top note in each group of sextuplets as a possible solution, there is another option that is not significantly more technically challenging, but creates a substantially thicker texture.

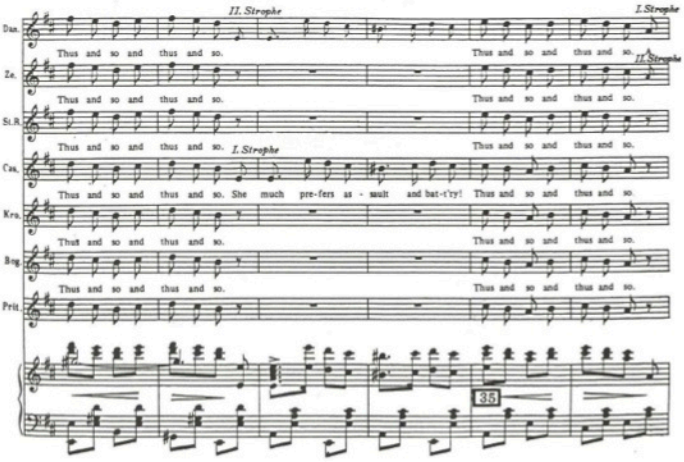


Not only is it nearly impossible to play this series of parallel thirds and sixths at dotted quarter note = 76, but it is equally unfeasible to negotiate the large leaps in the middle of each of the three measures up to tempo. A slightly thinned version is shown below. The incorporation of thirds and/or sixths at points where strong beats occur and also when they conveniently fit the current hand position creates a more desirable representation of the original while still feeling natural under the hand. Notice also the changing of notes and intervallic content in the middle of the second measure from the original sequence of octave, third, fifth to the edited sequence of three successive parallel thirds. In the key of A major, this is a very natural fingering pattern for most pianists. Other possible options include playing the second half of measure three in the same octave as the first half of the measure to avoid the right hand leap, or to omit the E natural at the end of the first sextuplet to allow more time to comfortably execute the right hand leap.

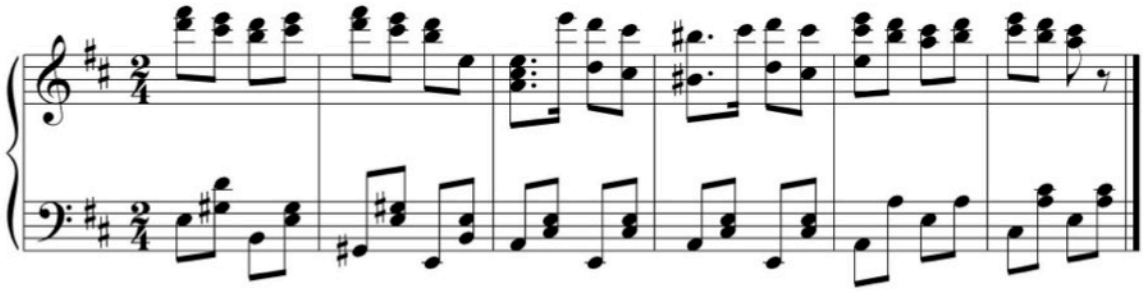


Leaping patterns in the left hand are commonly encountered in orchestral reductions and are pianistically awkward to execute accurately. The example shown below is selected from Franz Lehar's operetta, *Die lustige Witwe* (The Merry Widow). At an approximate metronome marking of quarter note = 120, the leaping patterns in the left hand are

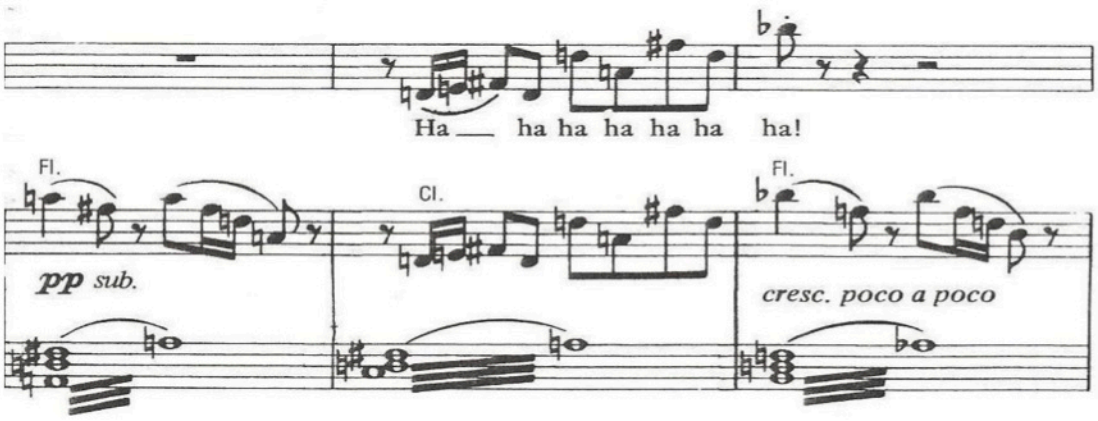
possible, but note accuracy is often sacrificed, causing many errors. In this example, what is of utmost importance is retaining the rhythmic integrity of the eighth note pattern while also providing a harmonic backbone when it is realistically possible.



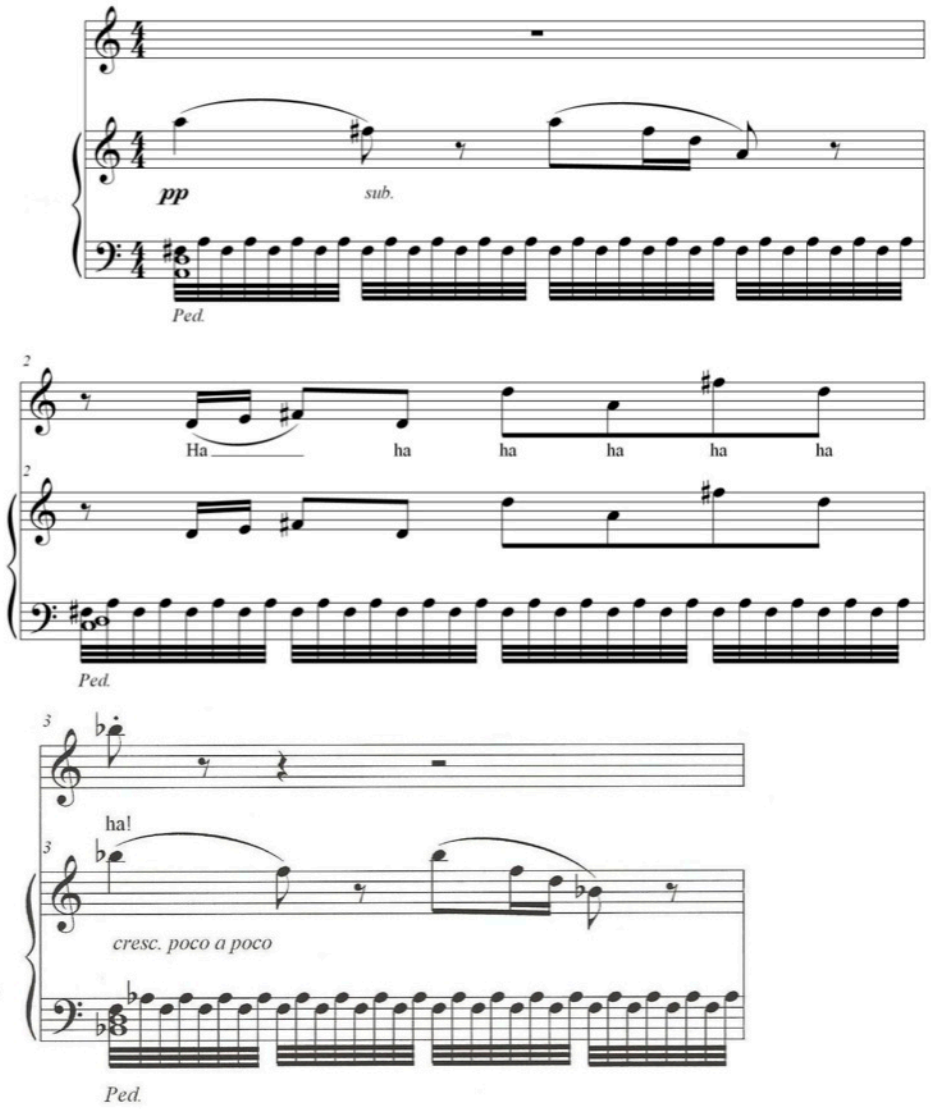
An example of an alternate solution is shown below. Minimizing the distance of each of the leaping patterns in the left hand is achieved through the process of re-ordering chordal tones to fit under the hand in relation to the bass notes on beat one and two of each measure. Essentially, each quarter note beat in the left hand is confined to the distance of one octave rather than a tenth or more. Modifications in the right hand are most prominent in measures three and four of this example. By omitting the low E at the beginning of measure three, the right hand is closer to the high E, thus shortening the distance of the leap. In addition, sixteenth note octaves found in the original are replaced in the edited version with a single note followed by two eighth note octaves. This is a technically more friendly pattern, as playing rapidly moving octave patterns is challenging for many pianists.



Finally, it is essential to include an example of orchestral tremolo. Tremolo patterns create an underlying intensity and are frequently found in orchestral music. In particular, these patterns are scored almost exclusively for strings. This is effective, since rapidly alternating between up and down bows on a single, repeated note is idiomatic for a string player. The same is not applicable for pianists. In most orchestral scores, tremolo patterns consist of an entire chord in which each string section plays one note that is repeated as quickly as possible. When transferred to the piano, this is not realistically possible.



The example shown above is extracted from *Glitter and Be Gay* from Leonard Bernstein's operetta, *Candide*. While it is not possible to rapidly repeat the entire chord simultaneously at the piano, a very similar effect can be achieved through playing a blocked chord on the downbeat, retaining the sound with the damper pedal, and shifting to a rapid alternation between two notes of the written chord, usually a small interval of a fifth or less. Use your ear as a guide to provide the best possible richness of sound. Technically, this pattern will be easier to execute at a quick tempo if the player does not let the key come all the way up to the top, almost as if one's fingers are glued to the keys. A possible solution implementing these concepts is shown below. One need not be too meticulous regarding the exact number of repetitions of the 32nd notes. The main goal should be to create unmeasured ripples of sound.



In conclusion, working with orchestral reductions at the piano requires knowledge of musical patterns that are idiomatic for the piano, the ability to ascertain which orchestral patterns need modification, a mental conceptualization of the wide array of tone colors heard in an orchestra, and a certain amount of creativity. Thinning an orchestral reduction with many different melodic lines is one of the more fundamental skills; however, modifying rapid repeated notes, thick textures that require quick changes in hand position, large leaps in the left or right hand, and tremolo requires more ingenuity, and perhaps individuality. In the process of modifying an orchestral reduction, the pianist creates his/her own version of the work portrayed as accurately as possible with two hands, and the two overarching goals should be to simulate the original orchestral palette of sound while working with a musical vocabulary that feels natural at the piano.

Ron Petti joined the faculty of the School of Music at Stephen F. Austin State University in 1999. He earned the BM and MM degrees in Piano Performance from Heidelberg College and Bowling Green State University, and the DM in Piano Performance/Chamber Music and Accompanying from Florida State University. As the Director of Accompanying at SFA, Petti directs the MM degree in Collaborative Piano, teaches the undergraduate course Accompanying Techniques, the graduate survey courses Vocal Literature with Piano and Chamber Music Literature with Piano, and applied lessons in piano accompanying and harpsichord. He is also the accompanist for many ongoing events in the School of Music including faculty and guest artist recitals, choral ensembles, opera productions, and student degree recitals. In addition to his duties, Petti also coaches graduate and undergraduate vocal majors at SFA. Prior to this appointment, he was the Staff Accompanist at SFA, and has served as Vocal Coach with the Florida State Opera, Coach/Accompanist for the Opera Program and Instructor of Piano in the Preparatory Department at Heidelberg College (OH), and Instructor of Piano at The Saint Francis School of Music in Tiffin (OH). As a collaborative artist, he maintains a demanding concert schedule with SFA guest artists and faculty, including serving as pianist in The Alazan Trio, a group who specialize in the performance of piano trios by American composers. As a soloist, he frequently gives recitals, has presented master classes in piano, served as an adjudicator in piano competitions, and has concertized throughout the US. He has been an accompanist at the MTNA National Convention in Washington DC, and Minneapolis, MN, and has served as accompanist for the SFA ACappella Choir for several European tours. Petti has also been a member of the musical staff at Opera East Texas, and most recently performed at the NACUSA composition conference in San Marcos TX, The Estes Park Chamber Music Festival in Colorado, The National Association of Teachers of Singing Convention in Oklahoma, and the NASA Saxophone Convention in Atlanta, GA. Future plans include a solo recital devoted to the works of Ukrainian composer Nikolai Kapustin.

Teaching Basic Beginning Wellness Skills: Sitting at the Piano

by Ryan Smith

Across the nation, keyboard wellness[1] is becoming an important component of both teacher training and student education in piano pedagogy. Local and state chapters of MTNA regularly host sessions on wellness. Since 1997, MTNA has maintained an extensive online bibliography of resources concerning wellness.[2] A number of independent training programs designed to promote wellness at the keyboard, facilitated by pianists such as Barbara Lister-Sink, Sheila Paige, and Edna Golandsky, have appeared nationally.[3] Training in the Alexander Technique, an approach to learning proper "body usage," is now offered at leading music schools such as the Juilliard School of Performing Arts in New York, the Royal College of Music in London, and the Boston Conservatory of Music. Furthermore, some prominent pianists' willingness to dialogue openly about injuries such as carpal tunnel, tendonitis and, more severely, focal dystonia[4] have made wellness topics less mysterious and more vital to sustaining a successful performing and teaching career.

While the American approach to learning piano is generally oriented toward music and note reading as opposed to technique, the increased attention to the most basic of wellness issues is evident in a variety of method series. Consider the fact that in 1995, *Alfred's Basic Piano Library Lesson Book, Level IA* included a mere seven points about sitting well at the piano (page 3) while the 2005 edition of *Alfred's Premier Piano Course Lesson 1A* expanded this set of instructions (pages 4-5). A more recent series, Helen Marlais' *Succeeding at the Piano: A Method for Everyone, Preparatory Lesson and Technique Book* published by The FJH Music Company (2010), contains even more information about sitting, hand position, and body usage. In contrast to many of its predecessors, *Succeeding at the Piano* integrates these lessons throughout the series book. I suspect that this approach will become more commonplace in future publications.

Learning to use one's body correctly, from the earliest instruction, is critical for a lifetime of successful piano playing at any level, amateur or professional. Furthermore, basic body usage concepts are useful not only for teaching beginners how to use their bodies properly, but they are also starting points for good usage, technique, and tonal control for all pianists.

The discussion below offers some instruction for developing student awareness of body usage, focusing on seating. This information comes from my experience both as a teacher and performer, participation in a number of wellness workshops, and studying the Alexander Technique. These concepts are by no means designed exclusively for the initial years of study. It is important for teachers to monitor and adjust their students' seating as they grow so that the piano "grows" with them. Consequently, teachers may find these concepts more helpful for solving problems with older students. Finally, while these principles are not exhaustive, they can help teachers develop good seating habits that will last their students a lifetime.

Your Body and the Bench

One of the surest ways to jeopardize an otherwise well-prepared performance is to sit incorrectly at the keyboard. Sitting at a different angle in performance from the one practiced can cause one's muscle memory to be deceived, resulting in memory slips, lack of technical or tonal control, or general unease. Too often I have watched my students and peers play awkwardly simply because they failed to adjust the bench.

While I hesitate to discuss how a pianist might arrange his backside on the bench, it is, in fact, a matter of critical importance. This topic is rarely broached in lesson books, probably for prudent reasons. But along with the neck and feet, the pelvic area is one of our major points of balance. When the pianist is seated, the pelvic area becomes the center of balance for the torso and arms. Without solid support, tension and counterbalancing in the arms and shoulders jeopardize the pianist's performance.

The point of contact between the pianist's body and the piano bench should be the base of the pelvis, which consists of two bony protrusions at the top of the legs. The medical term for these bones is the pelvic tubercle; for our purposes, the word "rockers" is more helpful. To help students locate these bones, I have them sit on a hard step stool. I ask them to locate the spot where they feel their bones pressing against the stool by rocking sideways and front-to-back. Once they have located their rockers, I ask them to rock back and forth gently to practice keeping their rockers in contact with the bench.

Next, I ask them to move so far forward that they cannot feel the rockers touch the bench any longer. They notice that their lower back tightens. I then ask them to lean back far enough that they cannot feel the bone-to-bench connection and to "air play" the piano from this position. This position, which I amusingly term the "high school hunch," is quite common at the keyboard. Tall high school students and even some college students often sit in this fashion at the piano. As a tall pianist, I was guilty during my high school and early college years. Two problems emerge from this hunch. One, over time it creates a lot of painful tension in the mid- back. Second, because the pianist is not solidly planted on the bench, he tends to grasp and tighten his fingers, albeit subconsciously, for balance. Musically speaking, this hunch precipitates banging chords or brittle tone quality in passage work. Tense fingers and harsh tone may be the symptom of poor seating rather than poor musical intuition!

One final observation is worth noting. Occasionally the student will appear to be sitting correctly in a performance, but his nerves cause his thighs to tense, resulting in the pelvic bones suspending above the bench. As a result, the fingers counterbalance by tightening up and grasping the keys. Much like the "high school hunch," this manner of sitting leaves the student's sound undesirable. Furthermore, this subtle problem can interfere with motor memory, contributing to otherwise unwarranted memory or technical slips. It is helpful to train susceptible students to plan "rocker checks" in the music until they grow accustomed to correcting this tendency automatically.

Sitting Up Versus Sitting Down

Piano teachers often insist that their students "sit up" while playing the piano. Method books likewise remind students to have good posture when playing the piano. An upright torso is absolutely necessary; however, several cautions must be mentioned.

The spine is designed as a gentle "S" shape. The two curves - one in the upper back, the other in the low back - counterbalance one another. When asked, many young students think that the spine is supposed to be a perfectly straight line. This is no surprise, given that young, well built men and women naturally disguise the curvature in their backs. The better one's posture, the less pronounced the curves.

The student's response to the instruction to "sit up" is typically to eliminate the curves in his back and straighten his torso. He pushes his upper back high, and tightens the lower back. More often than not, his rockers hover over the piano bench rather than resting on it. The command to "sit up," then, is frequently a poor cue that may produce a different set of problems. The student hears a command and acts accordingly; the teacher sometimes fails to observe that the cue provided an undesirable response.

While he appears to be sitting up, he is actually putting great strain on his entire upper body. The student places his balance and support on soft tissue (muscles) rather than on hard tissue (bones). This improper sitting can create fatigue and discomfort. For, while muscles tire easily, bones do not.

Pianists who tighten their backs from a young age may continue to do so as professional adults. I was once at a workshop where a college faculty member was performing a dazzling movement from a Brahms piano sonata in a master class. Those of us in the room, while impressed with the pianist's technique, reacted uncomfortably to her harsh, brassy tone. While the notes were accurate and the tempo captivating, the percussive and colorless performance left us dissatisfied. After praising the pianist's performance, the colleague noted the performer's seating habits. The performer sheepishly confessed to low back pain after performing. The clinician pointed out that throughout the performance, the pianist hovered on the bench. The clinician worked to help the performer relax her lower back and to sit down comfortably on the bench. The result was astounding. Immediately, a warm, lush tone magically returned to the performance without any attention being given to her fingers or arms. The rest of the session was devoted to practicing those treacherous passages.

In this type of situation, the performer's loss of support in her rockers transfers to her fingers. This tension in the fingers created to keep from falling off the bench prohibits the type of control necessary for beautiful tone production and color differentiation. While it may not be as important to a child, the budding high schooler or college student may find performing exhausting and frustrating from the challenges associated with poor seating habits at the keyboard.

Height and Distance from the Keys

Once a student knows how to sit, we must teach him where to sit. Most method books correctly note that students are to sit on the front half of the bench. However, we should note that the rockers are to be situated on the front half of the bench. Because every pianist's build varies, it is more helpful to gauge where to sit based on their rockers, not the fleshy part of their backside.

Having an adjustable bench is absolutely necessary for healthy piano playing. (Whoever invented and marketed stationary piano benches has done pianists, particularly amateurs, a great disservice.) Almost every instrumentalist, except keyboard players, can bring his instrument to him. But because the pianist cannot adjust the height of his instrument, his bench must be adjustable in order to accommodate his own height and arm span. Teaching the student to distinguish between correct and faulty bench placement is critical at an early age. As with most other wellness concepts, it will ensure both comfort and more reliable playing.

How High to Sit

Determining bench height is important for a number of reasons. If the bench is not at the correct height, the student's ability to move in and out of the black keys will be inefficient. If he is too low, playing the black keys accurately is nearly impossible. It also forces the wrist to be more active in movement than is necessary. More problematic is that fact that his shoulders often tense to compensate for a bench that is too low. As every good teacher knows, holding the shoulders up thwarts tonal and technical control.

To determine the proper height, the shoulders and arm must be completely limp. When the pianist raises his forearm to the keys from the elbow, the forearms must be parallel to the floor. Even after several years of lessons, I make sure that my students' forearms are relaxed. I do this by holding one arm and moving it in a circular motion. When the student's arm is not heavy—even at a young age—then he is tensing up his upper arms or shoulders. If this routinely occurs in a student, it is important to err on the side of raising the bench too high.

There is nothing unacceptable about using castors to raise the bench or sitting on a pad. Pianists such as Abbey Simon and Ann Schein use devices to sit at optimal heights. They know that an optimal performance requires comfort and good positioning at the keyboard. Pianists should have no hesitation about using tools to make them more comfortable and efficient at the keyboard.

How Far Back to Sit

The ideal distance from the keyboard is when the fists can reach the fallboard without bending the elbows, while the shoulders remain over the hips. This allows for a full range of motion with the least amount of interference from one's body or from moving around

the black keys. The process to determine distance from the keyboard is simple. The teacher must first ensure that a student sits properly on the bench before adjusting it. The pianist then extends his arms and places his fists, side by side, against the fallboard above Middle C. If the arms need to bend at the elbows, the bench should be pushed back accordingly. If the pianist must lean forward to reach the fallboard, then the bench should be pushed forward. It is important to remember that the student's shoulders must remain directly over his hips. If the student's back accommodates by leaning forward or backward to reach the fallboard, he will have a false sense of placement.

The Role of the Feet in Balance

The Alexander Technique addresses having tripod support in one's feet to balance body weight correctly. This means distributing one's weight evenly across the ball and heel of each foot. For the pianist, using the arms and feet while sitting complicates this natural balance. Tripod support with both feet is rarely possible for the pianist. Still, the pianist's feet must help his pelvis stay balanced on the bench.

Since the ball of the foot is typically engaged pedaling, the heel must bear all the support for the right leg. Therefore, the heel must be firmly planted on the ground, and one should balance slightly forward in order to have better balance. Without a solid grounding on the floor, maintaining one's balance on the bench and in the arms will be treacherous. This reason is also why female students need to wear shoes with appropriate heels for pedaling.

For children whose feet do not yet touch the ground, stool support is beneficial for enabling them to maintain their balance on the bench. If the student needs to use a pedal, then a pedal extender may be used. Although these devices have existed for many years, modern technology has greatly refined them. The student can maintain good balance and control at the keyboard without sliding off the bench or, as many children do, stand up awkwardly during a performance.

Tall pianists face a different challenge. When his knees get in the way of the instrument, the performer often tends to pedal with his foot angled on the side. However, this adjustment can cause much discomfort and imbalance on the right rocker. It is best to keep the heel balanced on the floor and to pedal with the side of the foot rather than the toes.

Conclusion

The details associated with proper seating at the keyboard may appear tedious or trivial. However, it is an issue of great importance for playing both at ease and musically. Teachers will benefit from teaching their students to distinguish between comfort and discomfort, and tension and relaxation, at the keyboard. And as the student grows, the teacher must also be prepared to teach the student to adjust his seating and positioning properly. It is the goal of these techniques to encourage piano playing that is both free

from pain and fatigue, and free for fluidity and musicality.

Footnotes

1 Wellness encompasses a number of issues such as physical and hand/eye coordination, muscular tension and relaxation, proper positioning at one's instrument, and principles of movement.

2 Annotated Bibliography on Musician Wellness. Music Teachers National Association [accessed October 26, 2012].

3 Barbara Lister-Sink, Freeing the Caged Bird: Developing Well-Coordinated, Injury-Preventative Technique . Sheila Paige, Keyboard Wellness Seminar. Edna Golandsky, The Golandsky Institute.

4 "A Hand Up for Dystonia: New Studies Are Shedding Light on the Causes, on Therapy." Brain Waves. 16: 3, Spring 2004.

Ryan Smith currently serves as the adjunct professor of accompanying at South Carolina State University where he accompanies student, faculty, and choral recitals. He has maintained a private piano studio since 1998, teaching students of all ages and abilities. His students have won awards at the local, state, and regional levels. In 2007 he was designated a Nationally Certified Teacher of Music (NCTM) by MTNA. Dr. Smith has presented workshops at a variety of colleges and music teachers' organizations on wellness topics, focusing primarily on issues related to body usage and movement. He has studied the Alexander Technique with Laury Christie and the Taubman Technique with Sheila Paige. He regularly performs solo and collaborative recitals throughout the Southeast, most recently with Gary Seydell, tenor, and Daniel Cole, bass. He also arranges and performs sacred music for keyboard and is published by Southern Harmony. Dr. Smith earned his doctorate in 2011 from the University of South Carolina in piano performance with a minor in music history. He earned his B.M. in piano performance at Furman University and his M.M. at the University of South Carolina. His primary teachers have included Ruby Morgan, Marina Lomazov, and most recently, Charles Fugo. In addition to his graduate studies, Dr. Smith has coached with several members of the Keyboard Wellness Seminar including Lynn Rice-See, Robert Bonham, Jane Abbott-Kirk, and Yeeha Chiu.